

**Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence of the Same:
The Effect of Logic Abridgment, Contradictions and Inconsistencies.**

by
Gordon Murray

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our sons, Raymond and Scott
and our grandchildren
Jamieson and Kristen.

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Nietzsche's Doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same: The Effect of Logic Abridgment, Contradictions and Inconsistencies

FOREWORD

Have I been understood? Nietzsche asks in *Ecce Homo*.¹ Nietzsche has been understood in depths beyond imagination. That understanding, stultifying in its diversity, will be assessed in this essay the theme of which is logic abridgments in the doctrine of the eternal return of the same. I will assemble arguments supporting and refuting the view that recurrence is worthy only as assessment of attitudes toward life and not as an imperative nor system of cosmology. The turbulent disunity in which Nietzsche is understood gave George Allen Morgan Jr. justification for the following:

Probably no thinker has excited a wider ambit of conflicting interests, sordid and spiritual, shallow and profound. To the timidly conventional a Satanic mind... deserving his bad end; to the blasé a sauce piquante of irresponsible wit; to the fanatical a stick to beat things with -- sometimes himself; a tasty morsel for gossips and psychological morticians; a monster of ruthfulness for some readers, a floodgate for sentimental yearning in others; prophet, mountebank, iconoclast, clown -- all these and many more has Nietzsche been to the masses. Certainly his motley following has aroused prejudice against him in cleanly discriminating minds. Can anything be good which attracts so many flies? ²

That there is something for everybody in Nietzsche's thought is suggested by G.A. Morgan...All who read Nietzsche's books and even those who do not, are free to understand and misunderstand: to initiate comprehension for insight and wisdom and to distort for entertainment or profit. Nietzsche himself contributed to the wondrous

¹*Ecce Homo* p.128

²*What Nietzsche Means* p.3

ways in which he has been understood. "It has often been noticed that Nietzsche seems to contradict himself quite frequently in his writings" observed George J. Stack in 1982.³

³*Dialogos*, 40 p.27

INTRODUCTION

I will argue that the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same no better interprets cosmology than pink elephants interpret zoology. I will also argue that the eternal-return-of-the-same doctrine as what Magnus calls “existential imperative” is without possibility of application and thus futile.

To facilitate those arguments, the validity of the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same will be tested under distinct rubrics. Although each rubric will stand alone, one per chapter, as an evaluation of some specific aspect of eternal recurrence, the rubric sequence has been selected to accommodate the identification of what I shall be calling logic abridgments.

The conclusions to be extracted from each rubric are grouped under the heading CONCLUSION and appear immediately following rubric ten. Then, or if, at the end of a rubric a reader is inclined to wonder which rubric or topic is next, and why, the answer can be found at the top of the following page. The question is usually answered in the very first sentence, but always answered in the first paragraph.

The first rubric has been placed in order by chronological entitlement in that it deals with the evolution of the idea of eternal recurrence from the time of the ancient Greeks to Nietzsche's August, 1881 inspiration. This much-recommended technique is also known as starting at the beginning. Rubric 1 also deals with 20th. Century philosophers' assessments of the relationship between Nietzsche and ancient Greek thought. The only experience of E-R, Zarathustra's mountain vision, is second only because it sets the scene alluded to in following rubrics. The third rubric explores

Nietzsche's evaluation of rationality so that his thought processes will be understood appropriately. The actual mechanism of E-R is tested in rubric four...The scientific proof Nietzsche assembled in support of E-R is assessed by contemporary philosophers in rubric five. E-R's function as an ethical imperative is debated in rubrics six and seven...The extent to which E-R fulfills its purpose in overcoming nihilism is measured against the comfort assured by major world religions in rubric eight. Whether E-R also serves as a redemption for revenge is questioned in rubric nine. Rubric ten assures that E-R refers to return of the identically same and not merely the similar.

In addition to assemblage and evaluation of all ten rubrics, at the end of each rubric a brief recapitulation of its principal points concludes the chapter.

In this essay I will assess the theoretical conditions under which the doctrine cannot be applicable and will show what contradictions and inconsistencies follow if the doctrine is taken to be operable.

Harold Alderman in his book *Nietzsche's Gift* wrote, the "doctrine of eternal recurrence gives us a problem not in Platonic cosmology, but in Socratic self-reflection."⁴ I will illustrate that the recurrence doctrine's cosmogony is unworkable and that if it were workable, it would negate self-reflection on the grounds that self-reflection cannot find its cause in eternal recurrence of the same. Thus, when the cosmology is shown to be impossible, any expected ensuing results or benefits will be rendered also impossible. The so-called "heaviest burden" will be exposed as complex, engrossing "what if" speculations deserving no linkings to reality. To identify

⁴Alderman p.84

abridgments of logic, contradictions and inconsistencies in Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same, I will examine the subject under the following schedule.

In Chapter 1 the ancient origins of recurrence theories will be introduced...This chapter is intended to establish the boundaries within which the subsequent chapters, except Chapter 10, will be confined.

Chapter 2, Zarathustra's vision of E-R, assesses the sections of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in which the phenomenon of recurrence of the same is reported...Nihilism as a psychological difficulty is introduced in this rubric, but that subject will be studied in detail in Chapter 8. In Chapter 2 the symbols of eternal recurrence of the same will be considered. Whether the recurrence image should be of a closed ring or as a coil will be of significance in many sections of my essay. I will argue that neither symbolic configuration can accommodate Nietzsche's supposed intention.

Chapter 3 defends the description of E-R given by Zarathustra.

Chapter 4, the cosmological mechanics of E-R, speculates on the seriousness with which Nietzsche might have intended the doctrine of eternal recurrence to be taken. My essay reports, and then assesses, the argument of those who suppose the doctrine to have been merely exploratory musings by Nietzsche on cosmological hypotheses...The cosmogony of E-R is examined.

In Chapter 5, cosmological proofs tested, the proofs for Nietzsche's doctrine of return of the same are evaluated. This chapter features the position taken by Martin Heidegger. My essay suggests that while Heidegger's argument that recurrence of the same is a genuine cosmic agenda is admirable, it is not at all persuasive.

Chapter 6, E-R is an ethical imperative, is in essence the reporting of a debate between two scholars regarding the possibility of an imperative in the doctrine of recurrence. Their debate polarizes the arguments I intend to develop.

Chapter 7, does E-R of the same preclude alteration of attitudes, is a continuation of the debate presented in Chapter 6 with the focus shifted to the psychological from the cosmological aspects of eternal recurrence of the same.

Chapter 8, Can E-R Overcome Nihilism?, is divided into two parts. In the first, nihilism as it applies to Nietzsche's theory is discussed...In part 2, the broader consequences, sources and definitions of nihilism are outlined. My essay argues that Nietzsche's doctrine is more nihilistic than are the world's major religions.

Chapter 9, Is E-R a redemption for revenge?, examines the suggestion extracted from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that the doctrine of eternal recurrence is intended, among other purposes, as a redemption for mankind from the destructiveness of revenge.

Chapter 10, E-R of the similar refuted, analyses a position that an element of chance can influence the doctrine of recurrence. This view appears to allow, not for recurrence of the same, but recurrence of the similar.

A summary will recount briefly the various significant logic abridgments, contradictions, and inconsistencies associated with Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same.

In the 'conclusion' section of my essay my own opinions and observations will be assembled from the body of the essay.

Footnotes

The footnote, rather than end notes, technique has been used...Because many of the cited books and journal articles contain the title 'Nietzsche' or 'Heidegger' and because there are frequent references to the writings or thoughts of those philosophers, the references to works cited may be identified by a translator's name. For instance, references from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are identified as Kaufmann Tr. p. X and those from *Nietzsche* by Heidegger are identified as Heidegger Vol. X p. X.

The essay text removes any uncertainty as to which books or journal articles prompted theme, quotation or paraphrase...Any chance for confusion is cancelled by the employment of paragraph introductions such as: Magnus, in his essay "Nietzsche's Existential Imperative" etc. The applicable footnote will be *Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy* p.X.

Because some arguments compare and contrast the contributions of two or more writers in a single paragraph, the phrase "in my essay" signals thoughts that are not extracted from original or secondary literature. Where syntax, paraphrased thought structures, and word sequences have been appropriated, the sources have been acknowledged with gratitude.

CHAPTER 1

Pre-Socratics and Eternal Recurrence

Nietzsche told about his mystic experience in a place near a towering rock in Sils Maria during August, 1881 “six thousand feet beyond man and time.” The mystic experience was the thought of eternal recurrence of the same...Because I found none more brief, though some less informative, I have selected the definition of eternal recurrence from *Nietzsche As Philosopher* by Arthur C. Danto.⁵

Eternal recurrence is the idea that whatever there is will return again, and that whatever there is, is a return of itself, that it has all happened before, and will happen again, exactly in the same way each time forever. Nothing happens that has not happened an infinite number of times and which will not happen again, for all eternity, in exact iterations of itself. There is no beginning and end, and no middle either to the story of the world:

Danto ⁶ recounts significant scenes from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* sections “On the Vision and the Riddle” and “The Convalescent” by way of emphasizing that Nietzsche’s doctrine of return involves, not merely similar recurrence of events and people, but the identical or the self same individuals doing exactly as they did and will do. (It facilitated life everlasting.)

Reports of his inspiration during August 1881 in Sils Maria might be taken to suggest that Nietzsche considered the thought of eternal recurrence to be unique and exclusively his own. While Nietzsche might suddenly have recognized the eternal life applications in his philosophy for the eternal recurrence theme, he was not unaware of ancient acknowledgments of return. Danto ⁷ reports that, according to Lou Salome,

⁵Danto pp. 201-2

⁶Danto p.202

⁷Ibid p.203

Nietzsche was reluctant to disclose his inspiration until he could verify it scientifically. Danto suggests that Nietzsche came to believe he had a proof for it which was scientifically impregnable, but whatever Nietzsche thought of his revelation, he was by no means the first to think the thought of thoughts.

The possibility of eternal return was considered by the pre-Socratics.

Anaximander thought that things were born not from one substance... but from its own particular principles... These principles of individual things he believed to be infinite, and to give birth to innumerable worlds and whatever arises in them; and these worlds, he thought, and now dissolved, now born again....⁸

The birth and death of the universe ⁹ in “everlasting recurrence” was speculated upon by Empedocles... Pythagoreans¹⁰..believed that events recur in certain cycles and that nothing is absolutely new. A cosmic cycle, referred to as the Great Year, said to last more than 10,000 years, marked the period of time between the perishing of an old world and the rebirth of the new. The Stoics believed that at the end of each cosmic cycle the universe dissolved...The events of the previous cycle will be repeated in all their details and in the same order. The doctrine of eternal return was not embraced by Christians because they believed that certain events were unrepeatable such as Creation, Crucifixion, and Last Judgment. The concept of successive cosmic cycles was rejected precisely because it would deny humans the freedom of free will. By decree, in 1277, Christians had to abandon speculations on the Neoplatonic idea of a Great Year lasting 36,000 years and recurring eternally. It was incompatible for Christians to endorse recurrence while hoping, at the same time, for personal heavenly reward.

⁸Kirk et al p. 125

⁹Ibid p.288

¹⁰Ibid p.238

James Gutmann found a philosophical significance in “the nature of the crisis”¹¹ that inspired Nietzsche. The rapture of Nietzsche’s August 1881 momentous experience¹² on a mountain path in Sils Maria is recounted by Gutmann, but exactly what was revealingly fresh about the centuries-old E-R doctrine is not clearly conveyed, Gutmann’s attempts to categorize Nietzsche’s experience as religious, metaphysical or mystical, notwithstanding.¹³

Gutmann, acknowledging that “Nietzsche himself obviously knew that the idea had long been current...,”¹⁴ suggested that it is as an ethical imperative that Nietzsche’s vision acquires its wonder. Gutmann, of course, could be right...A life examination that might transform descending life valuation into ascending valuations would have been important to Nietzsche.

I wish to suggest a different source of Nietzsche’s August 1881 stimulation. Karl Lowith, although referring to E-R as “...the most absurd invention of a modern mind...”¹⁵ acknowledged that scholars were well aware of the ancient origins of the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. Lowith, in his 1945 article which appeared in *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, credits Nietzsche with perceiving E-R as a replacement for dying Christianity.¹⁶

Lowith, in his contrasting of E-R’s aspect of eternal recurrence against Christianity’s promise of eternal life, does not actually declare that Nietzsche suddenly,

¹¹Gutmann p.837

¹²Ibid p.838

¹³Ibid p.830

¹⁴Ibid p.840-2

¹⁵Lowith p.274

¹⁶Ibid p.282

in August 1881, recognized the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same as a victory over extinction. More specific is Rose Pfeffer, author of *Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus*.

Pfeffer holds that when Nietzsche rejected the values of the Platonic/Christian tradition, new values had to be substituted. One of these new values denied “the timeless eternity of a supernatural God, but affirms the eternity of the ever-creating and destroying powers in nature and man.”¹⁷ Does this not describe the conquest of death and propose everlasting life absent of deities? This conquest, I believe, gave Nietzsche’s August 1881 “thought of thoughts” its indelible distinction.

George J. Stack in the chapter “Eternal recurrence Again”¹⁸, while not suggesting that Nietzsche in 1881 recognized immortality as a product of E-R does explain that the doctrine of E-R accommodates “immortality in *this* world.”¹⁹

Stack wrote the eternal recurrence was Nietzsche’s attempt to “surpass and negate the Christian belief in the immortality of the soul.” E-R repulsed the conjoined concepts of personal death and immortal soul by proposing endless existence in the here and then.²⁰

According to Martin Heidegger, in *Nietzsche* Vol. II,²¹ Nietzsche was inextricably linked to the ancient Greeks. Through this nexus, Nietzsche was characterized by Heidegger as the last metaphysician. According to Heidegger,

¹⁷Pfeffer pp. 130-1

¹⁸Stack pp. 209-10

¹⁹Ibid p. 215

²⁰Ibid p. 232.

²¹Heidegger pp. 199-204

Nietzsche dealt with the commencement of fundamental Greek thought...Nietzsche's philosophy ²² is the end of metaphysics inasmuch as it reverts to the very commencement of Greek thought.... "Nietzsche's philosophy closes the ring that is formed by the very course of inquiry into Being as such and as a whole." ²³ Ancient Greek thinkers addressed the question regarding the meaning of Being...Parmenides, providing one answer, tells us that Being IS. Heidegger informs us that with that response, the meaning of IS and Being -- permanence and presence -- which is eternal present, is determined.²⁴ If that position is the 'thesis,' the 'antithesis' is supplied by the other answer formulated by Heraclitus who tells us that being becomes. "The being is in being by virtue of its permanent becoming."..From Nietzsche comes the 'synthesis': it is the doctrine of eternal return of the same. This 'synthesis' is explained by Heidegger: ²⁵

Nietzsche conjoins in one both the fundamental determinations of the being that emerge from the commencement of Western philosophy, to wit, being as becoming and being as permanent...That "one" is his most essential thought -- the eternal recurrence of the same... Nietzsche's fundamental metaphysical position is the end of Western philosophy.

