

# Looking for the Lazy Argument Candidates (1)

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**Abstract:** The Lazy Argument, as it is preserved in historical testimonies, is not logically conclusive. In this form, it appears to have been proposed in favor of *part-time fatalism* (including *past time fatalism*). The argument assumes that free will assumption is unacceptable from the standpoint of the logical fatalists but plausible for some of the non-universal or part-time fatalists. There are indications that the layout of argument is not genuine, but taken over from a Megarian source and later transformed. The genuine form of the argument seems to be given in different form and far closer to logical fatalism and whose purpose is not to defend laziness. If the historical argument has to lead to the logically satisfactory solution, some additional assumptions and its additional tuning are needed.

**Keywords:** the Lazy Argument, logical fatalism, historical reconstruction, Cicero, Chrysippus, Diodorus, Megarians.

## 1 Introduction

There are two kinds or classes of Lazy Argument variants (LA – the argument is sometimes called the Idle Argument or the Argument from Inactivity). The first belongs to its ancient form while the second, common in modern formulations, imitates some but not all the features of the ancient one. Both kinds are similar insofar as they use apparently common logical principles and also insofar as they intend to reach the same fatalistic conclusion. But, even when presented with the same

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basic kernel, or almost the same, there are many differences between them. The main reason is that there are not any unique, standard or fixed *sources* that could serve as sufficiently solid bases for all further historical interpretations.

Many authors today defend or deny the conclusion of this historical argument without bearing in mind the substantial proprieties of the argument and its historical dimension. According to contemporary approaches, crucial to the argument is its logical schema and motivation to support outcomes of fatalism on logical grounds (some contemporary debates on modern variants are reflected in Buller 1995 and Berčić 2000). But it is neither the case that its logical schema is convincingly transparent and could be interpreted in some unique way, nor that the conception of fatalism laid in its background is universally acceptable for all conflicting sides included in the debate. Differences in interpretations are not only in approaches to the argument and in the way of its reconstructing, but also have their source in insufficient consensus about the question of its intended purpose: what is the intended aim of argument? So, it is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of questions, “What is the correct solution of LA?” and “What are the proposed solutions given by those involved in the debate?”

The argument is frequently discussed as “the standard argument” for fatalism<sup>2</sup> and also used in debates on free will and determinism (especially logical determinism), theological fatalism, etc. However, in this text we will not try to give any rival solution to LA but rather to reflect on some of the historical and philosophical kinds of fatalistic hypotheses that cannot be neglected and that could be of relevance in further approaches to LA and, moreover, that could be helpful in additional tuning of its possible solutions.

There are lots of ancient views on fatalism and not all of them are connected to idleness, which can be found in the conclusion of the argument. We think that LA had its origin in a *wider cluster of ancient arguments* based on the principle of bivalence. Most of these (if not all of them, as it seems) had a common source in the Megarian *cuisine*, probably in the circle around Diodorus. Besides the similarity in the sources, interpretations and elements of their logical structures, there are obvious differences too, since these arguments were used for differ-

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<sup>2</sup> However, it is possible to find several *different* formulations of the so-called ‘standard’ argument in modern literature.

ent purposes in philosophical debates and in confrontations between schools.

## 2 Sources

Several historical sources of LA – and some similar arguments – are known. A pioneering form of the argument can be found in the text of Aristotle.

These and others like them are the absurdities that follow if it is necessary for every affirmation and negation (either about universals spoken of universally or about particulars) that one of the opposites be true and the other false, and that nothing of what happens is as chance has it, but everything is and happens of necessity. So there would be no need to deliberate or to take trouble, thinking that if we do this, this will happen, but if we do not, it will not. (Arist. *de int.* 18b26-33)

This is the oldest form of LA. Aristotle and his commentators frequently used to say that we do not deliberate about what is necessary (*cf. ib.* 19a7-8; *cf. Alexander, in de fato* xvi.186.30 *ff.*; *cf. Ammonius, in de int.* 148,32 *ff.*). In other words: if every statement is true today, it would appear that nothing anyone can do will alter this since everything is decided in advance. If fatalism is a plausible conception, there is no place for free will or for being troubled over what will be or about what we could do or could have done. The argument results in *idleness* or *futility*. Aristotle's example shows almost the same way of reasoning and the same result of idleness as in LA. He criticizes this conception as inadequate and invalid. According to him, the argument fails because bivalence is not tenable for future tense propositions. Since (a future oriented) fatalism is ungrounded and this conception fails, we are (contrary to argument) able to make decisions and act freely and, what follows, we are able to retain a concept of responsibility.

