



# Strange Life of Ivan Osokin

*P.D. Ouspensky*

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## **Strange Life of Ivan Osokin** P.D. Ouspensky

A novel by P. D. Ouspensky that follows the unsuccessful struggle of Ivan Osokin to correct his mistakes when given a chance to relive his past. The novel serves as a narrative platform for Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence. The conclusion fully anticipates the Fourth Way Philosophy which typified Ouspensky's later works. In particular the final chapter's description of the shocking realization of the mechanical nature of existence, its consequences, and the possibility/responsibility of working in an esoteric school. The title derives the experience of Ivan Osokin living and then reliving his life again in exactly the same way but with prior knowledge of his past mistakes the second time. The title is an ironic commentary on this experience. When the protagonist realizes that he can recall having lived his life before, he decides to try to change it. But he discovers that because human choices tend to be mechanical, changing the outcome of one's actions is extremely difficult. He realizes that without help breaking his mechanical behavior, he may be doomed to repeat the same mistakes forever. Harold Ramis, who directed *Groundhog Day*, found the meaning of *Strange Life of Ivan Osokin* similar to the existential dilemma of *Groundhog Day*. Both works imply that a sober acceptance of personal accountability is necessary in order to effect an increase in the degree of freedom of the individual. Ramis' opinion is printed in the Lindisfarne Books' 2004 edition of *Strange Life of Ivan Osokin*.

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