In observing the way in which Nietzsche is the end of discordance between Parmenides and Heraclitus, Heidegger notes that "the essence of Being is Becoming,"²⁶ but, what becomes is and has Being only in creative transfiguration.²⁷

²²Ibid p.199

²³Ibid p.222

²⁴Ibid p.200

²⁵Ibid p.204

²⁶Ibid p.200

²⁷Ibid p.201

What is and what becomes is inasmuch as in creation it becomes being and is becoming. But such becoming-a-being becomes being that comes-to-be, and does so in the perpetual transformation of what has become firmly fixed and intractable to something made firm in a liberating transfiguration.

Heidegger informs us that Nietzsche intended, in about 1882, to "introduce the transfiguration of what becomes as something that becomes being" and eternalize ourselves as beings..."Let us imprint the emblem of eternity on our life!" wrote Nietzsche in what appears to establish the sequence of ideas...The first is that the essence of being is becoming then eternalization of ourselves as beings and finally to beings as a whole...This eternalization is to be done in such a way that the eternalization arises from being itself. ²⁸..Heidegger guides us toward the "most important aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy."..This aspect was recorded under the title "recapitulation" and is explained as follows: ²⁹.."To stamp Becoming with the character of Being -- that is the supreme will to power."..The notion that Becoming as impermanence is not to be replaced with being as permanent is corrected..."...one must recoin or shape Becoming as being in such a way that as becoming it is preserved, has subsistence, in a word, IS." ³⁰

The recoinage of what becomes into being -- will to power in its supreme configuration -- is in its most profound essence something that occurs in "the glance of an eye" as eternal recurrence of the same...The will to power, as constitution of being, is as it is solely on the basis of the way to be which Nietzsche projects for being as a whole...Will to power, in its essence and according to its inner possibility, is eternal recurrence of the same... we soon read the following sentence: That everything recurs is the closest approximation of the world of becoming to one of Being: peak of meditation.

²⁸Ibid

²⁹Ibid p.202

³⁰Ibid p.203

Heidegger remarks on the clarity ³¹ with which Nietzsche has instructed the way the stamping of Being on Becoming is to be understood. Heidegger also notes that even though thoughts about will to power attain pre-eminence, the doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same is never omitted from Nietzsche's attention.

Conclusion

This chapter, while it recounts the evolution of a cosmological theory from the dawn of philosophy to the present, serves a speculative purpose. I suggest that Nietzsche's August 1881 vision finds its enchantment, not in the mere concept of recurrence, but in the service it provided. The doctrine of E-R was Nietzsche's victory over death.

³¹Ibid

CHAPTER 2

Zarathustra's Vision of E-R

The doctrine of eternal return is only lightly mentioned in Nietzsche's published works. Even more rare are reports of experiences that embrace eternal recurrence events. One of these is found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On The Vision and the Riddle," so it is to this section we should look for insight into how eternal recurrence is to be interpreted.³²

Zarathustra is on a sea voyage during which, after two days, he recounts to the ship's crew a vision he had experienced.³³ It is clear that Zarathustra selected the sailors to hear his riddles and his report of adventure because sailors "do not like to live without danger," they are courageous, and also because sailors, not being scholarly nor analytically critical, prefer to guess rather than to deduce, to surmise instead of calculate. It is to this audience the structure of eternal recurrence of the same was defined. That the story will offend logic and reasoning can be predicted with confidence, especially when a 'leap' is required.

Zarathustra tells about his climb up a mountain in the company of a dwarf. The dwarf represents the weight of living, the spirit of gravity. The exchanges between the depressing dwarf and Zarathustra concerned the value of courage as a slayer of pity among other topics. Eventually, the two climbers stop and there behold a gateway, Moment, that represents the 'now' of time. Two paths leave the gateway in opposite directions, one way is future, the other past. Zarathustra asks the dwarf if the two paths

³²Kaufmann Tr. p.155

³³Ibid

will contradict each other forever. The dwarf answers saying that time is a circle. (The dwarf has provided the correct answer, that is, an answer that accommodates the recurrence doctrine being promulgated by Nietzsche, but the dwarf fails to recognize what is essential about his conclusion. The ramifications of the dwarf's answer will be discussed below). Upon hearing the dwarf's opinion that time is a circle, Zarathustra asks if the two of them had not previously walked the long eternal lane that leads backward and whether they would do so again and again?

Before Zarathustra's story to the sailors is completed, the import of the dwarf's answer must be examined.³⁴ The section titled "The Convalescent" explains the purpose of eternal return as: coming back, not to a new life or better life or a similar life... but back eternally to this self-same life. However, when eternal recurrence is thus described, its implications are exposed. These implications are outlined with clarity by Heidegger.³⁵

The dwarf experiences nothing of the fact that really to know the ring of rings means precisely this: to overcome from the outset and perpetually what is dark and horrid in the teaching as it is expressed, namely, the fact that if everything recurs all decisions and every effort and will to make things better is a matter of indifference; that if everything turns in a circle nothing is worth the trouble; so that the result of the teaching is disgust and ultimately the negation of life.

The foregoing introduces the contest between necessity (recurrence) and human freedom of choice. This contest is spoken of as the most abysmal thought, the characteristics of which will be studied in detail below.

³⁴Ibid p.221

³⁵Heidegger Vol. II p.55

Zarathustra continues telling about his adventure with the 'experience' of eternal return. The time is night. Moonlight reveals a path, a gateway, a slow-moving spider and the dwarf and Zarathustra whispering about eternal things. Zarathustra asks: ³⁶

Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before? And if everything has been there before -- what do you think, dwarf, of this moment? Must not this gateway too have been there before and are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment pulls after it all that is to come? Therefore -- itself too, it must walk once more.

And this slow spider which crawls in the moonlight and this moonlight itself and I and you in the gateway whispering eternal things -- must not all of us have been here before. And return and walk in that other lane out there before us in this long dreadful lane? Must we not eternally return?

Suddenly, the gate, path, dwarf, spider and moonlight vanish from Zarathustra's dreaming.

The description above, which is the only phenomenological or value-neutral description of the actual experience of eternal return, contains a destructive flaw. The dwarf, spider, gate, and path which Zarathustra believes will be repeated exactly as they have occurred together countless times previously are not lived events at all. They are hallucinations and figments. Zarathustra might experience them again in recurring dreams, but he will never encounter them again in real life for he never encountered them in real life a first time because they were elements of a vision. Has Zarathustra's report of a dream or vision increased support for the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same? It is expected that a doctrine should lose credibility when its foundational and intrinsic structure is hallucinatory. Having no pretense of nor claim to associations with reality, beyond existence as an evanescent disturbance in

³⁶Kaufmann Tr. p.158

Zarathustra's mind, the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same seems to refute itself. That Zarathustra was aware of the inadequacy of his experience with eternal return is suggested by the choice of audience to hear his evidence. The bold searchers, researchers³⁷ who embark with cunning sails on terrible seas alone receive his tale and are allowed to extract the intended message. Zarathustra would not expect sailors to subject the message to the rigors of articulate, rational scepticism. Logic is, therefore, conveniently abridged without fear of rebuke.

Myth, allegory, mysticism, visions and dreams are time-honoured techniques for communicating themes which are unsuitable or incapable of scientific verification. That such methods are used by Nietzsche to express the doctrine of eternal return of the same is not surprising. Zarathustra is directed by his animals to his role as the teacher of eternal return. Frightening, nauseating visions which depress and sicken him are used to instruct Zarathustra in the doctrine of which his destiny demands he be the advocate.

Zarathustra, continuing his story, awakens from his dream experience to witness a shepherd choking on a snake. It becomes clear in a subsequent section that Zarathustra is still in a state of irrationality or delusion for he is both the suffocating shepherd and the witness who, with his advice "bite the snake's head off," saves the shepherd's life.

That allegory and myth seldom shun the logically impossible should detract from the acceptability of an underlying theory. The illogical and irrational constitution

³⁷Kaufmann Tr. p.156

of parables should raise doubts and suspicions rather than endorsement. It is to Zarathustra's conquest of nihilism through snake biting that a test of logic should be applied. When the following paragraphs have been read, the question "has confidence in the fact of eternal return of the same been strengthened?" should be answered. I would suggest that the answer is No!

Simultaneously with the disappearance of the dwarf and all the other features of Zarathustra's dream imaginings, the cerebral adventure turns to scenes of nightmare horror. Suddenly, alone in the bleakest moonlight, he sees a young shepherd lying on the ground writhing and gagging in the throes of suffocation. A heavy black snake³⁸ protrudes from the shepherd's mouth into which it had crawled while the shepherd slept. "Had I ever seen so much nausea and dread on one face," pondered Zarathustra as he pulled unsuccessfully on the snake to drag it out of the mouth of the victim. Suddenly, Zarathustra offers the effective advice, "bite the snake's head off." The snake, with its head severed, ceases to be a menace in the script of Zarathustra's terrifying aberration, but its symbolism is still to be fathomed. For this duty Heidegger, among others, is available. ³⁹ "The black snake is clear monotony, ultimately the goallessness and meaninglessness of nihilism. It is nihilism itself," he wrote. Heidegger reports that the shepherd saved himself as every individual must do for himself. He who is not vigilant allows the nihilism (the snake) to incorporate itself in him. The expulsion of nihilism can be performed only from the inside and for oneself. Every thinker of nihilistic thoughts must himself bite the snake's head off to overcome

³⁸Kaufmann Tr. p.159

³⁹Heidegger Vol.II pp.179-183

despair. Zarathustra's nightmare undergoes interpretation by Heidegger who reports that when Zarathustra realizes that it is into his own mouth the snake had crawled and that it was in his own mouth the snake was parted from its head, he lies ill for a week. Upon recovery, he is told by his animals that it is his destiny to teach the eternal recurrence of the same.

Heidegger suggests that the snake enters the body of the one who thinks the thought of eternal recurrence and from the instant of the bite "the history of nihilism is brought to confrontation and forthwith overcome."⁴⁰ By means of this self-overcoming, the participant can traverse the narrow gap that separates what is all alike, in that nothing is worthwhile, from what is all alike, in that everything depends on each moment -- thus everything matters. "The smallest gap," writes Heidegger, "the rainbow bridge of the phrase 'it is all alike' conceals two things that are quite distinct, 'everything is indifferent' and 'nothing is indifferent'." The fragile bridge about which Heidegger writes involves resolution of the following question:⁴¹

All being, taken as a whole and as a plenitude of details in any given sequence, is forged in the iron ring of the eternal recurrence of the identical collective state; whatever enters on the scene now or in the future is but a recurrence, unalterably predetermined and necessary. But then in this ring what are action, planning, resolve -- in short -- "freedom" supposed to be?

It is this question that makes the thought of E-R so dismal. The solution to this question also provides meaning to Zarathustra's nightmare in which heads are bitten from thick black snakes -- bitten off from inside the mouth of the victim. It is obvious

⁴⁰Heidegger Vol. II p.133

⁴¹Ibid.

that choice between necessity and freedom must result from acceptance of the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same.

Since it remains, like thick black snakes, difficult to swallow, might Nietzsche's recommendation of the doctrine merely be as an exercise for the mind, but lacking serious claim on, or application, to actuality? If Nietzsche really believed in eternal return of the same, he would have had stronger supporting evidence with which to justify his own position and to persuade others.

The dwarf who accompanied Zarathustra up the mountain (on the Vision and the Riddle)⁴² responded to the question, if the paths leaving the gateway (Moment) in opposite directions, one to the future and the other to the past, they would contradict each other eternally, by saying "All truth is crooked; time is a circle." A quandary formulated. Metaphors of recurrence develop inconsistent images. The paths seen in the moonlight leave opposite sides of the gateway, Moment. The inference is that somewhere at the far side of a circle the curving paths meet. Whether this ring is like a metal ring lying flat or like a stripe around the equator of a ball arouses only mild curiosity. That questioned configuration is of less import than questions about the metaphor of the serpent coiled about the neck of the spiraling eagle. These images of snake and bird indicate a coil rather than a circle. Whether the ring of recurrence is a closed circle or a coil, as is a spring, tells whether recurrence has always been and always will be, or whether recurrence has a beginning and an end as does a coiled spring. The coiling images are crisp and vivid in Zarathustra's autobiography and yet

⁴²Kaufmann Tr. p.158

they seem to be inappropriate as support for a cosmogony needing no beginning and no ending.

The movie film projector was not available to Nietzsche, but if it had been, he could have used it to exemplify eternal recurrence of the same in the following manner. If the movie film were looped into a circle rather than reeled on spools, the same film images would cycle in the identical sequence portraying an unalterable series of occurrences. In that the occurrences passing the lens are no more or less in existence than all the other scenes which have preceded them or will follow them, time has influenced all events equally. Present, past and future are all the same. Becoming and Being can also be illustrated in the film loop. Becoming and Being are the same thing; are not all things knotted fast together that this moment draweth behind it all future things and itself as well? ⁴³

The contest between necessity and freedom will be of no consequence. Because the film content is unalterable, necessity is unrestrained. Freedom in not exercised for the people visualized in the movie film have no capacity for comprehending freedom of choice. Whether the people depicted love their filmed role or are nihilistic about it, is of no importance. Neither becoming nor being can be altered. The joy and woe, without preference, will repeat endlessly.

Conclusion

Zarathustra's vision of events on the mountain which provide the only 'experience' of E-R in Nietzsche's writings are not arguments against the informative

⁴³Kaufmann Tr. p.158

value of visions and dreams. I am not questioning, at this time, the profundities, revelations, truths or other insights that might develop from dreams, visions, hallucinations or even augury. I am concerned only with the repeatability of events that never happened. If the 'experience' on the mountain is repeated, it will be in the nature of a nightmare, but only in the mind of whose vision it was.

CHAPTER 3

Nietzsche Degrades Rationality

This chapter of my essay, in which the limitations of reasoning, if not its unlimited invalidity are extracted from Nietzsche's own published and unpublished (during his lifetime) works, is intended to record Nietzsche's lack of confidence in the supreme value of logical thought. The merit of his position is not being assessed: it is merely being observed.

George Stack, while discussing "Nietzsche's Myth of the Will to Power," provided insight into Nietzsche's thoughts about instinct and reason. Such insights are essential to the understanding of Nietzsche's doctrine of E-R.

Stack asked a question that addresses a theme of this rubric, "How is it...that Nietzsche can proclaim that 'there is no truth' and then proceed to develop a theory of reality that is presented as an answer to the riddle of existence?"⁴⁴ This question, even if it is rhetorical, directs attention to measurements of Nietzsche's values.

Stack quoted Nietzsche: ⁴⁵ "...life requires illusions (untruths) that are accepted as if they were 'truths'," of the struggle between "logico-scientific 'truth' and aesthetic, mythopoetic 'truth'". Nietzsche said that new myths are needed to accommodate both. Respect for learning and science, said Nietzsche, must be maintained, but they should be always under guidance and control.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Stack p.27

⁴⁵Ibid. p.32

⁴⁶Ibid. p.31

Stack wrote that Nietzsche believed that a powerful philosophical vision could “co-opt the scientific and technical power of the modern world.”

One hundred and twenty years ago the position Nietzsche held might have been better understood than it is today. Today, the advantage between the “logical, empirical, and scientific forms of ‘truth’” and the religious, mythical, metaphysical, and poetic forms of ‘truth’”⁴⁷ goes to the former. That such is so, or has become so, enhances Nietzsche’s reputation as a prophet.

A philosopher whose trust in the correctness of logical thought is weak, might be expected to abridge logic in his cosmology without misgiving or obligation to a disdained discipline.

