

NIETZSCHE'S AMOR FATI IN DAVID FOSTER WALLACE'S INFINITE JEST

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Original scientific paper

DOI: 10.31902/fll.44.2023.7

UDC: 821.111(73).09Volas D. F.

Abstract: This paper aims to show the *blasé* characters of Wallace's *Infinite Jest* exposed to the postmodern *zeitgeist* who fear and hate fate for its dominance, as is depicted in his works. The indifference, apathy, skepticism and equivocation which circumscribed Wallace's characters in *Infinite Jest* show their escapist analysis of the quirks of fate. This study tries to find out whether Wallace's characters affirmatively embrace the power of fate or negatively deny it. After a close reading of Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, the researcher highlights that Nietzsche's concept of *amor fati* is absent for Wallace's characters because, fallaciously, they were either trying to ignore it or demystify it. Wallace characters' means of coping with fate metamorphoses them into apathetic beings that are finally in a constant quarrel with themselves. Both their escape from fate and their craving for its demystification culminate in their drowning in life and its pleasures, and then it becomes clear they can no longer enjoy anything and they become afflicted with *anhedonia*. Wallace's characters cannot know why their lives are worth living, so they fall into deadly living. It argues that fate entangles human freedom and human extrication from their carnal desires becomes a big delusion in the infinite jest of their lives. The immanent fight with fate will make life's jest very serious. And when life is taken too seriously, its jest will intensively make a mockery of humans.

Keywords: *Amor fati*, Anhedonia, Destiny, Jest, Escape, Metamorphosis.

1. Introduction

David Foster Wallace is an encyclopedic writer who is obsessively concerned with humanitarian concepts and values. He ardently copes with unravelling the quiddity of human nature and human fate. And this quest is initiated by his recourse to the rational facet of human beings as it is the sole domain of philosophy. He is very much concerned with the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the world, and he tackles the issue of being and non-being particularly at the heart of his *Infinite Jest*. In fact, according to Boswell (2003), the eponymous title of this novel has an allusion to a phrase in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. And Wallace turns to be Hamletish in the sense that there was a big gap between what he said and what he did. He seeks to see what life is like, but he embraces death amid his living. For Wallace, the presence of world suffering and *Weltschmerz* is intimidating and highly underscores ontological insecurity.

Though he asserted that all humans are learnedly helpless, he defiantly seeks to fight against this helplessness.

The significance of this study lies in the solipsistic knowledge of Wallace's characters regarding the indomitable power of fate in their lives and the consequent aggravating symptoms of suffering. Here, the researcher is going to see how fate can have the most devastating effect on human life if it's to be resisted. In the previous study entitled *Gesturing toward Reality*, John Baskin highlighted that "what Wallace does in his thesis—with the same understanding incisiveness of his later analyses of cruise ships, the porn industry, lobster biology, tennis, David Lynch, and a host of other matters—is show how to resist the seemingly compelling premises that led Taylor to that unhappy, fatalist conclusion" (22). From one side, it is going to be ascertained that resistance to the mesmerizing power of fate did not make humans happy as Wallace's characters didn't become. On the other side, escaping from the portentous power of fate will make human life as insipid as possible. Negation of fate either with recourse to resistance or escape culminates in the portentous incarnation of it in human life. Therefore, fate must be embraced as Nietzsche in his *The Will to Power* (1968) highlights, fate has to be affirmatively embraced with both its sweetness and bitterness. Though Nietzsche thinks that fate acceptance sublimates human life, Wallace enunciates that 'acceptance' is usually more a matter of fatigue than anything else. (IJ 77)