Probably the most commented upon and popular form of the argument among ancient as well as contemporary philosophers is presented by Cicero (*fat.*, xii, 28-29). There are, for some reason, two versions of it:

- A) There is a certain argument which is called the "Lazy Argument" by the philosophers; if we obeyed this we would do nothing at all in life. For they argue as follows:
  - a) "If it is fated for you to recover from this disease, then you will recover, whether you call in a doctor or not;

- b) similarly, if it is fated for you not to recover from this disease, then you will not recover, whether you call in a doctor or not.
- c) But one or the other is fated;
- d) so, there is no point in calling in a doctor."

This is Cicero's basic form of LA (and for the first time it is named the 'lazy' argument, *ignava ratio*). According to him, the argument has the same proprieties whether we use the term "fate" or whether we invoke the terms "necessity" and "truth".

B) This kind of argument is rightly named lazy and idle, since by the same argument all activity will be removed from life. For one can change the argument so as not to bring in the name of "fate" and still maintain the same position, as follows:

- a) 'If this has been true from eternity, that "You will recover from this disease," then you will recover, whether you call in a doctor or not; and similarly,
- b) if this has been false from eternity, "You will recover from this disease," then you will not recover, whether you call in a doctor or not'; and the rest follows.

The phrase 'the rest' in Cicero's text refers to sentences c) and d) from the A-version – *i.e.* the disjunctive proposition ('one or the other is true from eternity') plus the conclusion ('there is no point in calling in a doctor'). In the B-version of Cicero's text, the term 'fate' is now omitted or substituted with the term 'truth', incorporated into a temporal context ('true from eternity').

Cicero's formulation of both arguments, side by side, seems intended to show two things:

- 1) that the argument's conclusion would be the same for *events* as well as for *propositions*, and
- 2) that the argument has the same outcome whether we use in its premises the term 'fate' or whether we have in mind simple 'truth' ('truth from eternity' or 'necessity').

Cicero, as our source, does not give us an explicit sense of a disjunctive sentence. The interpretation of the source can be only estimated because the 'one or the other' option could be read in several ways: *i.e.* 'true from eternity'; simply 'true'; 'necessary'; 'fated' in advance; or 'fated' in respect to all antecedent activities. As it seems, the argument is never just an argument corresponding to the problems of fatalism alone but also about the wider principally logical and metaphysical

questions concerning (among other things) truth, time and causality. Cicero discusses the argument in the wider debate covering Chrysippus' answer in confrontation with the Megarians, the Academics and Epicurus. It seems that the argument is taken over from some Stoics' source, perhaps from Chrysippus or Posidonius.

The argument at the first sight is deficient. Cicero's exposition and conclusion is also not completely compatible with what the argument is claiming. In A) he concludes that the argument is named *ignava ratio* "since by the same argument *all activity will be removed from life.*" This conclusion does not correspond to the character of the argument, since in the argument all that is said about fate corresponds to the complementary pair 'to be recovered/to be not-recovered'. According to this, like in Aristotle's version, it is *not fated* that *our side activities* are governed by fate. Further, if one can choose between two excluding options, this would be in conflict with Cicero's claim that *all activity will be removed from life.* In his version, just the predicted outcome is fated though not the activity *to decide* between two options and *to do* one of them. *We have options* to choose freely between two appropriate activities (to call in a doctor or not), even without a corresponding impact on the fated outcome.

There are more ways to interpret this argument so as to see why it is uneven. One solution is to say that the argument is simply unsuccessfully formed and thus fails. It corresponds to the opinions of both Cicero and Origen (*Cels.* 2. 20.) – the argument is a sophism and captious. The opinion could probably be taken over from some common Stoics' source, more precisely, as Diogenianus said, from 'the second Chrysippus book *On fate*' (*apud Euseb. praep. ev.* 6.8.25).

### 3 Sophism and parallel argument

Let us look for a moment at what the sophism is and what the parallel argument is. Historical comments, including that of Cicero, usually used to list this argument among sophisms. Ammonius presents this *type of argument* as an *aporia* (*in de int.* 131,20). What did ancient commentators have in mind when they marked LA as a sophism? What is the sophism? Bobzien (1998, 193) thinks that, in a sophism, there must be some bug in inference. But what kind of bug it is? In his *Topics*, Aristotle wrote the following on the sophism:

When the argument stated is a demonstration of something, but it is something irrelevant which has nothing to do with the conclusion, no inference will be drawn from it about the latter; if there appears to be such an inference, it will be *a sophism not a demonstration... a sophism is a contentious inference...* (162a15-16).