An essay, the foundation of which is the identification of logic abridgments and of flaws in reasoning, should expose an interest in thought processes and interpretations that devalue rationality. That reason does not lead to truth about reality was believed by Nietzsche, Ran Sigad writes in *Nietzsche as Affirmative Thinker*.⁴⁸

Nietzsche’s thought is above all critical. This entails that his extreme negative attitude towards reason and the aspiration for truth is not capricious, but grounded on critical speculations that lead to the position where reasoning is taken to be the falsification of reality. Nietzsche’s underlying attitude, then, is that reality should be grasped as it is hence we should do all we can not to falsify it....

According to the very nature of life there is a preference for instinct over reason, for only the former does not falsify reality.

The challenge for which logic is inadequate is understood in many ways by countless scholars. A cogent declaration is provided by Ronald Hayman in his book

⁴⁷Ibid p.32

⁴⁸Sigad p.109

Nietzsche ⁴⁹ who wrote that logic is just as incapable of refuting Christianity. He asks how intelligence or logic can be successfully pitted against Christianity described as “a debilitating malady with a firm grip on European civilization.”

Logic is clumsy anyway when it can handle only formulas for what remains the same while reality is in a constant state of flux... but for Nietzsche there could be no question of abandoning the mental activity that was impossible without it... Rational thought is interpretation according to a scheme we cannot jettison. In face of disease, usefulness may be more important than truth....

...Nietzsche is still often reprimanded for inconsistency and for flouting the law of non-contradiction... one of his major achievements showed that its value was limited... “Truth is will to be master...”

Logic is an attempt to comprehend actuality by means of a scheme of being we have ourselves proposed.

The foregoing position is solidified by Nietzsche as is reported in a book by Daniel Breazeale titled *Philosophy and Truth* in Chapter 4 “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense 1873” ⁵⁰ where comparisons are made between the rational man “who stands in fear of intuition” and the intuitive man who scorns abstraction. “The latter is just as irrational as the former is inartistic.” Both the rational and the intuitive man seek to rule over life, the former by foresight and regularity, the other by disregarding these needs.

Nietzsche, in his notes, tells that the rational man “guided by concepts and abstractions” succeeds in warding off misfortune, but finds no happiness, whereas the intuitive man learns nothing from experience “and keeps falling... into the same ditch” expects more joy and finds more beauty.⁵¹ Nietzsche, confirming that “logic is merely

⁴⁹Hayman p.356

⁵⁰Breazeale p.90

⁵¹Ibid p.91

slavery within the fetters of language” also notes that no one can live within denial of reason.⁵² He appraises the truest things in life and the world to be love, religion and art, classifying them as the three illogical powers.⁵³

Nietzsche’s notes assembled in “the Struggle Between Science and Wisdom,” suggest and demonstrate that wisdom and science are contrary concepts. In that comparison, science is the embodiment of reason and intellect, wisdom is “illogical generalizings.”⁵⁴ That science and wisdom are cast as antithetical is disclosed in the notation that science is in fear and hatred of illogical generalization. Nietzsche, in this passage, is discussing the shift in Greek trust from myth to reason. The text indicates that the struggle between science and wisdom is less a contest between logic and wisdom, than between logic and ethics.

Ran Sigad in *Nietzsche As Affirmative Thinker*⁵⁵ offers a useful interpretation of Nietzsche’s thoughts about reason. “Nietzsche is deeply annoyed by reason’s pretension to be capable of revealing the truth,” observes Sigad. Nietzsche was said to blame Socrates for falsifying reality as it is established in the Western culture. The life of reason as practised by Socrates was considered to be an evasion of the real struggle for life. “Human reason is not objective... it is the expression of interest to eschew suffering and to achieve security through knowledge of reality...”. Reason presents itself as the necessary and only truth. “Reason presumes to know what Nietzsche’s critical speculations show to be impossible to know” according to Sigad who writes that

⁵²Ibid p.94

⁵³Ibid p.95

⁵⁴Ibid p.128

⁵⁵Sigad p.111

“the philosophy of reason does not love wisdom and does not look for truth, but only achieves its self-advancing goals.” ⁵⁶

“Nietzsche attacks reason for failing to be free,” wrote Sigad. The lack of freedom is said to result from reason’s role in psychological service. Sigad assures that Nietzsche was not attacking free thinking, but was asking whether thinking (reasoning) is open to reality or closed within itself. Sigad continues ⁵⁷

But does not Nietzsche claim that every act in life is necessarily selfish and arbitrary? How is it then that reason should be rejected for simply fulfilling the necessary demands of its own nature?

I think it should be clear that Nietzsche criticizes reason, not on account of its being selfish per se, but because this particular form of life is not critical, nor does it seek truth, in contradistinction to all pretense...Reason is in particular faulted for pretensions to the effect that it can attain total knowledge of reality.

Faith in the supremacy of human reasoning ability is difficult to sustain before its withering condemnation by Nietzsche in *Joyful Wisdom*. ⁵⁸ Through time, the intellect while accommodating species survival has produced nothing but error. Nietzsche wrote that “nothing... is older, stronger, more inexorable than...instinct -- because it is the essence of our race and herd.” ⁵⁹ Even the laws of nature upon which much human reasoning is predicated are decried. ⁶⁰ “There are only necessities,” Nietzsche warned. No one commands, no one obeys and no one transgresses.

⁵⁶Sigad p.111

⁵⁷Ibid p.112

⁵⁸*Joyful Wisdom* p.152

⁵⁹Ibid p.31

⁶⁰Ibid p.152

To his own question “where has logic originated in men’s heads?” Nietzsche concludes that it was not on a foundation of truth that logical thinking organized, but instead on the extinction of those who reasoned otherwise.⁶¹

In itself every high degree of circumspection in conclusions, every sceptical inclination is a great danger to life. No living being might have been preserved unless the contrary inclination -- to affirm rather than suspend judgment to mistake and fabricate rather than wait, to assent rather than deny, to decide rather than be in the right -- had been cultivated with extraordinary assiduity. The course of logical thought and reasoning in our modern brain corresponds to a process and struggle of impulses, which singly and in themselves are all very illogical and unjust....⁶²

Life is no argument; error might be among the conditions of life.⁶³

Conclusion

Nietzsche’s preference for trust in the instincts of aristocrats (Athenian) over the rationality of the rabble is reflected in many of his works. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche actually claims that all that is good comes from instinct and that reasoning (logic) is to blame for many of society’s errors.

This rubric, “Nietzsche degrades rationality”, has been constructed to explain why Nietzsche is understood in so many different ways. His low regard for reason might partially explain why he contradicts himself so frequently. One wag wrote, “Pick any statement Nietzsche makes. If you can’t find a passage where he contradicts it, that is because you have not looked hard enough.”

⁶¹Ibid p.157

⁶²Ibid

⁶³Ibid p.164

This essay constitutes a search for logic abridgments and then assesses the effect these logic lapses will have on Nietzsche's E-R doctrine. To this purpose, rubric three is assigned.

CHAPTER 4

The Cosmological Mechanics of E-R

Zarathustra in “On the Vision and The Riddle” asks the dwarf, “must not whatever can walk have walked this lane before? Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed by before?”⁶⁴

Heidegger expands the E-R theme by explaining the cosmological circumstances that facilitate recurrence.⁶⁵ Time, writes Heidegger is infinite; things and their courses are finite. The conclusion reports that on the basis of these presuppositions, everything that can be done has been, “for in an infinite time the course of a finite world is necessarily already completed.” When the dwarf’s observation that everything moves in a circle, “all truth is curved; time itself is a circle,”⁶⁶ is applied to the infinity of time and finitude of things and of their courses, eternal recurrence of the same appears to follow. When Zarathustra’s question: “are not all things knotted together so firmly that this moment draws after it all that is to come,” is included, Nietzsche’s hypothesis is sufficiently outlined for rigorous examination. For this examination Bernd Magnus’ *Heidegger’s Metahistory of Philosophy* Chapter 2, titled “Cosmological and Logical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence” provides the structure.

Magnus analyzes recurrence from two vantage points, one empirical and the other axiological. This bifurcation, objective fact versus subjective attitude, can be

⁶⁴Kaufmann Tr. p.158

⁶⁵Heidegger Vol II p.43

⁶⁶ibid

addressed as descriptive and postulational ethical. Observing that the two points are not mutually exclusive, Magnus notes that if the cosmos consists of a finite number of energy configurations WTP which repeat, and if human actions are included in this configuration, the empirical and axiological distinction ends, leaving only the need to determine Nietzsche's point of view in each of his dealings with eternal recurrence. But, "references to the empirical requirements of the doctrine of eternal recurrence are found only in the *Nachlass*." ⁶⁷

It was in axiological, not cosmological terms, that Nietzsche published the doctrine. Nietzsche's intention is made clear in *Joyful Wisdom* 341. That some Nietzsche scholars treat the cosmological and axiological versions with equal emphasis is noted. ⁶⁸ Magnus professes, to avoid judgment as to whether Nietzsche intended the cosmological or the axiological version to play a vital role in the "clarification of the difficult notion," but makes a distinction between the axiological version Nietzsche chose to publish and the cosmological version which he chose to "withhold from publication." Since most of the cosmological argument depends on three *Nachlass* (XII 51-52-55) entries, the formulations merit exact recording. ⁶⁹

The amount of total energy is determined, not infinite. Let us beware of such conceptual aberrations! consequently, the number of states, changes, combinations and developments of this energy is incredibly large and practically unmeasurable, but nonetheless determined and not infinite. However, time, in which the totality exerts its energy, is infinite. That is, energy is eternally equal and eternally active. Up to this moment an infinity has passed, i.e., all possible developments must already have come to pass. Consequently, the present development must be a repetition and also the one which bore it and the one which will originate from it, and on forward and backward! Everything

⁶⁷Heidegger Vol II p.10

⁶⁸Ibid p.11

⁶⁹Ibid pp. 11.12

has come to pass in so far as the total configuration of all energy eternally recurs. Whether, quite aside from that, anything identical has come to pass is entirely indemonstrable. It would appear that the configuration structures attributes anew in the greatest detail, so that two different configurations cannot contain anything identical. Whether anything identical can exist within a configuration, for example two leaves -- I doubt it...

The external world of energies leads back to a simplest state of these energies; and also forward to a simplest state. Could not and must not both states be identical? Out of a system of fixed energies i.e., out of a measurable energy, no innumerability of state can arise. Only in the case of the false presupposition of an infinite space, in which energies evaporate as it were, is the last state an unproductive one, a dead one.

If an equilibrium of energy had ever been reached it would still exist. Thus, it has never occurred. The present state contradicts such an assumption. (However), if one assumes that a state has existed absolutely the same as the present one, this assumption would not be contradicted by the present state. But, among the infinite possibilities this must have been the case because an eternity has already passed until now...And, if the present state has already occurred, then also the one that bore it and the one which preceded it and so on, backward. From this there emerges the fact that it has already occurred a second and a third time; also, that it will occur a second and third time -- innumerable times, backward and forward. That is, all becoming moves in a fixed number of entirely identical states...Assuming an incredible number of cases, arriving accidentally at the identical condition is more probable than (arriving at) the absolutely never identical.

From the above entries, Magnus notes that Nietzsche assumed a) that space is finite, b) that energy is finite, and c) that time is infinite.⁷⁰ Nietzsche also held that no terminal state in the configuration of energy has ever been reached, "since space and energy are finite, it follows for Nietzsche that only a finite number of configurations unfold in an eternity of time" and that these must recur forever in the future exactly as they have in the past.

⁷⁰*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.13

A similar position is revealed by a brief excerpt from a lecture delivered May 5, 1937 by Professor C.G. Jung which defines “recurrence” and explains Nietzsche’s attitude toward the idea and recounts publication circumstances.

...the eternal return...is Nietzsche’s conception of immortality. You see, to him the number of possibilities in the universe was restricted. You do not find that in this book. Eternal recurrence is in a posthumous publication...consisting of fragments from Nietzsche’s archives. There, Nietzsche dealt with the idea that the number of possibilities in the universe was restricted and therefore it was unavoidable that in the course of infinite spaces of time, the same thing would return.⁷¹

Before I assess the cosmology of recurrence expressed or implied by Magnus and Jung, I will record an expression by Arthur C. Danto regarding logic and Nietzsche’s doctrine of recurrence.⁷² Danto in his book *Nietzsche As Philosopher* notes (as has been recorded above in various quotations) that Nietzsche based the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same on the fact that energy is finite, but then erroneously held that a finite number of word-states results. Danto writes, “It...does not follow from the fact that a sum is finite that there is an finitude of parts. The series 1 plus one-half, plus one quarter, plus one-eighth... sums to a finite number, 2. But there is not a finite number of members in the series.

Ivan Soll in “Reflections on Recurrence” supports Danto’s observation and presents Georg Simmel’s refutation of Nietzsche’s proof of eternal recurrence.

“Simmel argued that there could be a world composed of a finite number of elements

⁷¹J.J. Jarrett, Ed. pp.1043-4

⁷²A.C. Danto p.206

Magnus, in the chapter “Cosmological and Logical Dimensions”⁷⁶ concludes that in light of the cosmological/empirical problems associated with eternal return, the notes in which Nietzsche considers the actual functioning of recurrence were written in “the spirit of a thought experiment.. rather than as a sustained argument in support of a definite position.” Magnus asks,⁷⁷

Would recurrence as a cosmology mean that identical experience patterns recur eternally? If the number of possible configurations is finite, does this imply that logically possible as well as empirically actual configurations repeat themselves eternally?...Are the unrealized alternatives we have rejected in our lives and in history chosen eternally, since they constitute logically possible configurations?

Magnus gives this example to illustrate the purpose of his questions which he insists are not rhetorical. “If the river flows eternally to the sea, does the sea flow to the river in an equal eternity since it is a ‘possible’ configuration?”

Magnus and Jung make the distinction between the material Nietzsche undertook to publish and the material he did not publish. Magnus even identifies the unpublished cosmological material as that which Nietzsche “chose to withhold.” Jung disparages the cosmological argument for recurrence by simply reporting that this argument was pieced together from fragments of what could have been merely speculative testings of a notion. Some other Nietzsche scholars note little, if any, difference. The possibility that cosmological arguments for recurrence were too fragile for public scrutiny appears to be of greater significance to Magnus and Jung.

⁷⁶*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.21

⁷⁷*Ibid* p.22

Those scholars who believe it is not clear that Nietzsche intended to teach the eternal recurrence “as the temporal structure of the physical world,”⁷⁸ might find that Magnus voices their concern.⁷⁹ “If we begin...with the cosmology of eternal recurrence we are required to ask what axiological consequence, if any, it entails.” That human action is governed by eternal recurrence as a consequence of the cosmology troubles some Nietzsche scholars. This dichotomy is examined below.

Conclusion

The cosmological mechanics of E-R are outlined in detail by Danto, Heidegger, Jung, Kaufmann and Magnus in Chapter 4. While their assessments help explain how eternal recurrence might dictate the order of the universe, they also expose a flaw. The error lies in the supposition that only a finite number of configurations unfold in an eternity of time... that a finite number of world-states results. For every instant of time a finite number of universe configurations can occur. But, since those finite configurations can occur during every instant of time, various world-states will construct as long as time exists. Thus, as time is infinite, so are the configurations. Danto wrote that there is not a finite number in the series...”. It ...does not follow from the fact that a sum is finite that there is a finitude of parts.” With this I agree. Nietzsche’s belief that E-R is a physical cosmogonic necessity is impugned.

