

Hegel's Time!

This special issue of *Problemi International* arose from Hegel's celebration year 2020, for the largest part from the conference *Hegel's 250th Anniversary: Too Late?*, which took place in Ljubljana in September 2020. The conference was initiated and organized by International Hegelian Association *Aufhebung*, Goethe-Institut in Ljubljana and The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana.

In the difficult circumstances of the global health crisis, accompanied by outbursts of social unrest and local catastrophes such as the Beirut explosion, conducting an international conference face-to-face, with all the participants physically present in one place, turned out to be a risky undertaking bordering on the impossible. However, despite all the uncertainties, special permits, reduced capacities, and obstacles never heard of before, a powerful gathering and an intense exchange of critical thought finally happened in Ljubljana: live and in person! Because a group event such as a conference felt almost like a miracle in the middle of the pandemic, the celebration of Hegel's anniversary somewhat imperceptibly blended with a celebration of the mere possibility to critically question the established procedures of truth physically gathered in a public space.

The 250th anniversary of Hegel's birth marks the time of a beginning and the time of an end—not because it is an anniversary but because, with Hegel, we can think the relation between the beginning and the end, which is crucial especially in present times. Here, the question does not pertain to this or that end (of history, grand narratives, ideology, art, or philosophy) but

rather to the radical end and our relationship to it, that is, our *too-lateness*. Today, as the world is ever more obviously and unstopably sliding towards its “ultimate end,” and as it seems that, in relation to the speed of our pandemic-ridden reality, thought is increasingly falling behind, the question arises: What now? Is it actually too late?

The logic of expectation, which runs through apocalyptic scenarios, intrudes into this mechanism: we expect the end knowing that we are already too late. In this sense, every beginning is already too late. On the other hand, the logic of delay is also at work here: we are late in order to delay the end. Here, every beginning is too early. Both the logic of expectation (the end of the world is nearing, so nothing can be done anyway) and the logic of delay (this will be done later, so the end will also come later) have a “passivizing and anti-political” effect. But are there also any positive aspects of acting and thinking that can arise from the “as-if-it-is-too-late” perspective?

When we were writing the conference call on the topic of too-lateness in January 2020, none of us could have imagined that it would permeate and even overtake our thoughts so quickly and decisively. What appeared to be a bare conceptual projection in January, turned out to be an existentially inevitable reality in March. A new reality into which we were sinking in the following months: as if too-lateness itself paradoxically, yet irrevocably, came on time, once and for all.

In September, Hegel came to his birthday party through the words and thoughts of the participants of the Ljubljana event. Was he too late? Were we too late? Or does everything actually only begin at a belated celebration or even an after party? Let this special issue think it over: Is it Hegel's time?

Organizing committee of the international conference
Hegel's 250th Anniversary: Too Late?
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