And his inference goes against the grain of what Nietzsche postulates about the acceptance of fate with the taken-for-granted presence of suffering in human life. Wallace can't help thinking about suffering as a presupposed presence in life; his whole purpose in life was to find a way for eliminating suffering from human life. Wallace is deceiving himself for a chimeral ideal of a utopian world in which he supposed there has to be no trace of suffering; such an ideal is in stark contrast to the harsh reality of everyday life. And when he cannot find this ideal in the real world despite all his endeavors, he falls prey to his extreme desire for knowing the root of human suffering. He couldn't forget about the very being of suffering in human life and this overthinking gives way to his higher suffering. What killed him, at last, was his excessive desire for remembering the sufferings of all, and quite unexpectedly he forgets himself and falls into oblivion and committed suicide when he thought life is way too serious and he is the one who has to disentangle all the inherent knots of life. The case of Wallace is very much thought-provoking; Wallace was very much meticulous about his surroundings and everyday life, out of too much orientation toward other human beings and toward the environment; he becomes far from his own being. He wants to escape fate by denying its power and he thought brawling with fate without limit is the sole solution for terminating human suffering; but, he was ignorant of *amor fati*, Nietzsche's solution for the unbearable of suffering in life.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Fredrich Nietzsche's concept of 'amor fati' or 'love of fate' is first introduced at the beginning of *The Gay Science* book IV "Sanctus Januarius" or "Hymn of Victory", characterizing a reiterate affirmation of the Nietzschean way of living by saying yes to life. According to Nietzsche, humans must live their lives wholeheartedly and must embrace their fate by inculcating the belief that if their lives go through a repetitive cycle, they won't find the least fault with it. His well-known concept of eternal recurrence is one of the most predominant manifestation of the *amor fati* concept. Veritably, in his *Gay Science*, he brilliantly sketches a harsh picture for eternal recurrence of life to highlight that humans must live a life worth infinite recurrence and reiteration:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!' (341)

Strikingly, craving for the repetitious life is only possible when humans can adore their lives; otherwise, their lives will be tantamount to catastrophe. If we reach the point that our extravagant desire for the better version of fate disappears, then there is *ne plus ultra* for us as human beings. Meanwhile, extrapolating Nietzsche's inquiry to his obsession with naturalistic metaphysics, with considering human life-affirming quest for meaning-making by the simultaneous incorporation of human free will and fate will shed light on human infirmity against the undeniable power of fate. While denouncing nihilistic philosophy, he moves toward enlivening and vivifying elements of life. In this regard, Nietzsche constantly reminds humans "to keep in mind that this was the perspective of a nihilistic philosophy that inscribed the negation of life on its shield" (*Anti-christ* 49). Categorically, Nietzsche asserts that pity is the concrete manifestation of negation in life; i.e., as human beings, we must not pity our being and existence, as pity is quite appropriate for the dead rather than the living. In his *Anti-christ*, he sheds more light on this point that "pity negates life, it makes life worthy of negation, - pity is the practice of nihilism. Once more: this depressive and contagious instinct runs counter to the instincts that preserve and enhance the value of life: by multiplying misery just as much as by conserving everything miserable, [...] - pity wins people over to nothingness!" (49).

In this study, the positive connotation of nothingness matters; life even as the representative of nothing must be embraced quite affirmatively. Human beings must be courageous enough for this endeavor and they have to defeat their ontological, epistemological, and eschatological insecurities. Any insecurity may lead to human hatred and disgust of the whole world as if there is no beauty to be investigated. For Nietzsche, any affliction is grace in disguise, and for him, this mindset gives the only solution to human beings for coping with the sufferings in life. The aim of unraveling the mysteries of human life will just demystify the human situation on earth. From a Nietzschean perspective, Wallacean characters are just grappling with a life conundrum with too much susceptibility to a human vulnerability against fate. Human sights must always be set on some finite ends and death is the inevitable finitude of human life. Obsession with infinity haunts the human mind with extreme egotism that they may succeed in finding a path for overcoming fate; it is a hellhole for mankind from which there is no escape. Nietzsche ironically believes in human courageous living; we're fate's fool and plaything that cannot play with fate at all, or in Eliot's terms, we are like hollow men filled with straw. We have to say affirmative yes to life, otherwise, fate will negate us.

It's all the truth Nietzsche ascertained about fate. Indeed, he is an important figure in the realm of philosophy and he interrogates humanism as an empty denomination. He underscored that grappling with the issue of fate, by underscoring human free will would not guarantee a human sense of emancipation in life. In his *Ecce Homo* he highlights that "my formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity..." (18). As for Nietzsche, clever, free and powerful human beings must embrace their fate with all its limitations and it is only in this way that the best choices can be made. It's interesting to note that for Nietzsche, fate must be loved by all its ups and downs; then he has an allegiance to suffering as he believes his success is indebted to his sufferings in life. Moreover, Nietzsche substantiates that higher acquiesce to suffering determines human sublime ranks in life; "the order of rank is almost determined by just how deeply people can suffer, the trembling certainty that saturates and colours him entirely, a certainty that his sufferings have given him a greater knowledge than the cleverest and wisest can have" (*Ecce Homo* 321). As it is clear Nietzsche believes that as human beings we must not make a fuss about the sufferings that we are incurred by, which is against what Wallace in his *Infinite Jest* declares: that "sometimes suffering's point is almost crying out in a high-pitched whine to be heard" (IJ 141).