⁷⁸*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.22

⁷⁹*Ibid* p.23

CHAPTER 5

Cosmological Proofs Tested

It is with high hope I embark on Chapter 14, Vol. II of Heidegger's *Nietzsche* ⁸⁰ because Nietzsche's own proof of the doctrine of return is promised. We are told that the thought of eternal return of the same is in the realm of the question as to what being as a whole is.⁸¹

Nietzsche conjoins in 'one' both the fundamental determinations of being that emerge from the commencement of Western philosophy, to wit, being as becoming and being as permanence. That 'one' is his most essential thought -- the eternal return of the same.

That we set aside suspicions concerning humanism is advised by Heidegger. The uselessness of evidentiary force when the kind of required truth is not understood is also noted. Heidegger is establishing that proofs, for the existence of God for instance, can be constructed by means of faultless logic and yet prove nothing. There are many kinds of proofs,⁸² despite empiricists' belief to the contrary. According to Heidegger, to appreciate Nietzsche's proof, the thinking through of Nietzsche's thought is required.

Heidegger makes light of Nietzsche's effort to prove recurrence by the use of arguments from the natural sciences. Heidegger holds that any attempt to apply scientific standards of proof to metaphysical propositions must fail because correct questioning is made impossible.⁸³

⁸⁰Heidegger Vol. II p.106

⁸¹Ibid p.107

⁸²Ibid p.204

⁸³Ibid p.108

Heidegger wrote that eternal return of the same is the fundamental determination of the world totality which means that eternal return is the way in which being as a whole is. The general character of force⁸⁴ yields the finitude of the world and of its becoming because advance of cosmic occurrences into infinity is impossible, the world's becoming must turn back on itself. This is a permanent becoming -- eternally. Since becoming pulls along the entire past, every process of becoming must reproduce itself as the same. The character of world totality is of two aspects, becoming and being. On the basis of the finitude and permanence of becoming in infinite time, recurrence of the same is unavoidable.

Is Nietzsche's train of thought a proof at all in the usual sense? Heidegger asked, "is it a deduction based on a series of propositions?"...We conclude from statements concerning the constitution of beings as a whole to the mode of Being of these beings; we deduced the necessity of eternal return of the same for being as a whole.

Heidegger, comparing the 'logic' of science and the 'logic' of philosophy, concluded that because different things are dealt with, a totally different logic is required. In fact, it is suggested that thinking (in matters philosophical) is a substitute for the sort of logic used by science.⁸⁵ Heidegger states that each science deals with only one domain of beings considered under one aspect. Philosophy, because it deals with beings as a whole, which includes every other aspect, requires a different logic; a more 'original' logic Heidegger would say.

⁸⁴Heidegger Vol !! p.109

⁸⁵Ibid p.116

Heidegger appears to think that the various sciences possess individual and different types of 'logic'; that when the sciences are considered collectively must some totally different form of 'logic' be patronized. The tested and trusted logic employed by all the branches of science should be applied when beings as a whole are contemplated.⁸⁶ Heidegger uses Little Jack Horner's corner-sitting as a metaphor for perspectivalism which prevents man from seeing around his own corner. We, I suppose, are expected to believe that beyond that corner, around which we cannot see, are modes of nature, logic, truths and proofs unique by any human (empirical) measurement. The suggestion that strange things are constantly occurring just beyond our humanistic point of view does not earn nor deserve belief. That all occurrence beyond our scope of viewing is subject to the same laws of nature as the event we can see from our Horner-corner standpoint is more credible. It enjoys a quality known as consistency. Heidegger, upon assuming that whatever is going on beyond our humanistic point of view is unnatural, calls for new questions and answers concerning the essence of truth and the essence of human Dasein.⁸⁷ A unique thought of thoughts and a thinker of those thoughts performing his thinking in an extraordinary manner facilitate an escape from the need for logical, physical, and mathematical proofs. Heidegger (Chapter 17, Vol. II) tries to draw a distinction between Nietzsche's doctrine of return and religion. The task is complicated by Nietzsche's references to recurrence as a belief and also the qualities the doctrine and religions share in such abundance. Both extend demands for a confidence whose most appealing merit is the

⁸⁶Ibid p.116

⁸⁷Ibid p.118

utter absence of evidence. Techniques for persuading and retaining religious faith have been refined for centuries; techniques for trust in Nietzsche's doctrine are less time-tested, but seem no less sincere. In support of confidence in eternal recurrence of the same, Heidegger wrote, "the thinking of the most difficult thought is a believing."⁸⁸ "The power of thought of eternal return of the same is indicated by the claim that the thought 'fixates' by determining how the world essentially is -- as the neccessitous chaos of perpetual becoming."

Heidegger addresses Nietzsche's comment that the recurrence thought is not an actual thing at hand, but the proffering of a possibility. Nietzsche's notes contain a valuation of a possibility, "Even the thought of a possibility can shake us and transform us; it is not merely sensations or particular expectations that can do that. Note how effective the possibility of eternal damnation was!" Heidegger comments on Nietzsche's belief that possibilities are greater than actuality by noting the speculative way the thought of eternal return was presented in the *Joyful Wisdom*.⁸⁹

The heaviest burden -- what if a demon crept after thee into thy loneliest loneliness some day or night, and said to thee: "This is life, as thou livest it at present, and hast lived it, thou must live it once more, and also innumerable times; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence -- and similarly this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and similarly this moment, and I myself. The eternal sand-glass of existence will ever be turned once more, and thou with it, thou speck of dust!" Wouldst thou not throw thyself down and gnash thy teeth, and curse the demon who so spake? Or hast thou once experienced a tremendous moment in which thou wouldst answer him: Thou art a God, and never did I hear anything so divine! If that thought acquired power over thee as thou art, it would

⁸⁸Ibid p. 129

⁸⁹*Joyful Wisdom* 341 p.270

transform thee, and perhaps crush thee; the question with regard to all and everything: "Dost thou want this once more, and also for innumerable times?" would lie as the heaviest burden upon thy activity! Or how wouldst thou have to be favourably inclined to thyself and to life, so as to long for nothing more ardently than for this last eternal sanctioning and sealing?

A puzzling sequence of thoughts follows considerations of recurrence only as a possibility. The quotation, "only those who hold their existence to be capable of eternal repetition will remain."⁹⁰ invites questions. The questions raised by the suggestion that some people will remain and others will not are reminiscent of the exchange below between Professor Sterling and Bernd Magnus over whether a normative imperative can be acted upon by a person whose life's course is unchangeable. Nietzsche speaks of those who lack the energy or attunement to hold firm to the (thought) truth. Those who do not believe in it are the "fleeting ones." They are also the fleeing ones.⁹¹ The fleeing ones must finally die off, but for those who stand firm in this truth a new history begins. Nietzsche appears to state that individuals can think the thought of recurrence and support the truth of recurrence and be rewarded. But, what happens to those who die off? Will they not be also back eternally? What is the significance of remaining or not remaining? How can the fleeting and fleeing not flee?

That human attitudes can alter events is implied by the promise that those who hold their existence to be capable of eternal repetition will remain. It could be argued that those possessing the desired capability had it in all their lives and have no voluntary participation in the matter at all: those lacking the capability will never get it and there is nothing they can do about it. The latter argument is supported by the

⁹⁰Heidegger Vol II p.131

⁹¹Ibid p.

content of the last paragraph of Chapter 17 ⁹² which notes that all is indifferent, but the argument is upset by the supposition that faith in the thought could cause foundering and inaction. The recurrence doctrine insists that faith, or lack of faith in the thought, can create nothing other than what has happened. If there is to be a foundering, it is not a product of faith, but of fate, that is, if you believe the thought of thoughts.

From discussion guided by Heidegger regarding eternal recurrence as a possibility, I return to Magnus' essay "Eternal Recurrence"⁹³ to extract his speculation about recurrence as an allegory, not merely a myth, but a counter-myth. This counter-myth, "one which attempts to impress the quality of being upon becoming" is Nietzsche's antidote to hierarchical dualism. Magnus suggests⁹⁴ that the recurrence doctrine was not intended, by Nietzsche, as an empirical cosmology. The doctrine of eternal recurrence has too often been read as a groping and unsuccessful proof of a cyclical cosmology, writes Magnus. "...if eternal recurrence is thought to be a true physical theory, what happens to Nietzsche's perspectivism?" asks Magnus. How can we have a true theory of the physical universe from the pen of a man who tells us that there can be no such thing as a true theory of the universe?

Magnus enumerates the purposes of the recurrence doctrine as a counter-myth. It deifies what is transient, sanctifies the earthly against metaphysics, Christianity and nihilism, and combats hierarchical dualism. He then presents three interpretations of recurrence.

⁹²Ibid p. 132

⁹³Eternal Recurrence p. 371

⁹⁴Ibid

The first is cosmological which is respected as a true theory of the operation of the physical universe. "I believe it has the least to recommend it," he offers.

The second is normative. The analogy here is with Kant's canon of ethics. Kant had said: Act so that the principle of thy action may be universal law. Nietzsche said; Act as though your action were to be eternally repeated. Such a canon gives dignity to the moment.⁹⁵ Magnus writes,⁹⁶ under this interpretation we are admonished to behave as if recurrence were true. Magnus supposes that Professor Marvin Sterling endorses this view. (Their differences are discussed below. See Chapter 7.) Magnus examines some of the problems attached to the normative view. If recurrence were true, we would be expected to behave in this life as we had in all previous lives. It appears that no one can ever decide to believe or not to believe. Magnus equates having faith in recurrence as having faith in the truth of Christian redemption.⁹⁷ The difficulty with the normative interpretation is explained as follows:

The difficulty is with the formula "behave as if X is true" for a difficulty arises when we have good evidence for believing X to be false. Even though some religiously inclined persons have insisted that they believe X even when X is absurd, or silly, a few have been able to say, "I believe that X is true even though I believe that X is false." Generally, one ceases to behave as if X is true when one has good reasons to suspect X is false. Thus, for example, if I have good reason to be sceptical about the possibility of any coherent empirical doctrine of eternal recurrence, it would be difficult to ask me to behave as if it is true... to ask me to abandon rationality.

Magnus finds that the cosmological version and the normative version are too closely tied to the truth-value of the doctrine of eternal recurrence. The cosmological

⁹⁵John Neville Figgis p.98

⁹⁶Eternal Recurrence p.372

⁹⁷Ibid p.373

version argues that Nietzsche thought recurrence is true. The normative version argues that Nietzsche asks to behave as if it were true.

Magnus announces his preference for the third interpretation. The third interpretation is indifferent to truth-value of the doctrine: it represents the attitude toward life that is the opposite of decadence, decline of life, world-weariness.

Nietzsche wishes to portray the attitude of affirmation, of over-fullness, of ascending life, life as a celebration, life in celebration. The ecstatic attitude expressed by the doctrine is the attitude toward life expressed by the overman.

Magnus discussed the difference between Kant's categorical imperative and Nietzsche's existential imperative ⁹⁸ by noting that Kant's thrust is to subsume judgments about individual actions under rational, universal, moral law, while Nietzsche's imperative is individualistic: "My doctrine declares: the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will anyway...Eternity is at stake." ⁹⁹

The foregoing, which clearly acknowledges that we are all different in that we require different things from life, or think we do, is no more than Nietzsche's wishing for each of us whatever it is that will make us happy. (Hallmark Cards in the 20th. Century extend similar good wishes.) That ambiguous adjunct, "you will anyway" to which my essay has paid particular attention, contains still another interpretation. To test every possible meaning, the following speculation is offered. The assurance "you will anyway" could refer to the words 'must wish' in the clause "...you must wish to

⁹⁸Eternal Recurrence p.374

⁹⁹Ibid

live again". The argument would then claim that it is the required wishing and not re-living to which "you will anyway" refers. A bold essayist might go so far as to conflate the "must wish" interpretation with the claim, outlined above, that human beings (the sane ones) do live in the best way they possibly can, i.e. by always preferring pleasure to pain. A more salubrious life principle, one that by its wondrous grounding initiative invites repetition, is difficult to compose. Nietzsche's imperative, by wishing that each person gets his heart's desire, establishes a subtle pluralism with *amor fati*. The imperative expresses the hope that you got what you love, while *amor fati* expresses the hope that you love what you got. That there might be no difference, subtle or otherwise, between the normative and life affirmation is a thought-worthy hypothesis. It is apparent that those who love their lives can easily love their fate, be life-affirming, be overmen and cherish eternal recurrence. (Recurrence, posits Magnus,¹⁰⁰ is the being-in-the-world of an overman.)

Magnus continues his essay "Eternal Recurrence"¹⁰¹ by discussing eternal recurrence, not as a cosmological fact nor as a normative version that asks us to believe and behave as if it were true, but rather as a myth promoting the celebration and affirmation of life. Such celebration and affirmation of life are encouraged strongly in the problematical imperative, "the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will anyway." Clearly, Nietzsche is recommending, possibly among other things, that life be examined. Perhaps he had such aversion to the unexamined

¹⁰⁰Eternal Recurrence p.375

¹⁰¹Ibid

life that he thought it not worth living.¹⁰² To fulfill Nietzsche's imperative, examination of life is demanded. "To live in such a way" requires an evaluation of goals and the setting of life purposes. If the evaluation of life is not conducive to its repetition, a new direction should be charted. The rejoinder, "you will anyway" in this context, could be manipulated to mean that anyone making the effort to give his life an honest appraisal, and finding it appalling, would want to take corrective action. That a person, upon examination of his life, would strive to make conditions more terrible is unexpected, but not impossible. If it were impossible, Nietzsche's imperative would be without meaning. That the imperative really is meaningless is bound to attract some support both inside and outside the philosophy industry.

The high hope with which I launched this chapter is now less high. I continue seeking the promised proof of the doctrine of return, but with reduced expectation.

Conclusion

The collapse of the promised scientific proof of a metaphysical proposition should not be surprising, but it is disappointing. This rubric, instead of trumpeting Nietzsche's triumph, dwells on the "what if?" (*Joyful Wisdom* 341) question and the "as if" imperative.

The normative merit of E-R is still to be tested, but its cosmological pretension has been strongly challenged and critically questioned.

¹⁰²Plato's *Apology* 38a

CHAPTER 6

E-R as an Ethical Imperative

Bernd Magnus in *Heidegger's Metahistory of Philosophy*¹⁰³ presents a chapter titled Nietzsche's Existential Imperative. The imperative, written by Nietzsche in his notes, declares: the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will anyway. The normative instruction, however, creates a conflict. The doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same permits no change of any kind in the repetitions. Its events are only as they have been and will be no other way, in which case how can freedom of human choice be accommodated? When all things and occurrences are unchangeable, instruction on how life will be conducted is contradictory and without value.

Magnus' essay assumes normative as well as cosmological themes in Nietzsche instruction: live so as to wish to live again -- you will anyway. My essay will deal at length with cosmological interpretations, but before I analyze both Magnus' existential imperative study and his defense of his position by means of a second essay which is titled "Eternal Recurrence," a different reading of Nietzsche's comment will be explored. This first different reading has the merit of evading the contradiction of necessity and freedom.