About character of such ‘inference bugs’, we could learn something further from Sextus (PH ii, 229 *ff.*). There, he gives us some of features of the sophism and also claims that the discipline of dialectic is a tool capable of unmasking the sophism’s apparent plausibility and thus of solving it. He said:

They (dialectics) say that a sophism is a plausible and treacherous argument leading one to accept the consequence which is

- a) either false, or
- b) similar to something false, or
- c) unclear, or
- d) in some other way unacceptable.

To these four types of sophism Sextus gives corresponding examples. In the chapter devoted exclusively to sophisms, however, he doesn’t forget to remind us that “other say about sophism other things” (*ibid.*, 235). We don’t know the real meaning of this last reflection – is it connected with his division or maybe some could defend the same argument as invalid or valid from other grounds, metaphysical or just logical. Several passages later (*ibid.*, 247), Sextus informs us why the study of sophisms was especially important for training in dialectics – because dialectics is the science concerned with “what is true, false and indifferent”. This discipline enables us to recognize and analyze an argument, in an appropriate and precise way, to identify it as either valid or invalid, or indifferent (in the cases of ambiguities and *insolubilia*). This training goal was a part of the educational tradition of the Stoics through the ages. We know that Chrysippus wrote twenty-one treatises (in forty-eight books) on sophisms and other puzzling arguments (Diog. Laert. vii, 195-198). Dialectics is not just about forming valid arguments but also about resolving bad arguments. We will leave aside some extensive details here, but what Sextus notices as necessary to be said about sophisms concerns the structure of an argument. An argument, in general, is ‘true’ if a true conclusion follows from true assumptions. He continues further by proceeding from a (true or untrue) argument (as a whole) in respect to the relations among (true or untrue) assump-

tions to the conclusion and to valid or invalid procedures of inference. The characterization of the sophism is not exhausted just by invoking the elemental mechanics of inference for the elements of an argument. He continues, saying that a sophism “leads not only to falsity but also to other absurdities” (*atopias*, Sextus, *ibid.*, 251; cf. iii, 240) and that such an argument could compel us to agree with something that is absurd. This is the moment where we are not able to find what is wrong with an argument only according to the mechanical procedure of analyzing it, for it seems to be well formed and “a plausible but treacherous argument”. To sum up, Sextus’ position is that if something in the argument is wrong then it should be considered a sophism and can be classified according to the division given above (even “others say other things”).

Origen and Cicero are our prime sources for the argument and it seems that they were following a common source, as Turnebus (1556) first made out. Barnes (1988) makes a successful comparison between these two sources. The text seems to be almost the same: either their source was the same or Origen translates Cicero’s text (which is highly improbable, since we have no testimonies indicating he knew Latin). Cicero does not tell us why the argument could be a sophism (*captio*). However, he tries, as it seems, to find an adequate Latin term for the Greek *sophisma* when he states that such arguments, like LA, are ‘generis captiones’. This meaning for the expression, in the sense of ‘sophism’, can be found in more places in Cicero (*ac.* 2. 15. 46; *div.* 2, 17, 41; *etc.*). Since the qualifications of both authors are almost the same, the more probable solution is that either the source was common for both authors or that it comes from the same line of sources (directly from Chrysippus himself as Barnes supposes). Cicero informs us that all these arguments of a ‘captious kind’ (so, there were more of them) *can be rejected in the same way*, by introducing the difference between *simple* and *co-fated* events. Actually, Cicero’s suggestion is very likely taken over from Chrysippus, whom he quotes in preceding lines. So, Cicero’s source probably contained some kind of answer to our question.

The clearest characterization of the sophism in Galen (*De animi cuiuslibet peccatorum dignotione et curatione* 3,14-17, p. 49sq. De Boer, *transl.* Harkins, 1963) largely corresponds to Sextus, not only in methodology, but also in his purpose, namely, to learn dialectical skills by solving sophisms. Sophisms “bear a similarity to arguments which are true” and for this reason they “are hardly recognizable to those who are inexperienced in dealing with arguments.”

Since... the solution lies in showing the similarity of the false argument to the true, one must first have understood the nature of arguments which are true. For if a man has become so experienced in true arguments that he accurately and quickly recognizes their nature, he would still have no difficulty in recognizing those which are false.

What is of interest for us is that Galen emphasizes that it is necessary to analyze two similar arguments as a pair or a parallel – *i.e.* a sophism beside a corresponding correct argument. But what is a parallel argument?