Authentically, Nietzsche believes in the positive affirmation of life, requiring positive forgetfulness which provides an opportunity for the triumph of rebirth and the discovery of identity. He asserts that "only through forgetfulness could human beings ever entertain the illusion that they possess

truth..."(Birth of Tragedy 143). Strikingly, the inherent potentiality of rewriting in forgetting shows that nothing happens till today; then metaphorically, life can be like a text which can be rewritten every day and in this sense, our world must be remarkably *scriptable*: there is always an open play of possibilities in Wallace which gives human the potentiality to rewrite their lives in Barth's terminology. Therefore, Wallace's works seem to be the paradigm of Barthes' *jouissance*. In other words, forgetting permits the characters to write their days anew and it provides an opportunity for them to escape from their daily habits and boredom. Extrapolating from Nietzsche's concept of *amor fati* and the eternal return of the same, this study will underscore that demystifying and deconstructing life vicissitudes cannot alleviate human pains and sufferings. If human beings neither have fear of fate nor hope for it, they will become the incarnation of their fate and they will stop awaiting a world beyond, and instead, their real moments in their given lives will be more gratified. Nietzsche's philosophy unlike that of Schopenhauer does not believe in the loathsome and fearsome nature of fate.

Human beings can embrace their fate in the Nietzschean way only if they become able to free themselves of excessive desires. Otherwise, their fear of the portentous nature of fate metamorphoses their human life into animal life and they will easily yield to deadly living as Wallace's characters. Therefore, they cease to become neuter selves in their lives, because they will become pure desires which make their identities a purple patch rather than *neuter* selves. However, Wallace is too much concerned with this desire, and in his works, different characters are depicted that are doing away with their desires and want to become a *neuter* self as Maurice Blanchot (1992) claims neuter has separated itself from any desire, but unfortunately they cannot. Neuter self is the embodiment of the authentic concern for living; according to Maurice Blanchot, the *neuter* or *le il'*— detaches the subject from any relation to unity. [...] The he/it can never be a speaking subject, can never have the presence of an I''|(10). Insisting upon one's mental status exacerbates human awareness and culminates in double-awareness. As an ambiguous and equivocal experience for human beings, the neuter space is not easily achievable and it stands beyond all coherence, totality, *esemplasy*, and unity. It is unnamable, and the moment it is expressed it will erase itself. Its self-effacement and obviation are at odds with its urge for exposure; or to put it differently, its identity is all indicative of its alterity as if being is suspended in non-being. The neuter self is entangled in this desire-ridden cosmos, and in this midst, the only thing that can help human beings is becoming neuter. And as neuter selves, human beings inevitably have to embrace the obscurities of the world. The meaning behind the word neuter asserts that the capacity for suspense and indeterminacy is a privilege for human beings in this apathetic world. However, unfortunately, they jeopardize their life with a quest for self-aggrandizement which is a reversed sort of journey for

kenosis and self-emptying as the necessary ingredient for becoming perfect humans living in a conciliatory symbiosis with fate.

2. Wallace's Apathetic Characters & their Solipsistic Resistance to Fate

Throughout Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, Hal Incandenza's insistence upon feeling is a hint which highlights that he strips away cliché and stereotype to underscore that those who are deprived of feelings are incurably dead; he is a bibliomaniac and by voracious reading, he distances himself from the patina of everyday life:

I'm not a machine. I feel and believe. I have opinions. Some of them are interesting. I could if you'd let me, talk and talk. Let's talk about anything. I believe the influence of Kierkegaard on Camus is underestimated. I believe Dennis Gabor may very well have been the Antichrist. [...] I'm not just a creatus, manufactured, conditioned, bred for a function.' I open my eyes. 'Please don't think I don't care. (IJ 5)

Generally, all Wallace's characters like Hal feel like robots, as they cannot provide themselves with a reasonable response to the mechanical features of the world; therefore, it will lead to their solitary and insecure feeling. For instance, Hal wants to shout to all that he is not a nonchalant person, it seems, for him, vitality and felt experience interweave in a highly commiserative account. Moreover, Hal wants to excavate darkness for reaching the light, but he is unaware that some dark points in life must remain dark eternally.