What if, when Nietzsche wrote: "My doctrine declares; the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will anyway", he intended the segment "you will anyway" to apply, not to living again, but to the task? The

¹⁰³*Metahistory of Philosophy* pp. 22-25

meaning being suggested could acquire the different weight if the exhortation were:

“the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- and you will live in such a way that you will wish to live again.” In short, the note refers, not to living again, but instead to the selection of agreeable life choices; thus rendering the theme physiological/psychological rather than cosmological.

Socrates, probably not the first to notice, observed that men always select courses of conduct that they expect will bring advantage, pleasure or gratification rather than misery or pain. No one deliberately harms himself... does anyone like to be injured? asked Socrates in *The Apology*.¹⁰⁴ “To live in such a way that you have to wish to live again...” can mean that you will always make choices that you hope will increase your satisfaction with your life. This means that you cannot be persuaded to prefer choices that make your life painful and undeserving of repetition. That is what “...you will anyway” means, I suggest.

Psychiatrists and sociologists have recognized self-interest as a human trait that has remained unchanged for thousands of years. This trait is a means of measuring sanity. What could be more conducive to repeating lives than the possibly indestructible instinct that bases all options and choices in life upon one's own interests? Such a reading would blunt, perhaps demolish, the contradiction between necessity and freedom. The cosmological (necessary) and the existential (freedom) choices are discussed below.

¹⁰⁴Plato's *Apology* 25c

The psychological interpretation discussed above must have enjoyed some currency. This might explain, though not excuse, the translation which one sees occasionally of "*Meine Lehre sagt: so leben, dass du wünschen musst, wieder zu leben, ist die Aufgabe -- du wirst es jedenfalls!*" as "My doctrine declares: the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will LIVE AGAIN anyway." (The German text is from Bernd Magnus.¹⁰⁵ The augmented translation is from elsewhere.)

"Severe internal inconsistencies arise," observed Bernd Magnus in his essay titled "Nietzsche's existential Imperative."¹⁰⁶ He observed that the axiology of the exhortation: "My doctrine declares: the task is to live in a way that you must wish to live again," collides with the cosmology of eternal recurrence of the same. Magnus frames his essential question,

...if our lives as now experienced are not but repetitions of an infinity of lives identically endured, is there not a determinism implied in this doctrine, thus vitiating all imperatives? **If the eternal recurrence expresses a 'natural' law, how can it become an object of choice?** It would, on the surface, seem as meaningless to exhort one to live "as if" there were an eternal recurrence as exhorting one to live "as if" subjected to the law of gravity.

Wonderment about why Nietzsche urged that a program of conduct be undertaken during a lifetime in which nothing can be altered is expressed in various ways. Magnus observes: The assertion that life recurs eternally (empirically) is difficult to reconcile with the exhortation to live it as if it recurred eternally. Magnus speculates that this ambiguity has caused Nietzsche interpreters to minimize the

¹⁰⁵*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.28

¹⁰⁶*Ibid* pp. 29-55

conceptual value of the doctrine of eternal recurrence. “if everything returns...then the demand to live ‘as if’ would lose all meaning” said one interpreter expressing the ambiguity Magnus has identified.

Attempts to understand the doctrine of eternal recurrence analytically, that is, in terms of its internal consistency, expose the doctrine either as fundamentally defective, ambiguous or inconsistent. Magnus reiterates the problem: “The description of man and world as eternally recurring would appear irreconcilable with the exhortation to transform one’s life. If our lives are but repetitions of the self-same, backward and forward, our lives would seem to be determined in advance:”¹⁰⁷ pre-determined.

Why Magnus is tentative in the last sentence of the above quotation about the clarity of the contradiction invites rapt, yet cautious, attention. If a life is utterly scripted, that it is “determined” in advance, (pre-determined) would deserve more than an “it would seem” characterization. The quotation suggests that Magnus is mindful of Nietzsche’s denial to reason a position of exclusivity. From this perspective, wrote Magnus, reason is not viewed as a self-satisfying judge in the court of reality, but as a defendant on trial.

Magnus proposes that the doctrine of eternal recurrence be examined in its relation to metaphysics, Christianity and nihilism which, according to Nietzsche, are the themes which the doctrine either rejects or corrects, and are themes with which Zarathustra’s teachings collide. Magnus quotes *Twilight of the Idols* ¹⁰⁸ to explain how the ‘real world’ became a myth.

¹⁰⁷Ibid p.30

¹⁰⁸Holligndale pp.40-41

In Appendix D ¹⁰⁹ of the Hollingdale translation are illustrated Nietzsche's evaluation of metaphysics, Christianity and nihilism. These three themes are explained as follows: 1) Metaphysics: the science... which deals with the fundamental errors of mankind -- but as if they were fundamental truths; 2) Religion: no conception of God can be 'true' because no possibility exists of knowing anything about God, even whether he exists or not; 3) Nihilism: emerges when the highest values become devalued. The highest values are God, the Absolute, the timeless and eternal, truth and the apparent world.¹¹⁰

The conditions for which eternal return of the same is the remedy are more carefully examined. The need for correction in the concepts of metaphysics, religion and nihilism is defined below.

1) The madman from *Joyful Wisdom* is quoted by Magnus to explain the death of God and to illustrate nihilism or the devaluation of values.¹¹¹ Magnus writes ¹¹² that Nietzsche viewed metaphysics as Platonism with which he disagreed because of its other-worldliness. Identified as the dominant theme of Western thought, along with Christianity, Platonism was faulted for building up faith in the so-called 'real' world.

2) Christianity also lacked Nietzsche's favour for the same reason mentioned above. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ¹¹³ Nietzsche wrote his warning.

Behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth! I beseech you, my

¹⁰⁹Ibid p.192

¹¹⁰*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.34

¹¹¹Ibid p.35

¹¹²Ibid p.37

¹¹³Kaufmann Tr. p.13

brothers, remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! poison-mixers are they... Despisers of life are they... Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is the most dreadful thing, as it also is to esteem the entrails of the unknowable higher than the meaning of the earth.

3) Nihilism is the third undesirable condition for which eternal return of the same is an antidote. Nihilism is a concept possessed of so many features that no serious attempt at definition would be completely incorrect.

The meaning attached to the word by Magnus ¹¹⁴ is “not a nihilism which proclaims the meaninglessness of a blind and mute universe.” It is life without depth, this nihilism has an anesthetic essence: it is the unreflective nihilism exhibited daily...cheerfulness after the death of God. The highest value has been devalued; nihilism emerges. Eternal return requires no deity.¹¹⁵

Magnus, while careful to have it understood that Nietzsche was not influenced by Heraclitus or the Stoics in the sense that their theories were appropriated and adapted, charts a series of principles shared by the 19th. Century philosopher and the presocratics. These principles are: 1) monism, 2) determination, 3) dialectical unity of opposites through strife, 4) cyclicalism.¹¹⁶ Fire was Heraclitus’ underlying substance of the universe. “All things are exchanged for fire, and fire for all things,” is quoted by Heraclitus to express the sense of oneness and unity he purported. The cosmos is One in which natural changes are regular and harmonious, and this regularity is the Logos.¹¹⁷ Change is the ultimate reality. It is ironic that Nietzsche, who in the

¹¹⁴*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.36

¹¹⁵*Ibid*

¹¹⁶*Ibid* pp. 37-8

¹¹⁷*Ibid* p.40

company of Heraclitus felt most at home, should refute one of the ancient's famous illustrations: "You could not step twice in the same river: for other and yet other waters are ever flowing on." Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same insists that the very same river will be stepped into, as it has been stepped into, countless times.

Giving special attention to the questions of determinism and cyclicalism, Magnus recounts the similarities in the doctrine of eternal recurrence with the theories of the Stoics.¹¹⁸ The Stoic cosmology assumed "an unending series of world constructions and world destruction," with denial of human freedom being a consequence of such cosmology. Magnus quotes Frederick Copleston's profile of the Stoics' attitudes toward human freedom. What was to be called *amor fati* by Nietzsche in the 19th. century was known in antiquity.

Consistently with this belief the Stoics denied human freedom, or rather liberty which for them meant doing consciously, with assent, what one will do in any case... The reign of necessity the Stoics expressed under the concept of Fate, but Fate is not something different from God and universal reason, nor is it different from Providence which orders things for the best. Fate and Providence are but different aspects of God. But this cosmological determinism is modified by their insistence on interior freedom, in the sense of seeing it and welcoming it as expressions of God's will.

Magnus wonders if Nietzsche was aware that the Stoic philosophers recognized the difficulty in reconciling the cosmology¹¹⁹ of eternal recurrence with the axiology of eternal recurrence. The Stoics recognized the same incompatibilities that challenged Nietzsche commentators. Magnus appears to express doubt that Nietzsche could claim

¹¹⁸*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.42

¹¹⁹*Ibid* p.43

amor fati as his own exclusive insight, but ignore the cyclical, cosmological and axiological problem.

Magnus guesses that Nietzsche would have been acquainted with Stoic writings which studied the relationship between ‘necessity,’ ‘fate,’ ‘principle,’ and ‘auxiliary’ and proximate causes’. Alexander Aphrodisias had suggested a distinction between ‘fate’ and ‘necessity,’¹²⁰ by paraphrasing Aristotle.¹²¹

One may say also, the proposition “there will be a naval battle tomorrow” can be true, but cannot also be necessary. For the necessary is always true and this will no longer remain true after the battle occurs. But if this is not necessary, neither does the thing signified by the proposition, “there will be a battle”, occur of necessity. But if it is to be, though not of necessity (for that there will be a battle is true but not necessary) it is obviously possible, and if possible, the possible is not ruled out by the fact that everything occurs by fate.

Magnus observes that the preceding argument indicates that possibility or contingency is not ruled out by Stoic cosmological fatalism.

Before progressing further with my close study of Magnus’ essay, I will evaluate Aphrodisias’ comment regarding the example he presented to indicate that fate does not imply necessity because future events defy truth as correspondence. I find the comment flawed because the proposition “there will be a battle tomorrow” is stated out of necessity if ‘fate’ rules absolutely. That the statement was made is true, but this fact has no bearing on the merit of the prognostication. Whether a naval battle occurs should not be linked to the fact that the statement was made; moreover the statement having been uttered, and as is the case with the naval battle whether it did or did not

¹²⁰*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.44

¹²¹*The Basic Works of Aristotle* p.48

happen, is governed by 'fate' or necessity. If one believes in fatalism (termed by Nietzsche "Turkish Fatalism" and rejected) controlled by nature, everything happens with preceding causes, which is exactly what eternal recurrence of the same demands, there are no possibilities for other than the necessary. To opine otherwise, which Cicero¹²² tells us many do "...the other group holding that the voluntary motions of the soul occur without any influence of fate," is to suppose recurrence of only the vaguely similar or of the wildly dissimilar.

Regarding cyclicism, it appears that Aphrodisias, whether his conclusion is valid, did accurately express the Stoic position that human action exerts an influence on the determining forces of fate. In fact, control of the passions and appetites is the measure of human virtue. Control of reason by the passions is the sole evil. This is expressed by an ethical imperative in a deterministic and nature-controlled cosmology.¹²³ Magnus reports that while Nietzsche placed little value on the Stoic injunction that one should live according to nature because it would be impossible to do otherwise, his own doctrine of eternal return contained the same inoperable exhortation.¹²⁴ [I am not discussing whether a person can live other than according to nature, I am insisting that according to the doctrine of E-R, a person cannot live by other than precedence.] It is impossible to live other than you had lived, and will live, under the dictates of recurrence of the same.

¹²²*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.45

¹²³*Ibid* p.46

¹²⁴*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.47

Wrote Nietzsche:¹²⁵ “The eternal recurrence of all things excluded every goal and purpose: Let us beware of inserting goal, a striving, in this circularity...in reality, there is no goal”. Magnus¹²⁶ explains that despite Nietzsche’s rejection of goals there is an ethical-psychological context in his declaration: “...the task is to live in such a way that you must live again...” To read that as an ethical imperative would not be completely correct, warns Magnus, who compares Nietzsche’s instruction with the categorical imperative of Immanuel Kant who also provided an instruction for living. The difference is in the possibility that Kant’s advice can be ignored, while Nietzsche’s cannot as is made clear by Magnus.¹²⁷

If all things recur eternally in an identical pattern, backward and forward, then no set of volition can initiate a new cycle... If my future, as yet unknown to me, is governed by an inviolable decree merely repeating a life I have already lived innumerable times, then the immediate experience of my own freedom is, at bottom, an illusion. If the shock of eternal recurrence is to liberate our creative powers then the insistence upon the eternal recurrence of the same announces the vanity and futility of all striving. And yet, Nietzsche’s doctrine hovers within this tension spoken by Zarathustra, “I will return: -- not to a new life, or a better life or a similar: I shall return to this same and identical life...”

This interpretation is discussed below. This strict determinism, as opposed to libertarianism rather than fatalism, distinguishes Nietzsche not only from Kant, but from the Stoics and from Spinoza as well.¹²⁸

Magnus¹²⁹ examines the functions of memory in sequential existences. It is clear that Nietzsche believed that memory functioned as a durational element within a

¹²⁵Ibid p.50

¹²⁶Ibid p.51

¹²⁷Ibid p.52

¹²⁸*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.52

¹²⁹Ibid

recurrence. Memory does not transcend a specific cycle in this most radical of all determinisms. Thus, even though all conduct has been ordained by previous occurrences, each individual believes, albeit mistakenly, that choices of life options are original and free. The removal of memory from recurrence of lives opposes Plato's theory of Forms-recollections by which the soul shelters all its knowledge of the forms releasing it on demand known as education. Magnus writes, "still, the eternal recurrence intensifies the dynamics of choice because whatever I choose to be, that I shall be for infinite recurrences."

This construction would be better applicable if it had said: ...whatever I have been I will be for infinite recurrences; there are no choices.

"This strange and puzzling doctrine enjoins us to become what we are," wrote Magnus, to some extent quoting Nietzsche.

It admonishes us to stamp the character of eternity on our lives. It is the most extreme intensification and revaluation of the moment by eternalizing it...The eternalizing of the moment through eternal recurrence is the most extreme approximation of a world of becoming to that of being.

Nietzsche's highest and most hoped for achievement is embodied in *amor fati* defined as follows by Magnus.¹³⁰ *Amor fati* is the love of what is necessary. "Yes! I only want to love that which is necessary. Yes! *amor fati* may be my last love!" wrote Nietzsche. The transformation of the finite into the infinite, the moment into an eternity, freedom into necessity, and horror into love, is the "highest state which a

¹³⁰*Metahistory of Philosophy* p.54

philosopher can attain; to stand in a Dionysian relation to existence --my formula for it is *amor fati*".

Magnus concludes his chapter, Nietzsche's Existential Imperative¹³¹ with the paradox that permeates Nietzsche's recurrence doctrine. The doctrine is compared to a hammer in the hand of the most powerful. It is said to pose the question: Do you want this one more time and innumerable times more... as a doctrine strong enough to have the effect of breeding; strengthening the strong, paralyzing and breaking the world-weary?

How a question about the recurrence doctrine can strengthen or crush is unexplained. Contemplation on or knowledge of the doctrine can produce no strength or weakness that had not previously existed.

