

Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence (Eternal Return) In Relation To Lucretius

Post by "Cassius" of June 23, 2026 at 1:20 PM

Nietzsche is all over the board at various phases of his life but I find this to be consistently stated by every commentator I have seen, so I think it is correct:

Its purpose is to test your life-affirmation;

In other words, it is a test for your appreciation of whether you really find your life desirable, in that if you do you will want the opportunity to live life as long and energetically as possible.

Or as Epicurus says, you will find that *life is desirable*. There is nothing to harm us in being dead, but unless we are in some unusual situation where life is not worth living (which Epicurus says would be the characteristic of a very small man - who has many reasons for ending his life) then the focus is on the fact that death holds no pleasure - nothing positive - for us either.

Quote

[126] But the many at one moment shun death as the greatest of evils, at another (yearn for it) as a respite from the (evils) in life. (But the wise man neither seeks to escape life) nor fears the cessation of life, for neither does life offend him nor does the absence of life seem to be any evil. And just as with food he does not seek simply the larger share and nothing else, but rather the most pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest period of time, but the most pleasant.

And he who counsels the young man to live well, but the old man to make a good end, is foolish, not merely because of the desirability of life, but also because it is the same training which teaches to live well and to die well. Yet much worse still is the man who says it is good not to be born but *'once born make haste to pass the gates of Death'*.

[127] For if he says this from conviction why does he not pass away out of life? For it is open to him to do so, if he had firmly made up his mind to this. But if he speaks in jest, his words are idle among men who cannot receive them.

Vatican Saying 38: "He is of very small account for whom there are many good reasons for ending his life."