Origen also compares two arguments, LA and a parallel or mirror argument that contains the example of Laius and Oedipus as taken from Euripides (*Phoenissae*, 18-20). We know that Chrysippus' answer, given in a parallel argument, is this:

If it is decreed that you should beget children, you will beget them, whether you have intercourse with a woman or not. But if it is decreed that you should not beget children, you will not do so, whether you have intercourse with a woman or no. Now, certainly, it is decreed either that you should beget children or not; therefore it is in vain that you have intercourse with a woman. (*Cels.* 2. 20.)

Chrysippus' interpretation is, according to Cicero, that 'to have intercourse with a woman' is co-fated (*confatalia*) with 'to beget children'. This means that it is fated "both that Laius will sleep with his wife and that he will beget Oedipus by her" (*fat.* 30). In other words, the necessary condition cannot be omitted in capturing the outcome.

Origen as a source seems to be sometimes more informative than Cicero because he tries to explicitly develop the answer by using a classic Stoic device – rebuttal by the construction of "parallels" (comparison, *parabolé* (Sextus, M, IX 109; *cf.* 97, 134) *Cf.* Shofield 1983). The so-called "parallel argument" employs the same or very similar premises as the argument it counters (*ti antiparaballetai*), but aims to produce an absurd conclusion. Origen (*ibid.*) compares two lines of parallel arguments and tries to explicate why the parental argument is invalid:

For, as in the latter instance, intercourse with a woman is not employed in vain, seeing it is an utter impossibility for him who does not use it to beget children; so, in the former, if recovery from disease is to be accomplished by means of the healing art, of necessity the physician is summoned, and it is therefore false to say that 'in vain do you call in a physician'.



If Barnes is right about the authenticity of the Origen passage (as taken over from Chrysippus' source, where the case is analyzed as a sophism), then the parental part of the *parabolé* there is to be treated as a kind of sophism. In a parallel argument here – the pattern argument is a sophism while the other is a mirror argument given for the purpose of unmasking the first. The argument is a *sophism* as well as a part of a *parallel argument* at the same time. There is nothing conflicting in that claim. Moreover, the parallel argument could vividly indicate that the former argument is a sophism.

#### 4 Logic of the argument

The simplest logical form of the argument is given by Bozien (1998, 184, 186) and, at first glance, it seems uncontroversial and conclusive. It is given in the form of a *complex constructive dilemma*, an argument form familiar to the Stoics' favorable logical style.

- a) If A, then B.
- b) If C, then D.
- c) Either A or C.
- d) Therefore, either B or D.

The conclusion seems not to completely correspond to what Cicero said. The conclusion here has the disjunctive form "either it is fated that *p* or it is fated that not *p*" with the distribution of the predicate 'fated' taken from premises a) and b); it does not correspond with the proposed conclusion of LA in Cicero's text, reflecting idleness – (in A-version) that "there is no point in calling in a doctor" or (in B-version) "all activity will be removed from life". We can only agree with Bobzien (1998, 184) that it is necessary to add a *bridge premise* that relates futility in the conclusion with some of the premises if the argument, in its original form, is based on some non-explicit premise (or premises). Hence, we can conclude that either the argument *is not complete* or that the suggested *inference form is not proper* since, at this stage, it does not look like a validly inferred conclusion. If some bridge premise is missing, then we have to change strategy and analyze the argument as an *enthymeme*.

We don't know a principal logical structure of the argument that would correspond to the intention of its founder. Chrysippus could try to capture the argument by tools that were at the Stoics' disposal

and similar to the preferred style of the Stoics. This is probably what Bobzien had in mind. However, corrected and reformulated according to her conjecture, the argument still remains obviously defective.

Another remark on the form of inference proposed by Bobzien is that the form of the first two premises corresponds neither to the source text nor to the conclusion. According to the form of inference proposed by Bobzien, the conclusion would be: 'you will recover, whether you call in a doctor or not' or 'you will not recover, whether you call in a doctor or not'. However, it does not cover the intended futurity.

Third premise in Cicero's explicit A-version is also problematic. "One or the other is fated" could be read in two senses – either 'it is fated that  $P \vee \sim P$ ' or 'it is fated that  $P$  or it is fated that  $\sim P$ ', but it should be borne in mind that none of them have a strictly bivalent form as the Stoics accept, since variables A and C are taken not as an exclusively complementary atomic proposition, but as different and unfamiliar propositions ready to be used in a classic constructive dilemmatic argument.

Atomic propositions or rather sub-forms B and D of the first and second premises are taken without explicitly distinguishing the exclusive disjunction inserted and common to both of the sentences ('whether you call in a doctor or not'). Here also sub-forms B and D are taken as unfamiliar different expressions even though they contain mutually opposed same variables ('to be recovered' and 'to not be recovered').