Conclusion

E-R as a cosmological necessity, or even a possibility, has been assessed above. This rubric examines E-R as an ethical imperative; what Magnus calls an existential imperative. The benefits that might be extracted from the exhortation "to live in such a way that you must wish to live again" are evaluated. Although the views of many contemporary philosophers regarding the social and individual advantages of the imperative are reported, this chapter is structured as a grounding for the question asked in the next rubric -- Does E-R of the same preclude alteration of attitudes?

¹³¹Ibid p.54

CHAPTER 7

Does E-R Preclude Alteration of Attitudes?

In order to deepen our understanding of Magnus' essay "Nietzsche's Existential Imperative", which I have analyzed at length, I add the weight of another essay by Bernd Magnus. In this essay "Eternal Recurrence", Magnus responds to a paper by Professor Marvin Sterling. Sterling, according to Magnus, makes statement and analysis requiring corrective guidance.

Magnus reiterates the conflict¹³² between normative, imperative, and cyclical cosmological interpretations of Nietzsche's declaration: "My doctrine declares: the task is to live in such a way that you must wish to live again -- you will anyway." The purpose of advice to live as if our lives recur eternally, if they do in fact recur eternally, is the question. How each person lives every moment cannot be altered. Life will be exactly as every moment was lived an infinite number of times previously. Magnus states, "I can only live now in such a way that I must wish to live again if in previous recurrences I lived in such a way that I must wish to live again." To live with a revised agenda in any incarnation would prevent recurrence of the same. In other words, you cannot even alter your attitude towards existence.

Magnus asks a question not addressed by Nietzsche. Did Nietzsche "assert that everything -- the (logically) possible as well as the historically actual, man nature -- moves in an eternal cycle which is identical at each point within the cosmic circle?"

¹³²Eternal Recurrence p.364

Professor Sterling argues¹³³ that the advice to live as if there were eternal recurrence would involve putting forth the greatest possible effort to maximize joy and minimize suffering in this life is efficacious. “Indeed, the fact of there truly being an eternal recurrence would be precisely what validated the issuance of the imperative, and justify our obeying it...would I not be wise to put forth every effort to maximize joy and minimize suffering... if there were eternal recurrence?” Sterling asked.

Magnus admits his failure to understand that line of argument. I make the same admission, for unless Nietzsche’s advice were available to guide humans from the beginning, if there were one, of the recurrence cycle, it could have no effect. It could not be applied subsequent to the original, if there were one, occurrence. Above, I had questioned whether the eternal recurrence is a closed ring or a spiral. If it is a spiral, Nietzsche’s advice might have been available before the die was originally or initially cast. On reflection, that humans appear actually to maximize their joy and minimize their pain might be paraded as proof that Nietzsche and his agreeable instructions were present at the beginning. Of course, this speculation is wrecked if eternal recurrence is a closed ring which would demand that Nietzsche’s imperative is a continuous, never beginning, never ending, incapable of amendment, never absent, intrinsic constituent of humanness *sine qua non*.

The possibility of Nietzsche’s imperative having a completely physiological, rather than cosmological, foundation has been explored above.

¹³³ Eternal Recurrence p.365

Magnus, after agreeing with Sterling's statement, "the fact of there truly being an eternal recurrence would be precisely what validated the issuance of the imperative and justifies our obeying it," observed that the very same fact also licenses our issuing a contrary finitistic imperative and justifies our disobedience. Magnus was critical of Sterling's comment. "If, in fact, all my experiences will be repeated eternally (and my voluntary choice is, at least to some degree instrumental in determining the character of my experiences)...". Magnus asks what sense can be made of the notion of "voluntary behaviour," given unfailing, identical recurrence? Magnus insists that a person can live as if there were an eternal recurrence if, and only if, that is the way he lived in all previous recurrences.

Magnus concludes his discussion of this theme with observations regarding personal identity as it is affected by E-R. He notes that "my" choices are mine regardless of whether they are viewed as past, present or future.¹³⁴ It becomes apparent that "my present self" has here the same relation to "my future self" as "my past self" has to "my present self". (This time observation is included with my suggestion that a film projector running a loop can create a useful recurrence metaphor.) Magnus touches on the reason recurrence is Zarathustra's abysmal thought.

So while I am at this very moment to experience the psychological weight which attaches to constructing my future self, how can I avoid the deflating psychological impact which follows from recognizing that my present self construction has already been constructed... Past, present, future all name the same event.

¹³⁴Eternal Recurrence p.367

Conclusion

This and the preceding chapters measure the efficacy of the instruction “to live in such a way that you must wish to live again...”. The instruction is found wanting, or at worst, inoperative as a function of E-R. The answer to the question, Does E-R preclude alteration of attitudes? is Yes! If recurrence of the same operates as Nietzsche instructs (*Joyful Wisdom* 341) “...but every pain and every joy and every thought and every sigh, and all the unspeakably small and great in thy life must come to thee again, and all in the same series and sequence...” then there is no possibility for a change of attitude toward existence.

Advice on how we should construct our lives is valueless for we are powerless to interject a thought or a resolve that was absent from all our previous existences. Thus is refuted the ethical imperative of E-R.

CHAPTER 8

Can E-R Overcome Nihilism

An examination of nihilism is a requirement for understanding the conflict between necessity and freedom. Nihilism appears as a condition requiring of remedy to Nietzsche although his doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same, in which every person is required to repeat the same life endlessly and may even be doomed to love it, could be seen as a doctrine of nihilism. Heidegger, in Vol II of *Nietzsche* ¹³⁵ constructs a question that reveals the nature of nihilism in Nietzsche's philosophy.

All being... is formed in the iron ring of the eternal recurrence of the identical collective state; whatever enters on the scene now or in the future is but a recurrence, unalterably predetermined and necessary.

But then what are action, planning, resolve -- in short "freedom" supposed to be? In the ring of necessity freedom is as superfluous as it is impossible.

The nihilism of endless lives in which nothing is fresh is expressed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in the section titled "The Convalescent".¹³⁶

...the fact that if everything recurs all decision and every effort and will to make things better is a matter of indifference; that if everything turns in a circle nothing is worth the trouble so that the teaching (of eternal recurrence of the same) is disgust and ultimately the negation of life.

Also examining Nihilism, Magnus, in his essay "Eternal Recurrence" opens his explanation of Nietzsche's position regarding nihilism by use of a medical analogy. Nietzsche's philosophy is said to offer his patient a diagnosis, prescription and

¹³⁵Heidegger Vol. II p.133

¹³⁶Kaufmann Tr. p.55

prognosis. Western humankind is a patient who is suffering passively from an unspecified disease (Nihilism). Nietzsche identifies the ailment as nihilism, but is disbelieved by the patient. Continuing the medical metaphor, Magnus lists the natural questions. What caused the soul-sickness that produces nihilism? What are the symptoms and how is the pestilence to be overcome? Nietzsche prescribes a transvaluation of values as a cure for nihilism. The prognosis, Magnus judges, is uncertain because of questions about the form of the medicine.

Magnus presents a twin thesis in appraising Nietzsche's approach to E-R as a cure.¹³⁷ First, the doctrine of eternal recurrence is a representation of the being-in-the-world of an overman who articulates a particular attitude toward life. "... the form of life is the opposite of decadence, decline of life, world-weariness. It is the affirmation of ascending life, life in and as a celebration." Second, the doctrine is a counter-myth, one which attempts to impress the quality of being upon becoming. Magnus writes that Nietzsche's counter-myth was intended to overcome kronophobia, defined as a traditional retreat from transient experience represented by metaphysics, Christianity and nihilism. Persisting in the medical metaphor, Magnus writes that passive nihilism or world-weariness is a contagion that spreads by means of a systematic hierarchical dualism. Systematic hierarchical dualism generally results in a devaluation of the highest values and manifests itself as a contempt for the earth and the earthly. Hierarchical dualism yearns for a different, and better, world.

¹³⁷Eternal Recurrence p.370

Nietzsche tells us that traditional Western philosophy, Christianity and morality nurtured nihilism, are examples of kronophobic hierarchical dualism. The patient recovers as he defies this world. The patient rejects doctrine of contempt for life and hostility toward this world. The doctrine of eternal return is seen as the antithesis of world-weariness. The patient no longer despises the world or pursues other-worldly goals. This appears to be an instruction to Christians that they should prefer eternal recurrence to Heaven.

The rescue of Western thinking from nihilism appears to have been a goal of Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal recurrence of the same. Harold Alderman in his book *Nietzsche's Gift*, wrote ¹³⁸

It becomes apparent that the test Nietzsche proposes with this doctrine of eternal recurrence is nothing other than that of the extent to which one has overcome nihilism and is capable of loving oneself and all things that are human and worldly.

In this part of my essay, I will attempt to defend a contention that nihilism is not overcome by the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same, but is instead nihilistic more intensely, and to a greater degree, than is Christianity, for instance. While Christianity, among some other major religions, is grounded on human freedom of choice with appropriate punishments and rewards attached, the recurrence doctrine, if true, would force a conduct into endless repetition of the same which humans are powerless to amend.

¹³⁸ Alderman p.84

As an antidote for the sense of hopeless futility that recurrence generates, *amor fati* is prescribed. *Amor fati*, however, is nothing more than spurious self-delusion. Love of one's fate as a remedy for the heavy mental depression by life's endless identical repeatings is, in the first place, unworkable in addition to being a fraudulent nostrum. The reason *amor fati* is unworkable has been applied above to other aspects of the doctrine of eternal return of the same. It is again a problem of the sequence of cause and effect. *Amor fati* cannot be embraced as a prevention of the nihilistic despair fostered by recurrence of the same before recurrence of the same has begun, nor can it be instituted after recurrence of the same has begun. To give this argument a different focus: there is no need for *amor fati* before eternal recurrence of the same, and no power to adopt it subsequently. Thus, *amor fati* is self-delusion. If the delusion known as *amor fati* is not already in all previous occurrences of the same, it can be in none. There are no epiphanies, no latter-day revelations allowable in Nietzsche's recurrence doctrine of the same.

Nietzsche recognized that "the experimental idea which was to overcome nihilism began to backfire", we are informed by George J. Stack in "Eternal Recurrence Again".¹³⁹ Stack observed that although Nietzsche repudiated pessimistic negations of life and the world, the affirming attitudes Nietzsche substituted were inadequate. Endless human life without individual choice or purpose "render the entire process absurd", wrote Stack¹⁴⁰ expressing an opinion he was by no means alone in entertaining.

¹³⁹Stack p. 234

¹⁴⁰Ibid p. 235

Arthur C. Danto, in his book *Nietzsche As Philosopher* ¹⁴¹ writes about the Nihilism of Emptiness from Buddhist or Hindu teaching which holds “that the world we live in and seem to know has no ultimate reality.” ¹⁴²

Reality... is but a painful dreaming from which all reasonable men would wish to escape if they knew the way and knew that their attachment was to nothingness. Life is without sense and point, there is a ceaseless alteration of birth and death again, the constantly turning wheel of existence going nowhere eternally; if we wish salvation it is salvation from life that we must seek.

I have been arguing that Nietzsche’s doctrine of recurrence fails to dispel the Nihilism of Emptiness, declarations to the contrary by other essayists notwithstanding. It is a pillar of my thesis. Danto observes that Nietzsche¹⁴³ was able to justify an affirming attitude toward life, a “new way to say ‘yes’,” but at what time this affirmation of life is made is left unstated. Affirmation of life, that is, an alteration of attitude by an individual, refutes the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. If an affirmative attitude were not present always, it can be present never; there can be no conversions nor in-transit “yes” saying. As interim adjustments to recurrences are represented as impossible, the affirmation of life or “yes” saying, before the starting of recurrence is held to be lacking in necessity.

Danto ¹⁴⁴ defines a second nihilistic condition which he calls the “Nihilism of Negativity” and characterizes as a rebellion of the young against established ideas. The position occupied, until the nineteenth century, by religion was being usurped by

¹⁴¹Danto p.28

¹⁴²Ibid

¹⁴³Danto p.29

¹⁴⁴Ibid

science, education, revolution, evolution, socialism, business enterprise, or, latterly, by sex. "The hope for a better dispensation in another life was replaced by a psychologically indistinguishable hope for a better dispensation in this one..."

It is evident ¹⁴⁵ that Nietzsche repudiated existing values. His assault on notions of the so-called "true" world, in contrast with which this world is completely disvalued, are numerous and explicit. *Twilight of the Idols* provides numerous examples.

Danto continues by observing that once man realizes that the alleged true world is a fabrication created in response to certain unfulfilled human needs, man achieves the final form of nihilism: a disbelief in any world alternative metaphysically preferable to this one. He believes that this world, unstructured and purposeless it may be, is the only world.

It is for this Nihilism of Negativity, anguish at the non-existence of a better, or even another, place that Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same is said to provide culmination.¹⁴⁶ This culmination takes the form of a "view that the world repeats itself infinitely and exactly, the same situation in which we now find ourselves having already occurred an infinite number of times." Danto reports that Nietzsche considered the recurrence doctrine as the ¹⁴⁷

...only genuine alternative to the view that the world has or can have a goal purpose or final state. If each state of the world (insofar as we may speak so of

¹⁴⁵Ibid p.32

¹⁴⁶Ibid p.34

¹⁴⁷Ibid

anything as structureless as he appears to claim the world to be) recurs infinitely, then no state can be a final state...

Another example of the various ways that Nietzsche has been understood is exposed in the application of *amor fati*. Heidegger, in *Nietzsche Vol II*¹⁴⁸ writes of *amor fati* as a defense against the nihilism of eternal recurrence of the same by which necessity excludes human beings from choices of conduct.

Danto in *Nietzsche As Philosopher*¹⁴⁹ develops the argument that Nietzsche constructed *amor fati*, loving one's fate, as a comfort for those who come to realize that the world is as hostile to human aspirations as they could imagine it to be.¹⁵⁰ "It is hostile, not because it... has goals of its own, but because it is utterly indifferent to what we either believe or hope."

The recognition and acceptance of this negative fact should not lead us to "a negation, a No, a will to nothingness." Rather, he felt it is an intoxicating fact to know that the world is devoid of form and meaning, encouraging if anything...

To be able to accept such a view, he thought, required considerable courage for it meant that we must abandon hopes and expectation that comforted men, through religion and philosophies, from the beginning. For the attitude he felt he could and we should adopt, he provided the formula of *amor fati*.

Danto writes that the love of fate prescribed by Nietzsche becomes more difficult to accept when it has to serve as a support for the loss of world form and meaning, in the personal sense, but carries the additional burden related to purposeless

¹⁴⁸Heidegger Vol II pp.206-7

¹⁴⁹Danto pp.33-4

¹⁵⁰Ibid p.33

repetitiveness of the universe in toto. From Nietzsche's unpublished works, Danto extracts the following formula for nihilism and despair.

Let us think this through in its most fearful form; existence, such as it is, without sense or goal, but inevitably recurrent without a finale in nothingness: the Eternal Recurrence.

That is the extremest form of nihilism: nothingness (meaninglessness) forever.

Heidegger (*Nietzsche Vol II*) ¹⁵¹ presents a less terrifying condition for which *amor fati* is a correction. Heidegger indicates that love of fate was formulated as an emotion counterpoise for the doctrine of eternal recurrence, not the discarding of hope for escape from rebirth.

