

Eternity Without a Paradigm Shift (or Stuck in a Loop)

Stephen

The author would like to take this opportunity to inform any and all person(s) who may be reading this paper that the thoughts, views, sentiments, and philosophies expressed herein are not meant to represent any views whatsoever that the author may hold concerning religion, philosophy, legal systems, etc., but is purely a discussion on what could conceivably be imagined by some groups of people to be the true state of things in this world. Once again, the author does not hold these views to be his actual beliefs. Thank you.

“Weatherby, I need you to develop a safe, reliable, politically correct, and cost-effective alternative to prisons and capital punishment by next Tuesday.” Studying his employee across his majestic oak desk, Sir Biggumish removed a cigar from his mouth and slowly raised a glass of champagne to his lips with a meaty hand.

Weatherby twirled his handlebar mustache thoughtfully for a moment before replying. “Five million dollars.”

Biggumish barely kept from choking into his wineglass. “You ask much of me, Weatherby. If I did not know better, I would think you presumptuous.” He paused for a moment, squinting at Weatherby through narrowed eyes.

“Done.”

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Weatherby paced in his study, thinking aloud while a tape recorder ran.

“. . . but if what they surmise is true, then the expansion following the Big Bang will eventually conclude in a Big Crunch, all matter eventually squeezing into a tiny ball of critically dense matter. And, if that is true, there is no reason why *another* Big Bang would not happen . . . the universe would once again expand outward as it had before, and everything would be the same as the last time, and it would again crunch, and the cycle would continue for eternity . . .”

“But, if indeed everything was as it was before, then would not we all live once more, and *live* once more, going through the same motions of our life, our everyday happenings, our daily routines and decisions, and would our *entire life* not be *exactly the same as before*?”

At this point, Weatherby paused in his pacing, agitated in spirit and thinking over the finer points of the business deal he had undertaken. He started pacing again.

“Of course, this whole idea could never be proven, by the very nature of the thing, and, on the whole, the knowledge of the whole thing is purely philosophical and of no real use

to anybody. But if I could make Biggumish believe that the process could be somehow controlled, in order to punish a wrongdoer . . . and it would require no physical work.”

Weatherby stopped pacing, his mind made up. He crossed the room, turned off the tape recorder, and sat down. He began to write.

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Biggumish finished the last page of the report, leaned back in his chair, and took a long drag on his cigar. Exhaling slowly, through the cloud of smoke, he asked Weatherby,

“And you think it could be done?”

“Yes, of course. The whole thing *is*, if I might say, *extremely* cost-effective, safe, reliable, and, I dare say, *should* be politically correct. And all you would have to do would be to pronounce their sentence, and they would break.” Weatherby snapped his fingers smartly. “Just like that.”

Biggumish sat for a long moment, shrouded in a cloud of smoke, and Weatherby could see the gears turning in his head.

“Well, if you say so, dear Weatherby. If you are convinced that it would be quite effective, I trust you. I dare say, you have never failed me. You have been quite the loyal subject.” Biggumish smiled. “Oh, and the small matter of . . .” Biggumish snapped his fingers, and a butler appeared with a briefcase in hand.

“Here is the usual ten percent of your pay in the here-and-now. You will find that the rest of the sum has been placed in your account, as per the normal.” Biggumish smiled contentedly. “Good day.”

Weatherby got up, took the briefcase, and left. He never came back.

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Nate knew that it was only a matter of time before they caught up with him.

Considering that he had robbed a bank, shot a man, stolen the man’s car, and led the police in a high-speed car chase, he knew it was only a matter of time. So he settled down.

When the police found him, he was sitting in a recliner, beer in hand, watching his favorite episode of the Tellytubbies, and periodically clutching himself and rocking back and forth nervously. He didn’t put up a fight.

There was never much of a court case to settle. He pled guilty, and the usual sentence was carried out: revocation of eternal will.

As Nate trudged slowly along a bustling New York City street, he reflected sadly on the current state of affairs. It was true, if he had committed the crime twenty years ago, he probably would have faced life in prison, or even a death sentence. But those past methods were only arguable worse.

Not even aware of the crowds of passerby bustling around him, Nate wandered aimlessly through the city, still reeling from the consequences of his ill-begotten undertaking.

Revocation of Eternal Will—just the thinking of the phrase sent chills up and down his spine. Doomed—doomed to an eternity of reliving the same life over and over and over, as the stars grew cold and weary, collapsing back into a supercompact ball of matter, then leaping forth again with new strength and vitality, expanding to the limits of perception, then falling back in towards the true center of the universe.

Over and over and over.
Forever.

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Nate knew it was only a matter of time before they caught up with him.

Really, though, he expected no less—he had robbed a bank, shot a man, stolen his car, and led the police on a high-speed chase. And all for naught. He knew that he was too much of a coward to die in a spray of bullets, shuffling off this mortal coil, heading off towards he knew not what, but the scientists said was an endlessly repeating universe, where those doomed souls would relive their lives forever, over and over and over—always, it would turn out the same, and one would never know it, never *feel* it, as one was living it, because of the very inherent limitations of the system, because of man’s own inability to perceive his own past lives . . .

And Nate had no doubt that this would be the sentence handed down to him by the courts, really could think of no reason why they wouldn’t . . .

When they found him, Nate was sitting in his recliner at home, drinking a beer and watching his favorite episode of the Tellytubbies, and periodically clutching himself and rocking back and forth nervously. He didn’t put up a fight.

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Nate knew it was only a matter of time before they caught up with him.

Considering the fact that he had robbed a bank, shot a man, taken the man’s car, and led police on a high-speed chase, he expected no less. Nate did not hate the law, he knew they were doing their jobs, and he did not resent them for it. Besides, the world was probably a better place without people like him around to muddy it up.

But Nate shivered, chilled to the bone when he thought about the punishment that was waiting for him once they took him to court. It would all be straight out of the book, no nonsense, no petty lawyers middling around with inconsequential matters. They would punish him, they would doom him to the cold, inescapable, and inconsolable Revocation of Eternal Will. And he would be doomed to live out the same life every time the universe collapsed and started again, and it would be the same forever, over and over and over and over and over . . .

“Hey! He cheated us out of five million dollars!”

Sir William Charles Henry Biggumish IV shouted these words angrily, as understanding dawned upon his mind:

His ancestors had been tricked!

All this time, the knowledge of this treachery was right at their fingertips—all this time it had been here, and all they had needed to do was pick up a copy of an interesting little book called K-PAX, written by an author long dead, written years and years ago, and they would have realized how they and their fathers had been cheated out of five million dollars by a stunted slime of an employee named Weatherby.

The vaunted Revocation of Eternal Will was all a sham—if the scientists were understood fully, then *all* people were subject to the said Will. It was not a thing that was to be *conferred* on someone, but a condition that existed for all people. And not a single scientist, philosopher, or other person had stepped forward in nearly a century to point out the error of the system. How *stupid* mankind could sometimes be!

Biggumish IV angrily dialed a phone number, and shouted into the receiver, “Get me my lawyer!”

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