The argument at first glance looks as if it is intended for the Stoics' complex constructive dilemma form of inference and it could, partly, be read Bobzien's way. However, if we more closely inspect Chrysippus' remarks about the argument given in Cicero and if we respect the context of the lines of the debate concerning the argument in *de fato*, this opinion seems to be less probable.

Let us go back to Chrysippus' comment. He criticizes sub-forms B and D of premises a) and b) as not valid since their antecedents have to represent adequate conditions corresponding with their consequents. *Co-fated* (or *con-joined*) things differ from *simple* fated things. A simple fated thing is also necessary but it represents the internal dispositions of a concrete being. For example, 'Socrates will die' is true because of Socrates' 'internal' dispositions, since he is human being and human beings are mortal. But in the sentence 'Socrates will die in the sea', to die in the sea is not an internal disposition of Socrates. He could potentially die in many ways. For this sentence to be true, Socrates has

to be joined with or connected to some external and also necessary antecedent circumstances, which make it possible for Socrates to die in the sea. The conditional sentence has to be formed with an antecedent condition that either recalls an internal or external necessary condition. Chrysippus' comment here is not against causal determination originally proposed by the argument but, as it seems, against futility. It is also in accordance with Origen's observation, though Diogenianus wishes to emphasize rather his alleged agent-determinism option (*apud*. Euseb. *Praep. ev.* 6.8.34-5).

Chrysippus' remark pushes us to the other side of LA arena. What is also interesting is that he neither criticizes the claim about fate or the laziness conclusion or the disjunctive antecedent in premises a) and b), nor does he criticize the disjunctive proposition in premise c). The central subject of his criticism is the nature of the conditional in premises a) and b), which he is not conceptually ready to accept. Commentators of LA agree that Chrysippus' solution is a successful criticism of LA (quoted in certain places by Cicero, Origen, Diogenianus; Seneca, *nat. quest.* ii, 37-38; Nemesius, XXXV, 51; Calcidius, *in Tim.* clxv. 203.15f.; Ammonius, *in de int.* 149,1-3). The idea is that fated outcomes need the fulfillment of necessary conditions. However, what would happen if we made some appropriate corrections according to Chrysippus' critics and use the result as a suggestion for correcting the argument? Let us try it.

Take the first premise. It would be (with or without the simple disjunctive assumption; it doesn't matter) 'if it is fated for you to recover from this disease, then you will recover, if you call in a doctor or if you take some medicine'. It is immediately clear that either of the co-fated conditions, even if necessary, is not strong enough to guarantee recovering in all possible cases. They could play the role of necessary conditions for recovering, but none of introduced conditions are sufficient for the recovering. In the same manner, let us bring in his other parallel example. 'To have intercourse with a woman' is not a sufficient condition for begetting a child. Commentators, together with Chrysippus, all of whom shared the same principles, somewhere missed this fact.

Against whom was Chrysippus' parallel argument proposed? Who will agree with its original form? Even though there are not many candidates, we can only conjecture. Let us inspect it in more detail. If we take a closer look at the premises, all of them could be interpreted as theorems. The idea to read premises a) and b) as theorems is not new

and we can find it in Dummett's modern version of fatalism argument (1978, 340). Both of these premises have the form of an extended version of the paradox of material implication. The third premise or c) looks also like the theorem and has many features in common with the law of the excluded middle. If this is so, the intention of the argument's originator is very close to the logical fatalism approach and to the purpose of proving fatalism on solely logical grounds. However, the conclusion of the argument has the same deficiency we mentioned above. It is not implied by the premises. These premises do not imply futility and in this form it is an obvious sophism.

If formulated in the sense of the paradox of material implication, two premises a) and b) would have approximately the following form: a)  $P \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow P)$  and b)  $\sim P \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow \sim P)$ . Moreover, these premises are prefixed in Cicero's A-version of the argument with 'to be fated' while in B-version 'to be true from eternity'. In A-version we have something like a)  $fP \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow P)$  and b)  $f\sim P \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow \sim P)$ . In Cicero's B-version, we obtain, if we apply as an immanent principle that 'true from eternity' could imply or includes 'necessity', these expressions: a)  $\Box P \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow P)$  and b)  $\Box \sim P \rightarrow ((Q \vee \sim Q) \rightarrow \sim P)$ . The third premise is something very similar to the law of the excluded middle, but not the same, since it is prefixed with the predicate 'to be fated'. In A-version, it could be either  $f(P \vee \sim P)$  or  $fP \vee f\sim P$ . With the B-version of premise c), we can read by analogy either  $\Box(P \vee \sim P)$  or  $\Box P \vee \Box \sim P$ . The dilemma surrounding the assumption of premise c) could be solved by insight into expressions a) and b) and their prefixed antecedents, and, for this reason, would be more adequate to read the disjunction in sentence c) as a disjunction similar to that between the two antecedents from a) and b).