Feeling ontologically insecure propels Wallace's characters toward a compensatory act which is passive resistance to fate. They are in a constant brawl with fate as they do not accept their duty in life. As *dharma* makes them feel the burden of being human and exacerbates their fear of taking responsibility for their living, they prefer to drown themselves in narcotics to turn a deaf ear or turn a blind eye to fate power, which is the straightforward manner of denial. And according to Nietzsche, fate denial not only will manifest its overarching power, but it also will suck human enthusiasm for living. The desire for living merrily at the expense of devitalizing force of life is the major threat for Wallace's characters; their life without *élan vital* does not worth living. Breathing is worth gratifying, but most human beings ignore this bounty as Wallace's characters are no exception. Interesting to note, is Wallace's depiction of respiratory and pulmonary diseases throughout the novel as once he refers to it as "pulmonary sloth" (IJ 365), or when he talks about a player's breathing difficulty and the minute portrayal of breathing aid as:

Of each pair, one half, designated by lot, filled his or her lungs to capacity with inhaled air, while the other exhaled maximally to empty his or hers. Their mouth was then fitted together and quickly sealed by an organizing cultist with occlusive tape, who then expertly employed the thumb and forefinger of both hands to seal the combatants' nostrils. (IJ 411)

Here, we can see that breathing or pneumonic disorders foreground the importance of taken for granted presence of breath in human life which is a bridge between life and death. In this part, Wallace's analysis of inhalation, arrest, and then exhalation is reminiscent of Samuel Beckett's 45- second play entitled *Breath*. Any harm to the respiratory system affects life vitality, as pulmonary sloth is way much more comprehensive than the sloth and lethargy humans are afflicted within their daily lives. As there are shreds of evidence about the slothful life of Wallace's characters, "what appears to be laziness, lethargy, fatigue, sluggishness, a certain passive reluctance to engage you. Torpor" (IJ 284); it seems they are thirsty for a sense of livelihood, and perhaps their engagement in the tennis court demonstrates their desperate need for a game which helps them to feel alive. They need to be enthusiastic about the very minor things in their lives and perhaps like Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, they need to "pretend they are human beings" (8).

Occasionally, they must remember how they are alive; otherwise, they feel insecure, "if the whole of the world dissolved and resolved each time I blinked, what if my eyes didn't open?" (*A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never do Again* 84). Here, again we see the human obsession with not being and how this eschatological concern is suffocating for Wallace's characters. Though, fate must not be transmogrified by human double awareness; Wallace characters' awareness of fate power and their simultaneous sense of mental fight for pain obviation is surmised in their solipsistic insistence upon this fight. As a solipsist thinker, Hal asserts that knowledge of anything outside one's mind is uncertain and terrifying; the external world and other minds cannot be known. Indeed, for Wallace, human one's mind is a good shelter against all unknown mysteries including the most unknown and terrifying element like fate. The trace of solipsism can be found in most of his works:

Solipsism, sometimes discussed as a doctrine but also evoked as a metaphor for isolation and loneliness, pervades Wallace's writing. [...] His stories are full of sealed-off people." The self-obsessing narrator of 'Good Old Neon,' who has committed suicide and addresses the reader from beyond the grave, says "you're at least getting an idea, I think, of what it was like inside my head," of "how exhausting and solipsistic it is to be like this. (Ryerson 12-13).

Wallace could not believe that every human is alone with a fate of one's own. Only his solipsism does exacerbate the human sense of loneliness and ontological uncertainty. When human beings are exhausted, they cannot bear the responsibility of their lives. On these occasions, impotency will reign over their daily lives and Wallace's characters can do nothing except blaming fate for relieving their pain. Nonetheless, in this regard, Richard Taylor tries to define

fate as a real element that has simultaneously portentous and promising factors in it, but human beings in most cases are ignorant of the promising potentiality of fate. As in his *Metaphysics*, Taylor quite clearly elaborated:

The fate that has given us our very being has given us also our pride and conceit, and has thereby formed us so that, being human, we congratulate ourselves on our blessings, which we call our achievements; blame the world for our blunders, which we call our misfortunes; and scarcely give a thought to that impersonal fate that arbitrarily dispenses both. (54-55)

Taylor believes in Nietzsche's concept of fate affirmative embrace with both its portentous and promising features; or to put it differently, for him, fate negation will only make it more horrendous. However, Wallace cannot help thinking about fate power and its inevitable metamorphizing facet.