Heidegger's suggestion of purpose appears better aligned with Nietzsche's intent when viewed in the light of what Nietzsche, himself, says in *Ecce Homo* (II 10.)

My formula for the greatness of a human being is *amor fati*; that one wants nothing to be different -- not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it... but love it...

When individuals accept the immutability of the future they, by self delusion or by other means, love their fate and see themselves as creators of their own futures.¹⁵² Each will say, "Thus I willed it."

Conclusion

E-R cannot overcome nihilism, and *amor fati*, concocted as a remedy, is a failure. They cannot calm the anxiety expressed in "The convalescent"... "if everything recurs all decision and every effort and will to make things better is a matter

¹⁵¹Heidegger Vol II pp.206-7

¹⁵²Ibid

of indifference... so that the teaching (of E-R) is disgust and ultimately the negation of life."

Heidegger asks, what is freedom supposed to be?..." ...in the ring of necessity, freedom is as superfluous as it is impossible."

Self-delusionary *amor fati* appears to be Nietzsche's best, though utterly inadequate, hope for defeat of nihilism.

CHAPTER 9

Is E-R a redemption for revenge?

Logic abridgments and inconsistencies in Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return of the same are not absent as has been illustrated in this essay. Among the more oblique clashes of the impossible are seen the co-ordination and relationship of eternal recurrence of the same to the concept of redemption.

Redemption on the one hand embodies a change of condition, i.e. to regain, to recover, to liberate, to free and to make payment to facilitate such altered circumstances. Eternal recurrence of the same, on the other hand, admits of no altered circumstances; there can be no cause and effect association of the two.

The point that I wish to argue arises from the presumption that eternal recurrence provides a redemption for revenge. (Heidegger's contrary position regarding the co-ordination of redemption and revenge will be examined later in this chapter.) Since revenge arises from eternal recurrence, as will be explained below, it is evident that eternal recurrence must be anticipated before revenge can be generated. It can be argued that the grounds for revenge exist only at the beginning of, or before, the first repeating and thus could become intrinsic and immutable to all recurrences. Such an argument, to which I do not subscribe, cannot release redemption from its impossible position unless it is supposed that redemption actually preceded the condition as its cause that provided its purpose (effect) and requirement. Since such a supposition is not expressed in either primary or secondary literature, I will assume that it is without merit and not attempt to validate it.

Redemption's impossible position is created by its inability to make the changes, implied by its definition, to a system of cosmology that denies the very possibility of change. In fact, the recurrence doctrine defies even the most minute change.

In order to understand how Nietzsche has been understood, the secondary literature regarding eternal return, revenge, and redemption will be examined, but that research will be prefaced with Nietzsche's own references to revenge and to its association with the doctrine of eternal return of the same.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the section titled "On the Tarantulas,"¹⁵³

Nietzsche characterized the preachers of equality as spiders whose poison "makes the soul whirl with revenge." These preachers of equality are said to be secretly vengeful, performing their harm under the name and guise of justice.¹⁵⁴ What justice means to them is that the world be filled with the storms of their revenge. "We shall wreak vengeance and abuse on all those whose equal we are not." Zarathustra speaks out against those preachers of equality who really are masking hope of applying tyrannical abusive mastery of others, usually in the name of justice and the words of virtue. In these, the impulse to punish is powerful.¹⁵⁵ Repressed envy is seen as the source of the frenzy of revenge precisely because "men are not equal."¹⁵⁶

Upon observing the vengeance among men, Zarathustra discloses, "for that man be delivered from revenge, that is for me the bridge to the highest hope and a rainbow

¹⁵³Kaufmann Tr. p.99

¹⁵⁴Ibid p.100

¹⁵⁵Kaufmann Tr. p.100

¹⁵⁶Ibid p.101

after long storms.” The tarantulas, which represent priests and other despisers of the world as well as the envious, want other-wise.¹⁵⁷ Justice means the filling of the world with our revenge storms, they say to each other.

Revenge is also said to be applied to the will against time. This application is explained in a section titled ¹⁵⁸ “On Redemption” in which the will’s secret melancholy arises from the will’s inability to will backwards: “he cannot break time and time’s covetousness; that is the will’s loneliest melancholy.” “That which was is the name of the stone he cannot move.” ¹⁵⁹ “...he wreaks vengeance on whatever does not feel wrath and displeasure as he does.” Thus the liberating will hurts all who can suffer and “he wreaks vengeance for his inability to go backwards.”

This, indeed this alone, is what revenge is: the will’s ill will against time and its “it was”.

Verily, great folly dwells in our will; and it has become a curse for everything human that this folly has acquired spirit.

The spirit of revenge, my friends, has so far been the subject of man’s best reflection; and where there was suffering, one always wanted punishment too. For punishment is what revenge calls itself.

The relationship of the spirit of revenge to equality, suffering, bridges, time, redemption and mankind’s best reflection is dealt with extensively by Heidegger in *Who Is Nietzsche’s Zarathustra?* and by Wolfgang Muller-Lauter in an essay titled “The Spirit of Revenge and the Eternal Recurrence.” The two Nietzsche scholars agree

¹⁵⁷Ibid pp. 99-100

¹⁵⁸Ibid p. 139

¹⁵⁹Ibid p. 140

that revenge is something to which redemption is the specific solution. The immutable past, according to the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same, will be the future also. It is this obstacle that the will cannot budge.

Time, as passing away, is repulsive; the will suffers on account of it...¹⁶⁰ then wills its own passing, and in so doing, wills that everything in the world be worthy of passing away, which is a nihilistic state. If it is a matter of rescuing the earth as earth, then the spirit of revenge will have to vanish beforehand.¹⁶¹ Thus, for Zarathustra, redemption from revenge is transition from ill will toward time to will that represents being in the eternal recurrence of the same.¹⁶²

The preceding paragraphs of this chapter have identified two conditions that precipitate the spirit of revenge. Those are envy by the inferior man, and the will's ill will toward time and its "It was," the latter being the most significant in Heidegger's discussions of relationships between eternal recurrence and redemption. The offending "it was" or transiency, "it will be" as future, and "it is now" or present, are linked to vengeance and then to the eternal recurrence which provides redemption.¹⁶³

Nietzsche's position on this union, interdependence and sequence of revenge, eternal recurrence and redemption is clearly stated by Heidegger.¹⁶⁴

For Nietzsche the redemption from revenge is redemption from the repulsive, from defiance and degradation of the will...Redemption releases the ill will from its "No" and frees it for a "Yes". What does "yes" affirm? Precisely what the ill will of a vengeful spirit renounced: time, transiency...

¹⁶⁰Heidegger Vol II p.224

¹⁶¹Ibid

¹⁶²Ibid p.226

¹⁶³Heidegger Vol. II pp.224-6

¹⁶⁴Ibid

Redemption from revenge is transition from ill will toward time to the will that represents being in the eternal return of the same.

To put it another way: only when the Being of beings represents itself to man as eternal recurrence of the same can man cross over the bridge and, redeemed from the spirit of revenge, be the one in transition, the overman.

It is clear that Nietzsche considers the advent of the overman to be dependent on the defeat of the spirit of revenge. The agent of that defeat is redemption made possible by eternal recurrence. Thus E-R and overman are related.

While Heidegger does not fault Nietzsche's premise for the same reasons set out in the lead paragraphs of this chapter, he nevertheless refutes Nietzsche's linking of revenge and redemption.¹⁶⁵ "What is left for us to say if not this: Zarathustra's doctrine does not bring redemption from revenge?" asks Heidegger.¹⁶⁶

Muller-Lauter, in his essay "The Spirit of Revenge and the Eternal Recurrence,"¹⁶⁷ assesses the nature of Heidegger's disagreement with Nietzsche's revenge/redemption position. Muller-Lauter expresses his own view that Heidegger has been trying to serve two objectives in his consideration of the doctrine of recurrence and the overman. Heidegger is said to be trying to endorse Nietzsche's philosophy on the one hand, while exposing its inadequacy as regards the history of being on the other. Heidegger declares that Nietzsche cannot cross the frontier of metaphysics. Muller-Lauter writes that Heidegger "sees as a failure Nietzsche's effort to derive

¹⁶⁵Ibid pp.228-8

¹⁶⁶Ibid p.229

¹⁶⁷Muller-Lauter pp. 132-5

metaphysics from the spirit of revenge, while conceding that the idea of recurrence may possibly have a future.”

“Going along with” Nietzsche while trying to distance himself from him, Heidegger is said, by Muller-Lauter, to have made various arguments which emphasize the divergence between his own and Nietzsche’s understanding of revenge as considered metaphysically. Nietzsche has described all present thinking as being dualistically determined by the spirit of revenge. Heidegger claims that Nietzsche, himself, also falls victim to the spirit of revenge and that revenge has become the most essential part of what he, Nietzsche, wanted to overcome. Heidegger, however, tries (in vain) to sever the spirit of revenge from the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. Muller-Lauter writes ¹⁶⁸ that Heidegger leaves behind him what Nietzsche says about revenge as well as what Nietzsche understood by the doctrine of recurrence. Heidegger concluded that there is something unthought in Nietzsche’s most abysmal thought. This, and his thesis that Nietzsche was himself captivated by the spirit of revenge, Heidegger attempts to support.

One particular fragment from Nietzsche’s *Nachlass*, however, does not enjoy Heidegger’s endorsement, namely “that everything recurs in the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of Being: high point of meditation.” The disagreement centres on the constancy of Being in the union with becoming and Being -- being in the form of “It was” (becoming) as Being that returns again and again in

¹⁶⁸Ibid p.135

the abolition of its immovability.¹⁶⁹ It is this rigidity of Being that provoked the spirit of revenge.

“To impose upon becoming the character of Being -- that is the supreme will to power,” Heidegger acknowledges, then asks, “Is there not nonetheless still concealed in this imposition a will repugnant to the mere fact of passing away and therewith a highly spiritualized spirit of revenge?”

Muller-Lauter presents a series of responses ¹⁷⁰ to Heidegger’s question in which first, revenge is explained as arising from the intolerability of the actual “it was” that cannot be altered. Such revenge is not antipathy aroused toward passing away as such or transitoriness, but appears only when “foolishness of ill-temper acquired spirit which up to now has been mankind’s chief concern.”

The conclusion is reached by Heidegger ¹⁷¹ that Zarathustra’s doctrine of E-R does not bring about redemption from revenge. The process observed that the very thing that generates the spirit of revenge is time and its “it was” the obstacle that the will cannot budge.¹⁷² “Revenge is the will’s ill will toward time and that means toward passing away”, ¹⁷³ (transiency).

The supreme will to power, that is what is most vital in all life, comes to pass when transiency is represented by perpetual becoming in the eternal recurrence of the same, in this way being made stable and permanent...Such representing is a thinking which (as Nietzsche notes) stamps the character of Being on beings.

¹⁶⁹Muller-Lauter p.136

¹⁷⁰Ibid p.137

¹⁷¹Heidegger Vol.II p.229

¹⁷²Ibid p.224

¹⁷³Ibid p.228

such thinking takes becoming, to which perpetual collision and suffering belong, into its protection and custody.

Does such thinking overcome prior reflection, overcome the spirit of revenge?

Heidegger wonders, if there does not lie concealed ¹⁷⁴ in this very stamping a form of ill will against sheer transiency and thereby a highly spiritualized spirit of revenge? He concludes, eventually, that Zarathustra's doctrine does not bring redemption from revenge.

It appears that Heidegger has disrupted, albeit without satisfaction,¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche's attachments of revenge to redemption. Perhaps Heidegger and those who agree with him regarding that attachment, have merely failed to understand. Perhaps it was with plaintive foresight that Nietzsche asked: "Have I been understood?"

Carl Gustav Jung, through a series of lectures delivered between 1934 and 1939, provides insight into the spirit of revenge that is more familiar to human beings VIZ., envy. Jung, in lectures published in two volumes under the title *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* deals lightly, if at all, with vengeance aroused by transiency, (Heidegger's interpretation of "it was") and the will's ill will against time and its "It was." Whereas Heidegger and Muller-Lauter direct their evaluations and assessments of revenge and redemption toward metaphysical interpretation, Jung directs his interpretation of revenge and redemption toward the psychological. Jung analyzes *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in great detail, but does not undertake to tie together redemption from revenge with the doctrine of eternal recurrence nor does he argue

¹⁷⁴Ibid

¹⁷⁵Ibid p.229

against their inter-relationship as does Heidegger. Where Heidegger binds revenge to time, Jung features the contests between persons: the inferior man filled with envy and the superior man ever aware of threatening vengeful hostility.¹⁷⁶

Jung establishes the way in which he understands Nietzsche by exercising the poisonous tarantula metaphor in order to examine the spirit of revenge evident in inferior men. These are men who cloak their bitterness in professions of interest in the pursuits of justice and equality. From *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Jung quotes ¹⁷⁷ "Thus do I speak unto you in parable, ye who make the soul giddy, ye preachers of equality! Tarantulas are ye unto me, and secretly revengeful ones!"

Jung explains how hierarchical distinctions flourish.¹⁷⁸ The superior man recognizes the jealousy exuded by the inferior man and becomes anxious that his superiority might be destroyed. Jung argues that the superior man will always offend the inferior man and that the inferior man thinks vengeance. Nietzsche had written in "On the Tarantulas", vengeance is in thy soul. Jung writes: the superior man projects the inferior man into a preacher of equality and lectures him as follows: ¹⁷⁹

Therefore do I tear at your web, that your range may lure you out of your den of lies, and that your revenge may leap forth from behind your word "justice."

Because for a man to be redeemed from revenge -- that is for me the bridge to the highest hope, and a rainbow after long storms.

¹⁷⁶C.G. Jung Vol.II p.1091

¹⁷⁷Ibid p.1090

¹⁷⁸Ibid p.1091

¹⁷⁹Ibid

Jung does warn about the destructive effect the spirit of revenge has on the personalities of individuals.¹⁸⁰

If you despise somebody, for instance, or are hostile and attack somebody, you identify with it and develop resentment naturally, and that is the spirit of revenge. That shadow you have reviled tries to get at you -- it comes back with a vengeance. Then it looks as if you had that feeling against all those who have that shadow, but as a matter of fact it is your own shadow which has the feeling of revenge, and at any time it will come back at you. You see how the shadow comes back at Nietzsche with a vengeance: That is the tragedy of Zarathustra.

Jung does not try to relate redemption to eternal recurrence, in fact he does not attempt to explain the cosmological need for redemption nor its function. Since it appears that envy-based revenge has not been removed from human nature, the efficacy of redemption falls under suspicion. How can the redeemed be distinguished from the unredeemed? Since the spirit of revenge is still present in the world, has redemption failed? Is there, perhaps, no bridge to the highest hope and no rainbow after long storms? The foregoing questions are presented to indicate the disquietude stirred by Jung's failure to explain the meaning, purpose or function of redemption in Nietzsche. Jung exhibits no intention of linking the spirit of revenge to the doctrine of eternal recurrence and thus sides with Heidegger who, as recorded above, also rejects the association.

Two notable scholars, Jung and Heidegger, find Nietzsche's association of revenge and eternal return of the same unacceptable.

¹⁸⁰Ibid p.1114

Conclusion

Is E-R redemption for revenge? Heidegger declares that it is not, a conclusion with which I raise no argument.