Premises a) and b) in both Cicero's versions have one common peculiarity. They claim that, if something is fated (or 'true from eternity'), it is yet in our power to do one of two mutually exclusive actions before the fated event takes place. It is a peculiar understanding of fatalism and not completely corresponding to the logical form of fatalism usually ascribed to LA. Idleness and futility in the conclusion is the third of the possible options one is able to choose in fatalism understood in this way. Even if it does not correspond with logical fatalism, there are some fatalistic conceptions that will bring both sentences together with the so-called futility option.

Now we will take a tour across different conceptions of fatalism and try to indicate and understand possible candidates who would accept such an interpretation of fatalism. As regards metaphysical principles, there are some historical candidates who would agree with such a reading of sentences a) and b) and with the conclusion of LA.

## 5 Many faces of fatalism

Our intention is to show two things: what could be principally assumed as a fatalistic conception in the Lazy Argument and for whom was the fatalistic argument intended? For this purpose, it would initially be necessary to establish what fatalism is or could be, especially the kind assumed in LA. For easier reading, logical illustrations will be given in the simplest possible forms.

### 5.1 Modern interpretations of fatalism

It is hard to say that a certain formulation of fatalism is the standard or classic. It would be easy to find many formulations and concepts. Some differences among them are subtle, some crude, some probably unimportant from a philosophical standpoint. But our motivation here is not to estimate the consistency of interpretations of fatalism but to point at some important features of these conceptions and to expose what seem to be their main characteristics applicable to LA.

It is not strange that fatalism is almost always contrasted with determinism, since between these two, from a historical standpoint, the demarcation line is not transparent in all cases, if there are any cases where it exists at all. The standard formulation of fatalism that can be found in the literature usually emphasizes *inevitability* with respect to the physical aspect of its interpretation as its main characteristic: if events are fated, then they are inevitable (and, as it seems, vice versa). However, such a poorly-equipped conception, with merely a notion of inevitability and nothing besides, doesn't tell us much. From this poor formulation of fatalism, we have no ground for the claim that events are inevitable or for how they could be so. This simple formulation gives us no further way to find any track toward the tenability of the claim. In this case, we could just take for granted that events are inevitable and nothing else. Moreover, this simple kind of fatalism tells us nothing about the inevitability of events that we are usually interested

in and widely talking about. For this task, we will need some additional points. However, anything added to the simplest formulation of fatalism, marked solely by inevitability, makes this conception more complicated. For if one is talking about the inevitability of future events, she is indirectly enrolled in many additional questions concerning its properties, for example: about her base for present knowledge about the future events; about the status of the future truth and the truth of predictions; about powers and conditions that make events inevitable; about the ability to govern or to anticipate future events; about representations of fatalism that are also connected with conditions that guarantee inevitability; and so on. As we will see later, not all forms or conceptions of fatalism are equal in the interpretation of inevitability. They differ significantly.

Let us take a closer look at the main differences between determinism and fatalism. Is there any difference between them and what this difference consists in? Let us repeat a known fact, that determinism, too, is not a unique conception and is usually connected with a bundle of properties: causal accessibility, laws or regularities (universality of some kind), necessity, antecedent causes, teleological pressure, forward knowledge, and so on. Sometimes it is connected with predictability but sometimes not – depending on the interpretation and the nature of causes. The simplest formulation of determinism is in the claim that everything has its cause or that everything that happens is determined by an antecedent cause. This formulation, supported by notions of cause and causality, is known as *causal determinism*. For a long time it was presented as a base for scientific knowledge.