2.1. The Shadow of Fate: Source of Unbridled Fear in Humans

Pessimistically, when fate reigns over human life, humans' fear petrifies their courage for living; therefore, various traces of mislivings will be manifested. In this regard, Barry Schwartz highlighted that "Seligman's discovery of learned helplessness has had a monumental impact on many different areas of psychology. Hundreds of studies leave no doubt that we can learn that we don't have control" over our fate (102). This discovery makes human beings very cruel in their relationship to each other and their selves due to their institutionalized sense of ontological uncertainty as well as their deranging sense of learned helplessness. With their acquiescence to this awareness, they want to conquer their helplessness by exercising control over others by either repressing themselves or others. What is evident is human being's inclination to abuse their freedom to boycott others of their kind, when they know they are rendered impotent by the environment; they intentionally do not want to remember how enchained they are to the moments; therefore, they will undergo a great transformation in a blink of an eye. And it is as if a human is "suffering a kind of hidden degenerative recidivist soul-rot" (IJ 264). Human indulgence in the materialistic and escapist ways of living culminates in their soul decadence. Perhaps, one of the reasons for human decadent behavior toward each other is an ego-centric desire for rescuing one's own life at the cost of making others pawns of themselves, as they avoid being pawn of the universe. The acme of this ignorance and suffering is that we think we have freedom for choosing not to be the pawn of the universe, but at the end of the day, we can see there is no escape from being the puppet. We must yield to the fact that it can be far better if we accept the determinism of the universe because the disguised form of determinism is our illusion of escaping from it.

It seems that blaming others is the easiest way to fight fate, but rewarding oneself rather than blaming others is a necessity for life continuation. Here, we

see Wallace cannot reward himself, perhaps because he proves that the black substance of the human mind becomes darker than normal in the postmodern zeitgeist. In this midst, terror and *angst* of destiny propel mankind to a hustle and bustle way of living which neither does obviate their fear nor grant them a higher power. Though in our era, humans are always in a rush; their movement toward perfection is indeed too slow; as if they are mostly suffering from *bradykinesia*. The *substantia nigra* (SN) of the midbrain plays an important role in reward and movement. Therefore, the movement for a perfectionist human at the time of conscious cogitation will always seem unrewarding. What is at stake in human life is humans yielding to the rush of everyday life which has its detrimental effects on the human spirit. Hal *Incandenza* in Wallace *Infinite Jest* was haunted by the word *zuchung* which means convulsive movement. It bears a correspondence with us as postmodern humans as we are in a rush without paying any attention to anything else. It seems "he suddenly felt nothing, or rather nothing, a pre-tornadic stillness of zero sensation, as if he were the very space he occupied, then he had a *seizure*" (114). Moreover, human consciousness, sense of duty, obligation, expectation, etc. will undergo severe change. That's why there are so many humans with masked faces who have lost their paths for living and will go in a rush to nowhere. According to Wallace, most humans are suffering from *dysthymia* or persistent depressive disorder which chronically removes hope from life. Critically, many humans seek to experience an effortless way of living, but instead in this domain they just become purposeless. Wallace characters' reaction toward fate like so many other humans is an ambivalent one, they are always hovering between yielding to fate or evading from it.

Strikingly, by escaping from mesmerizing power of destiny, it cannot be conquered; instead, it will accelerate its bulimic potentiality. Human beings have a bipolar reaction when dealing with time and destiny, from one side, they cannot bear the trace of time and destiny as if they are suffering from anorexia, with the association of dysphagia; *i.e.* human beings think that they have to swallow time with difficulty because they cannot digest the negative trace of it. On the contrary at other times, they fall prey to the rush of time like the time they need to be happy go lucky, they can easily swallow time and send it to oblivion that's why they can cruelly become ungrateful for the happy moments. Therefore, at any cost, destiny powerfully will swallow human beings polyphagically with utmost cruelty that will divest them from their self totality. Therefore, unavoidably compliance with fate is a very strategic maneuver for the human soul that:

A soul can divest itself of the created state of willing, knowing, and having to realize the pre-creational state of non-willing, non-knowing, and non-having. The soul is not by nature divine, but it is, through the

transformation of love, divinizable, enabling even the embodied, earthly soul to achieve a lasting and essential union with God. (Robinson 12)