If E-R cannot be redemption for revenge, is not a cosmological possibility nor an effective ethical imperative nor a conquest of nihilism, what is its value?

As a thought experiment only, is its inestimable value.

CHAPTER 10

E-R of the Similar Refuted

A blatant contradiction is created by the ways in which Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence cosmology is understood. Some Nietzsche scholars believe the doctrine demands a return of the identically same as indicated in the section titled "On the Vision and the Riddle", wherein Zarathustra asks if the same spider, in the same moonlight, and he and the dwarf will again and again whisper about eternal things (Compare *Joyful Wisdom* 341). Those scholars understand Nietzsche to mean that the recurrence doctrine dictates the return of the self-same or identical life, neither a better, worse, nor different one. Such an understanding of Nietzsche's cosmology has, at least, the merit of popularity.

Other scholars, seeking also to understand, construct a contradiction to the popular interpretation. They give great importance to the message they extract from the section titled "Before Sunrise" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.¹⁸¹

This section is said to introduce an element of chance into the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. When an element of chance or 'hazard' or accident is permitted to enter the concept of recurrence of the same, the self-sameness or identity defined above is deflated to a routine continuation of nature's evolution. This means that eternal recurrence is the cosmological opportunity for unique events to occur, not recurring just as they had occurred previously.

¹⁸¹Kaufmann p. 160

While harbouring no intention of suggesting that because the 'chance' argument had not been expressed during the last century it must be frivolous, I will analyze this recent interpretation. This latter-day interpretation is drawn, principally, from "Before Sunrise".

Walter Kaufmann, in his translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, prefaced each of the four parts with a synopsis of each of the contained sections. In the preface to the Third Part, Kaufmann ¹⁸² refers to the effect the sky and climate have on human beings. "An ode to the sky," is Kaufmann's leading sentence of his comment about "Before Sunrise." Kaufmann concludes his synopsis as follows: "Another important theme in Nietzsche's thought: the praise of chance and a little reason as opposed to any divine purpose." This comment denies teleology or goal.

I suggest that it is reasonable to conclude that Kaufmann did not suspect Nietzsche of refuting the doctrine of self-same recurrence. If such a possibility had occurred to Kaufmann, a few volumes pondering the contradiction would probably have replaced his two-line assessment of Nietzsche's thought: "the praise of chance and a little reason as opposed to any divine purpose."

A careful study of Kaufmann's brief comment suggests that he had not extracted the 'chance' theory of recurrence. His use of the word 'chance' was to emphasize a non-teleological cosmogony, I propose.

¹⁸²Kaufmann p. 148

C.G. Jung in *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* Vol. II records a lecture he delivered June 22, 1938 ¹⁸³ in which the section "Before Sunrise" from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is examined in detail. For this close study of "Before Sunrise" the translation of The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche Volume Eleven by Oscar Levy ¹⁸⁴ will be used because it contains phrasing, spelling and punctuation used by Jung. My comparison of the Kaufmann translation with Levy's translation exposed no variation in the way Nietzsche has been understood.

Jung betrays no inkling that "Before Sunrise" can contain a proposal that recurrence is of only the similar instead of the self-same. The members of his class, whose comments are recorded, ask no questions indicating any doubt about the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the self-same.

Regarding the paragraphs of "Before Sunrise" that speak of "hazard," Jung says¹⁸⁵ that Nietzsche wished to make clear his views on the irrational, not orchestrated, nature of events and his views on the feeling of value of such a world.¹⁸⁶

A world that was exclusively rational would be absolutely divested of all feeling values, and so we could not share it, as we cannot share the life of a machine... a machine after all is a premeditated mechanical device. And we feel that we are not premeditated mechanical devices... we feel we... are an experiment of nature... of hazard, which means there is nothing rational about it: it has nothing to do with any device.

¹⁸³Jung p.1319

¹⁸⁴Levy Tr. pp.198-202

¹⁸⁵Jung p.1335

¹⁸⁶Ibid

Jung goes on to emphasize that by the word 'hazard' Nietzsche wished to make clear that things are not arranged. They happen by chance. Jung does not suggest, or fails to note, that this absence of a world management precludes eternal return of the same. Jung is merely agreeing with Nietzsche that there is no clock maker or string puller and no event control other than recurrence of the self-same.

Heidegger, like Jung, found no reason to suppose, or fails to note, that "Before Sunrise" contradicts the doctrine of eternal return of the same.

A patient analysis of the pertinent sentences in "Before Sunrise" might expose Nietzsche's intended message. In the third paragraph, Zarathustra uses the word 'wisdom' ¹⁸⁷ to represent a revelation that comes to him during sky-gazing at night. Part of the wisdom imparted during the sun's absence is conveyed by Zarathustra: "Happiness runneth after me. That is because I do not run after women. Happiness, however, is a woman."

In paragraphs three and five, 'wisdom' is equated with the attainment of the joy of being a blesser and a yea-sayer. In later paragraphs, the paragraphs said to refute eternal recurrence of the self-same, the word 'wisdom' should, and it does, retain similar purposes.

A little reason, to be sure, a germ of wisdom scattered from star to star -- this leaven is mixed in all things: for the sake of folly, wisdom is mixed in all things!¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷Levy p.198

¹⁸⁸Levy p.201

The paragraphs, can be looked upon as an accommodation to human propensity for supposing a purpose for the world. The word 'wisdom', if equivocation is to be avoided, will speak of the acquisition or attainment of insight only.

The paragraph, "a little wisdom is indeed possible: but this blessed security I found in all things, that they prefer to dance on the feet of chance," can be understood in a manner that poses no threat to the doctrine of recurrence of the self-same. This reference to dancing on the feet of chance has to do with what Zarathustra spoke about in the section "On the Vision and the Riddle."¹⁸⁹ Zarathustra told of his climb up a mountain with a dwarf to a ship's crew because where mariners can guess, they hate to deduce or reason. Zarathustra is restating in "Before Sunrise" what he expounded in "On the Vision and the Riddle", viz., that human beings are more likely to appeal to providence than to reason.

The next paragraph in "Before Sunrise" requires no subjectively selective focus. The message, I think, is clear.¹⁹⁰ There is, in all existence, no teleological reason or final cause.

The reference to divine dice and dice-players is just Nietzsche's poetic way of saying that cosmogony is without outside control other than E-R. What happens is as absent of manipulation as is tossed dice.

"In everything there is one thing impossible -- rationality!" said Zarathustra.¹⁹¹ This comment means that because there is no deity in control, nor

¹⁸⁹Kaufmann Tr. p.156

¹⁹⁰Levy p.201

¹⁹¹Ibid

purpose to the world, reasoning or rationality is powerless to discover a meaning to life. This position is strengthened by Zarathustra's claim that "I emancipated them from bondage under purpose... I taught that over them and through them, no 'eternal will' willeth." Those quotations affirm that, not only is there no goal for the world, there is no way to assign to it a purpose.

In this chapter, argument has been raised against an interpretation of a section in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that contradicts the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. Recurrence of the same as described in "The Convalescent," "I come again... not to a new life or a better life or a similar life: I come back eternally to this same, self-same life..." is, I think, the essential nature of recurrence as Nietzsche himself intended it to be understood.

To insist that a return of the similar (instead of return of the same) was Nietzsche's hypothesis strips distinction from his message. Nietzsche would not have advocated eternal recurrence of the similar because he disavowed transcendence. With no God, no life everlasting, no Heaven, no other world, and no immortal soul, extinction of the individual would be inescapable. For this problem, eternal recurrence of the similar would provide no solution.

The world always has, and always will, recycle the similar, the similar being anything within the laws of nature. There is nothing remarkable about such a claim although its contradiction provides exciting, though unlikely, possibilities.

The volume of comment and the explicit quality of his definitions of E-R of the same clearly overwhelm supposition that it was only recurrence of the similar that Nietzsche proposed.

Conclusion

Recurrence of the same has been refuted because it is unworkable. Recurrence of the similar has been refuted because it is unworthy.

CONCLUSION

The chapter titled “Pre-Socratics” is constructed so as to indicate that Nietzsche believed the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same to be a true and actual cosmogonic reality. The chapter also indicates that it was the recurrence of the self-same that distinguished, by contrast, Nietzsche’s theory from those of its predecessors. That Nietzsche’s recurrence doctrine recoined Becoming as Being is promulgated in Chapter 1, but is refuted throughout the rest of my essay. My thesis holds that the doctrine can change nothing because the doctrine is a myth and speculation which should not be elevated to an actuality or even a possibility.

Chapter 2, “Zarathustra’s Vision of E-R”, exposes a flaw in Nietzsche’s doctrine by observing that the phenomenology of recurrence was an hallucination, the recurrence of which would be nothing more than the repeating of a dream or the recurring of a nightmare. This chapter speculates on whether the symbol of recurrence is a closed ring or a perpendicular coil (as a spring is shaped). This question is entertained early in my essay because it will become the key to arguments that both ring and coil metaphors preclude the imperative as well as the mechanics of a recurrence doctrine.

Chapter 3, “Nietzsche degrades Rationality”, recounts the shortcomings of reasoning as observed by Nietzsche. This chapter examines Nietzsche’s reservations about logic as a means of extracting truth. No argument is mounted against the anti-logic pronouncements selected from Nietzsche’s published and unpublished writing:

the comments are presented to accommodate my position that Nietzsche abridged logic, which he held in low regard, without compunction.

These various selections are intended to suggest that the rationality standards upon which the doctrine of eternal return of the same is founded were, at best, extremely low. Such loose adherence to rationality exposes the doctrine to the charges expressed in my essay.

The E-R doctrine's cosmological merits are: 1) Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same is merely a thought experiment: 2) recurrence is truly only repetition of the similar: 3) the doctrine earns no claim on credibility.

The E-R doctrine's psychological consequences are: 1) Nietzsche says, be content; love your life, it is repeated forever. When this concept is repudiated, the following message survives: love your life. 2) Nietzsche's doctrine, intended to establish life everlasting, does nothing more than echo the ancient adage "know thyself".

Chapter 4, "The Cosmological Mechanics of E-R", deals with the confluence of time and energy and space (the former being infinite) that orders the structure of the universe.

Nietzsche's conclusions are criticized by various scholars who find fault with the ways time, energy and space are related to each other. That eternal recurrence of the same must necessarily flow from Nietzsche's co-ordinations is not supported.

Chapter 4 contains speculation about whether Nietzsche constructed his recurrence doctrine in axiological terms or in cosmological terms. Support for the position that the

doctrine is axiological centres on the material Nietzsche himself selected for publication.

Whether the actual functioning cosmology of eternal recurrence of the same was for Nietzsche merely a “thought experiment” not yet sufficiently developed for public scrutiny is questioned, but not answered.

In Chapter 5, “Cosmological Proof Tested”, tells how the proofs of eternal recurrence of the same are assessed. Heidegger claims that Nietzsche’s argument from the natural sciences provides no proof for the recurrence doctrine because scientific standards of proof for metaphysical propositions fail through inability to present correct questioning.

Of a matter discussed fully in my essay, Heidegger says that the logic of philosophy must be totally different from the logic of science because different things (Beings as a whole) are under contemplation. Heidegger actually suggests that thinking (in philosophical matters) is a substitute for the sort of logic employed by science.

(If different logics were used for different puzzles, Demiurge, Zeus or Genesis might be consulted with genuine hope that useful and correct solutions would emerge. Truth values would thus be enshrined in dogma and defended by faith.)

In this chapter, a quandary over how Nietzsche understood himself is raised by the philosopher’s position that those who do not support the truth of eternal recurrence of the same, viz., “the fleeting ones,” will die off. How such a dying off is possible in a cycling, unchanging cosmology remains without Nietzsche’s explanation. The rhetorical question: How can we have a true theory of the physical universe from the

pen of a man who tells us that there can be no such thing as a true theory of the universe? defines the quandary.

Three interpretations of eternal recurrence are discussed in Chapter 5. These are: 1) cosmological 2) normative 3) affirmation of life. These are presented by Magnus who prefers the third for various reasons among which is that it is not tied to truth value.

It appears that the eventual instruction from Nietzsche through his doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same is that we each examine our life.

“The Ethical Imperative,” Chapter 6, as an instruction for living, is dissected. Various ways of interpreting the so-called existential imperative are tested and found to be wanting. When interpretations that do not offend nature (non-miraculous) are applied, they fail to meet the purpose Nietzsche appears to have intended his doctrine to serve.

Chapter 7, “Does E-R of the Same Preclude Alteration of Attitudes?” argument is inspected in Chapter 7. Two Nietzsche scholars, Magnus and Sterling, debate the conflict between normative imperative and cyclical cosmological interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory.

Magnus, with whose position my essay aligns, expresses the reason no imperative should be applied to the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same. If *amor fati* were not fully operating in the first occurrence it can be in none, and there is no reason for it to be in the first occurrence. The significance of the closed ring as contrasted with the coil structure (Chapter 2) is revealed in such arguments. The

closed ring cannot admit any consequential attitudes such as *amor fati*. The coil, whether the ends are joined, also cannot admit of any consequential conditions.

Chapter 8, “Can E-R overcome Nihilism?”, tries to focus on the comment of despair expressed in the “The Convalescent” in which eternal return of the same is said to remove purpose from life. “...if everything turns in a circle nothing is worth the trouble...” states a requirement for acute nihilism. Since Nietzsche appears to have put eternal recurrence of the same forward as a means of avoiding nihilisms imposed by the world’s major religions, this chapter speaks of his failure to do so. The chapter also assesses the way in which Nietzsche seeks to overcome the nihilism of eternal identical cycles of human life. His solution is *amor fati* by which individuals overlook the endless unchanging repetitions of their existences by loving their fate. Nietzsche calls this loving of fate an affirmation of life that progresses into belief that whatever happens to the individuals happens because the individuals willed it that way. My essay follows the thoughts of Nietzsche scholars who suggest that *amor fati* is merely a self-deluding mind game providing no sufficient defense against nihilism.

Chapter 9, “Is E-R a Redemption for Revenge?”, concerns the association, if any, of eternal recurrence of the same and revenge.

An uneasiness among humans that inspires envy or fear and moves individuals and groups (“preachers of equality”) to avenge their inferior status is not being contested in my essay, but is merely recorded.

The suggestion that the doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same can, in some way, calm the spirit of revenge arising from time as its “It was,” the obstacle the will

cannot budge, is not embraced. The spirit of revenge against time is said to be linked to the attempted uniting of Becoming with Being. The linking is not peaceful.

Disagreement centres on the constancy of Being in the union with Becoming and also on the rigidity of Being that is said to provoke the spirit of revenge. "It was" is both past and future and cannot be altered.

Heidegger concludes that Zarathustra's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same does not bring redemption from revenge. To this conclusion I raise no objection.

Chapter 10, "E-R of the Similar Refuted," undertakes to refute one particular interpretation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence.

A certain understanding of "Before Sunrise" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* has encouraged a belief that elements of fortune or chance could shift recurrence of the same to recurrence of the similar. Such a reading is contradicted in my essay. As support for my contradiction, alternative understandings of the readings are suggested.

The thesis theme and thesis title invite expectation that an answer will be formulated. So, what has been "the effect of logic abridgment, contradictions and inconsistencies on Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence of the same"?

The answer is: invalidation.

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