In his classic text on the problem, in a chapter entitled *The Lawlessness of Fatalism*, Bunge (1959, 101-2) follows the above-noted poor formulation according to which the character of fatalism is in inevitability. He criticizes Emerson's attitude that "the book of Nature is the book of Fate" as an error, for fatalism is a non-causal principle that differs from causal determinism and scientific determinism by which "the book of nature" could be read or understood. In his attempt to formulate a conception of scientific determinism (both elastic enough to cover new forms of determination and strict enough to exclude unverifiable and irrational notions), he sees scientific determinism as something less ontologically obligated that could also cover statistical and other forms of determination. Unlike Emerson's, Bunge's characterization of fatalism is presented more as a dramatic scene than a serious and consistent

metaphysical conception. For him, fatalism is concerned with inevitability and in the background of this “class of doctrines” he sees a non-naturalistic belief in some supernatural and external power able to assure and to make things happen in this world, a power which pushes things toward their inevitable end. Bunge’s classic scene is based on some additional assumption concerning the character of such power. In contrast to scientific determinism, this power ruling Fate is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and indirectly governs things by principles beyond our ability to comprehend. In short, according to Bunge, fatalism is not causal and its inevitability is provided only by the romantic imagination of an unnatural or supernatural transcendent and indirect force of necessity. The fatalistic explanation is just a simulation of the explanatory process and very far from both the scientific and even the causal depiction of determination.

Wilson (1955, 70-2) interprets fatalism almost in Bunge’s sense, claiming a causal discontinuity version of fatalism. If the future is inevitable (and not antecedently dependent), then everything is prepared for ‘laziness’, and his opinion is that, in this version, “human effort, human wisdom, human skills, even human stupidity, have no causal continuity with the future. The same future will occur... no matter what we human beings know or don’t, seek or shun.” The difference between the two conceptions he sees in this manner: “the fatalist asserts a causal discontinuity between present actions and the future world, where the non-fatalistic determinist asserts causal continuity here as everywhere else.” In this interpretation of Wilson’s, the kind of fatalism that claims causal discontinuity and puts aside antecedent conditions conflicts with the given formulation of determinism. *Discontinuity fatalism* does not have much in common with (causal) determinism, neither could be implied by determinism.

Grünbaum, in a chapter entitled *The Fallacious Identification of Determinism with Fatalism* in his (1971, 302), shares some opinions of Bunge and Wilson when he says that “fatalism is the appallingly primitive prescientific doctrine that in every situation, regardless what we do, the outcome will be unaffected by our efforts”. Since determinism recalls antecedent conditions (and laws of nature) while fatalism claims just inevitability (without further recalling antecedents), it means that these two conceptions differ. However, if we accept these formulations as adequate, it does not mean that these two are mutually and necessarily excluding one another. According to him, if determinism is true,

fatalism has to be true, too. Fatalism can be seen as an outcome of determinism since determinism implies fatalism. But not vice versa: if everything is inevitable, it does not imply that everything that occurred has its antecedent condition fulfilled. But if everything is necessary, then it is also inevitable. These two conceptions are not equal, but strongly related and similar.

The position of S. Langer (1936, 474, 478) is not far from above. She conjoins fatalism and determinism when she contemplates William James' "The Dilemma of Determinism" and says that modern "scientific fatalism" (the notion we later meet in Bunge in a different sense) is "the assumption that there is a theoretically knowable collection of causes for any act" and that the doctrine of determinism, in its philosophic form, is "a modern version of belief in Fate." She assesses the ancient concept of inevitability projected in a modern derivation from the concepts of necessity, cause and the universality of law, and from the assumption that the future, like the past, is necessary and in the same sense inevitable. Everyone who knows the causes and universal laws could form and infer true sentence about the future. He could make an inference covering the future (inevitable) state of affairs. Langer decidedly denies that such knowledge is possible not just because personal acts are practically unpredictable (for it is impossible to collect such an immense complexity and variety of causes), but also because "all the causes of an act," before the act itself has taken place, form an "illegitimate totality," in the sense of Russell's and Whitehead's *Principia*. However, the logical ground for the character of the relation between determinism and fatalism seems to be still open according to Langer's observations.

We are mentioning just some of the many modern interpretations of the relation between two conceptions. However, these interpretations did not provide us with a more precise or a broader view of the problem. We could also have introduced other modern authors and formulations in this line of reasoning – they are numerous – but the impression will not be significantly different and, what is important for us, not much clearer. Fatalism is, for the above authors at any rate, a strange, impossible, inconsistent and undesirable doctrine, and we agree that, from today's standpoint, such non-continuous fatalism would be a completely eccentric theory. What these positions generally have in common is that determinism is connected with the notions of cause and causality (and generality), while fatalism is connected with the notion



of inevitability and, in some cases, with discontinuity and particularity. Moreover, since determinism and fatalism are frequently understood as (in the same strange way) similar and interwoven conceptions, the notion of inevitability could probably be understood – in some or another sense and in some cases and formulations – as accessible from the notion of necessity. This summary is certainly nothing more than just a sketch. Due to the conceptual mess (interweaving causality and uncaused circumstances, universality and particularity, and so on), we have to know that a precise formulation of the modern understanding of fatalism remains an open question.