It means that the solution for Wallace's characters and all disorientated humans is learning to make a balance between willing suspension of either disbelief or belief when dealing with fate. And for some human beings oblivion of fate power can lighten their responsibility in life and postpone their decision-making. Sometimes Wallace's characters suffer from decision paralysis and therefore they will be driven everywhere except to the stable point as if moved by wind. "[...] Mostly wind. The biggest single factor in Central Illinois' quality of outdoor life is wind. [...]. Most people in Philo didn't comb their hair because why bother" ("*Girl with Curious Hair*" 7). As the instrument of fate, wind can intervene in human decision-making. Moreover, human oblivion is a defensive stratagem that illusorily makes human beings secure toward the ontological insecurity exacerbated by fate influence. Oblivion does not give any human victory over time ravishment; oblivious human just experiences a pyrrhic victory which is tantamount to defeat. It is bearable for some people who accept self-deception as a principle in their lives.

On the other side, when Wallace's characters consciously keep an eye for fate, they will lead an inauthentic way of living that is porous with fears. The need for courageous living is necessarily felt because if human beings are scared to death in a confrontation with life challenges, they will lead a deadly living very soon. Then more than anything else humans need courage in their lives, as Paul Tillich in *Courage to Be* asserts, we can see "the fortitude to Be (*Die Tapferkeit zum Sein*)" (6), while human beings maneuver in life with their own feebleness and frailty. This frailty to be is tangible in Wallace's *Infinite Jest* as the dominance of addiction in the fiction indicates every kind of addict cannot have the Courage to Be. "The courage to be is the courage to affirm oneself in spite of fate and death, but it is not the courage to affirm oneself in spite of sin and guilt. It could not have been different: for the courage to face one's own guilt leads to the question of salvation instead of renunciation" (Tillich 11). If we don't pressurize ourselves to become conscious of our behaviors, automatic deceiving will be the natural outcome. Because seemingly humans are absorbed to the world just for the sake of entertainment and human life is like a game and according to Wallace, "game is about managed fear" ("*Infinite Jest*" 67). What is evident is that Wallace's characters simultaneously think about managing their fears and their fates; while there has to be distinction between fear and fate. In other words, fear of fate is manageable not fate itself.

2.2. Human Delusion of Having Control Over Fate Exacerbates its Intractability

The major characters of all Wallace's works specifically those of *Infinite Jest* show, taking anti-depressants and drinking beer are the analgesic stuff for relieving fate deterministic burden. They don't have the art for being calm and jovial without resorting to narcotics. On a deeper level, it shows that Wallace's characters cannot yield to life affirmatively, and they're negatively fighting against life forces. Wallace's characters move against Nietzsche's concept of *amor fati*, and they consequently deny the positive affirmation of life by renouncing all life as the unbearable incarnation of suffering. And in this vein, they decide to be drowned in the events and sufferings of the mundane world. Humans must not deceive themselves that life is an integrated party, they must be courageous enough to live a repetitious life without the feeling of suffocation; or in Nietzsche's term, humans must love their living to the extent that if they return to it recurrently, again they crave for their living. However, Wallace's characters mistakenly think that life is supposed to be replete with absolute happiness that's why they can no longer enjoy their lives:

This is called here the Syndrome of the Endless Party. The celebrity, money, sexual behaviors, drugs and substances. The glitter. They become celebrities instead of players, and because they are celebrities only as long as they feed the culture-of-goal's hunger for the *make-it*, the winning, they are doomed, because you cannot both celebrate and suffer, and play is always suffering, just so. (IJ 253)

Indeed, suffering presence in the game arena is ineluctable and in the warp and woof of human fate, suffering is an ever-present constituent of human destiny. Even if humans are on the *qui vive* for the voice of destiny, they won't be able to change their destiny. As Wallace in his *Infinite Jest* cryptically hints to destiny's *soufflé* which can't be heard by the human ear; in other words, he intends that destiny's presence is really invisible and no one can hear its voice. Strikingly, Wallace asserts that blindfolded human beings think that they can engineer the trivial and insignificant matters in their lives. Wallace asserts that human beings claim to be wisdom incarnate in order to be able to pretend they can reign over their predestinations. Fate's greatest essence and origin lie in time, the incarnation of time indomitable power shows destiny's grandeur and its grandeur must always be remembered as Wallace substantiated:

Almost nothing important that ever happens to you happens because you engineer it. Destiny has no beeper; destiny always leans trenchcoated out of an alley with some sort of *Psst* that you usually can't even hear because you're in such a rush to or from something important you've tried to engineer. ("IJ" 110)

Grievously, human beings feel absolutely alienated after being exposed to the shadow of fate; at these points, they are learnedly helpless. And despite multiple “pons asinorum” in life (points at which many learners fail), (*Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* 55), human beings must not be a loser to their humanity. In various tests for remaining human, human beings must recurrently remind themselves how frail they are and how carefully they must pass through the path of life in order not to be lost in the rush of life. In *pons asinorum* points of life, we can see that human thought is very weak and unconfirmed; indeed follies of the world can enchain human thought and can prevent them from seeing the differential points in every incidence. Though differential mechanisms and points in the postmodern era are not tangible, human beings must grasp the humanitarian points in life. For instance, it seems in Wallace’s works, infinity and nothingness can be the same as Mullins corroborated “all is one. Nothing changes” (48). In this sense, either we are fatalists or not, there is no escape from fate:

Fatalism is the thesis that whatever happens must happen; every event or state of affairs that occurs must occur, while the nonoccurrence of every event and state of affairs is likewise necessitated. With respect to human affairs, fatalism claims that we lack the power (capability, ability) to perform any actions [...]. As a result, there is no such thing as (libertarian) free will. (Bernstein 65)

2.3. Going Beyond Fate through Zen-like Non-action

Human arrogance for their free will, as the darkener of the spirit, coerces human being into a life with either chaotic action or with porous non-action while humans need to reach “taoist or *comme on dit ‘dolce far niente’* or Zen like constructive-nonaction movement” (*Oblivion Stories* 145). Knowing when to be active or non-active depends on the degree of human attachment to either consciousness or unconsciousness, and either way proves its findings. Conscious non-action is a way away from the indifferent way of living; however, unconscious non-action can bring total annihilation to human life. Whatever instigates non-action, according to Wallace must not inhibit the jest in life and replace it with staleness. Self-consciousness about fate is an additive to human’s learned helplessness. As a matter of fact, “trusting the railroad ties’ vibration and the whistle’s pitch, as well as intuition, and fate, and whatever numinous influences lie just beyond fate” (*Infinite Jest* 410), is a guarantee for a meaningful way of living. Here, we can see a subliminal trace of *amor fati* signifying that humans must love their destiny in either disguise but it is far from practice in *Infinite Jest*.

Necessarily, for some time we need to become a zero degree human; i.e., human without any predominant desire. However, unfortunately, we cannot yield to the zero degree of covetousness for becoming a perfect human; instead,

mostly we recede to the beastlike potentiality of being a human rather than manifesting the angel-like features of human beings. The most essential problem of humans is the point that they are always waiting for the angel-like person to make them hopeful and bring meaning back to their lives. Why do humans prefer to be a backseat driver and expect to be awakened? They just drown themselves in daily quibbles and babbles and ultimately forget their awaited hope and meanings in lives. That is why in most cases, hope is not a key to prosperity because many humans foster a *pseudo* hope in their minds which is the real obstruction in their lives. And they become dumb to “a voice comes from elsewhere (perhaps that of Samuel Wood or of the nameless) inaccessible to time and erosion; a voice that, even if it is also illusory like a dream, has in it something that lasts / Even after its meaning has been lost” (*Blanchot, A Voice From Elsewhere* 21). If humans had an ear for hearing their inner voice, then they would not be scared stiff when it comes to fate.

Presumably, fate is anthropomorphized; sometimes it's like an inner voice that has to be heard. However, it's only audible for those who have an ear for; those who are still human in such a dehumanized world. People who are not yet disillusioned by the harsh reality of their lives; humans who understand genuine feelings and can empathize with dehumanized others of their being. Though, it must be noted that Wallace neither could make sense of absolutely apathetic humans nor could he understand those who were hypersensitive. Because he believes hypersensitivity to others' pain is very deranging, and humans with such sensitivity can never experience a happy life even when there remains one person suffering on earth. Because of this, he depicts Mario *Incandenzaas* as a character who was suffering from —familial *Dysautonomia*, a neurological deficit whereby he can't feel physical pain very well” (590). Wallace craves for this deficit in humans as it will culminate in human *analgesia* toward pain like the character Mario in *Infinite Jest* who is just emotional and not self-reflexive at all.

However, human nature is not changeable, human beings must feel suffering and yet remain human. Therefore, they must yield to whatever befalls them either afflictions or graces, embracing the events can make a Nietzschean superman of them. What is striking in Wallace's characters is the fact that they just theoretically know about the impact of fate, but in practice, they cannot love their fate. As somewhere else in the *Girl with Curious Hair*, we see that “he sees life as a jungle. No matter how long a rein you think you're on, he's always got the rein in his hands” (108). Getting the rein of life in one's hand, needs so much courage that many humans with underscoring their fears and Achilles heels cannot yield to. Unlike Samuel Beckett's *Unnamable*, whose catchphrase was “I can't go on in any case. But I must go on. So I'll go on ...” (107), Wallace's characters like so many blasé humans will say, we must go on, but we cannot. Because so many of them robustly start their quest, but unexpectedly they deny

the necessity of going on. Perhaps human embracing of the fate power must be handled subtly, rather than tenaciously and bumpiously. Moreover, human beings must not always be self-conscious about the power of fate; indeed fate is among those things which must neither go into absolute oblivion nor must be uninterruptedly remembered; instead, it must come and go between forgetting and remembering. It is only in this case that fate can be affirmatively embraced.

3. Conclusion

Wallace mainly depicted life as a jest due to the point that in a vicious circle every one of us is killing ourselves for nothing. His quest for analyzing the traces of fate in human life prevents him from embracing fate. As a result, the absence of *amor fati* culminates in his characters' soul-draining life; life without 'courage to be' is deadly living. It is found that 'Being' without life affirmation impedes human becoming, for a resounding yes to life despite all its sufferings and afflictions is a necessary component of living. The code for the end of human struggle in this infinite world is self-renunciation; self must be renounced despite life affirmation. Human beings must become a renouncer and affirmatively embrace their worldly alienation and experience their own *kenosis* or self-emptying for fulfilling human reconciliation. There has to be a balance between the infinite jest of life and infinitesimal earnestness for living. Indeed, institutionalized fear of human simultaneous life earnestness and refuge in the jest of life petrifies vital moments of life and transforms the ideal vertical life into a horizontal repetitious way of living. Therefore, according to what Wallace has depicted, in his *Infinite Jest* (2006), thanatology (crave for death) is replaced with deontology (sense of duty); his characters as the example of postmodern humans, are reluctant to recognize their human duty and forget to live their vital lives, instead they take refuge in death before the time comes.

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AMOR FATI NIETZSCHEEN DANS L'INFINIE COMEDIE DE DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

Ce travail vise à représenter les caractères blasés de *L'infinie comédie* de Wallace qui sont en proie au *zeitgeist* postmoderne et qui haïssent le destin et en ont peur vu sa prédominance. L'indifférence, l'apathie, le scepticisme et l'ambiguïté qui circonscrivent les caractères de Wallace dans *L'infinie comédie* montrent leur analyse basée sur la fuite de la réalité en ce qui concerne l'essence du destin. Cette étude essaie de comprendre si les caractères de Wallace acceptent affirmativement la force du destin ou qu'ils la nient négativement. Après avoir profondément lu *L'infinie comédie* de Wallace, nous insistons sur ce que le concept nietzschéen de *Amor fati* est absent chez les caractères de Wallace, parce que fallacieusement, ils tentent de l'ignorer ou de le démystifier. La lutte des caractères de Wallace avec le destin, les métamorphose en des êtres apathiques qui sont en constante querelle avec eux-mêmes. Leur fuite du destin et aussi leur vœu de le démystifier en même temps aboutissent à ce qu'ils submergent dans la vie et ses plaisirs. Il est donc clair qu'ils ne peuvent plus jouir de rien et ils deviennent ainsi affectés de *anhedonia*. Les caractères de Wallace ne savent pas pourquoi leur vie vaut d'être vécue et ils vivent plutôt comme des morts. En fait, ne pas accepter le destin met en question la liberté de l'être humain jusqu'à ce que, dans l'infinie comédie de la vie, la délivrance de l'homme de ses désirs charnels devient une grande illusion. La lutte

immanente avec le destin rend la comédie de la vie très sérieuse. Et quand on prend la vie trop au sérieux, son aspect comique se moque extrêmement de l'homme.

Mots-clés: *Amor fati*, Anhedonia, Destin, Comédie, Fuite, Métamorphose.