Since we could find traces of the above mess in most of the modern interpretations of the Lazy Argument, we have decided to compile a crude registry of historical and ancient conceptions of fatalism and have tried to find some appropriate candidates for what the original defenders of the argument could have been maintaining in the debates. Also, if possible, we have tried to answer the question of who they were. We will not assess the metaphysical consistency of these conceptions, but only wish to select the best candidates that correspond to the historical and conceptual claims given in the argument. As it seems, nothing in the above ‘modern’ interpretations of fatalism is what we are trying to find. Besides, as it can be seen, let us say in advance, that the names of the conceptions and their contents do not always correspond to the same things. We will try to make it clearer when and if it is possible.

## 5.2 Fatalism as logical determinism

Jordan used to say (1963, 1) that “strict determinism” is the outcome of *the principle of bivalence*, with two additional assumptions: one of them is *the correspondence theory of truth* while the other is *the assumption of the timeless character of the truth*. Woleński recently (1996, 2) stated a similar formulation of this conception: “The view that *classical logic* implies *radical determinism* is called *logical determinism*.” He equates *radical determinism* with *fatalism*. When we add the *principle of causality* to the *principle of bivalence*, we obtain *radical determinism* (fatalism). Jordan and Woleński just echoed the words of Schlick (1931), Waismann (1956) and early Łukasiewicz (from his article “On determinism” (1970)). According to them, logical implicature could in some sense cover and express the principle of causation across the correspondence theory of truth.

Łukasiewicz also holds that *logical determinism* is a conception where logic reveals the ontological structure of reality. Actually, in many aspects, he interprets and repeats ancient conceptions. It is a common opinion that he did not make an additional terminological distinction between logical determinism and (logical) fatalism and, from that time on, these two terms seem to be marked in the literature as the same conception. Here, the logical notion of necessity fully corresponds to the fatalistic notion of fate and inevitability, while the notion of cause and the nature of causality could be interpreted (roughly speaking) through the notions of realized antecedent condition and implication. Łukasiewicz formulates this conception with the philosophy of the Stoics in mind as well as their theories of logic and physics. As it is known, he widely criticized this conception, from seemingly the same position as Aristotle, and later introduced three-valued logic systems as the result of his standpoint on the non-identity of the principle of bivalence and the principle of the excluded middle.

Taylor's (1962) 'standard' argument for fatalism is based on the same understanding of logical determinism that we find in the above authors plus something tacitly assumed by others, namely, the interpretation of the nature of time is substantially *symmetrical* in character. Such conceptions and the same starting assumptions also inspired most of the modern interpretations of the 'Lazy Argument' like Ryle, Dummett and Gould, and later Stalnaker, Shields, Irwin and some others. The most of them are dealing with the problem as opponents and critics of this conception and they do not always share all of the same assumptions in interpreting (logical) fatalism and logical determinism. However, almost all of them agree that 'strict' or 'radical' determinism (logical fatalism) is an idea that could be or tend to be proved solely or largely on logical grounds by appropriate application of logical principles.

Logical fatalism or determinism in this sense is not a conception that adequately corresponds to the two key premises of LA. Two sentences containing inserted disjunctions refer to the possibility of a free decision between two exclusive actions: 'either you will do this or you will not do that'. That is, there is an open possibility to do any of the two opportunities. Logical fatalism – if time is symmetrical and reduces all possible worlds to an actual one – will not allow this possibility. What is interesting here is that all ancient critics tolerate this possibility for decision and criticize other aspects of the argument. It is hard to suppose that no one saw this part of the argument as inconsistent – neither

the Stoics nor Cicero nor their commentators. There are no such traces in either the later Peripatetics' or the later Middle Platonists' and the Neo-Platonists' sources. For us, it only means that this possibility could have been tolerated intentionally if, in the background of the argument, there lies an assumption of some specific sort or an understanding of fatalism. If we take these assumptions from the ground of logical fatalism, then the argument is clearly inconsistent, for the key premises are stating something contradictory to the assumptions of radical or strict determinism, which excludes the possibility of behavior that could be covered or illustrated by a form of exclusive disjunction and the possibility to choose freely between two exclusive options. So we must go towards a part-time fatalism and this should be the subject of the subsequent section of our article.

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<sup>3</sup> Pagination of classical texts is quoted according to editions collected in *Thesaurus Lingua Graecae* and *Thesaurus Lingua Latinae*. Different editions are quoted inside brackets.

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