

Abstracts

After Too Late: The Endgame of Analysis

Nadia Bou Ali and Ray Brassier

If philosophy, as its own time comprehended in thought, always comes after the fact, is philosophical reason fated to belatedness? Is there a “too-lateness” that is not only a *Nachträglichkeit*, but also not only phallic *jouissance* or idiotic enjoyment? These questions bring together politics and psychoanalysis. The wager of psychoanalysis has always been that there is a “stuckness” that cannot be worked through; only by naming the deadlock does something else become possible. Adorno credits Beckett’s *Endgame* with naming the deadlock of capitalist modernity: the indiscernibility of subject and object negates the difference between freedom and fatality. By calling this negation by its name, aesthetic reflection negates it, thereby rescuing the residue of possibility secreted by the contradictoriness of the actual. Yet so long as it is bound only to point to negativity, reflection enables its negation without carrying it out. The negation of negativity must be practiced. After it is too late, after the subjective destitution incurred through the nomination of negation, only the negation of nomination can exceed what exists and make something else possible.

Key words: Hegel, psychoanalysis, Adorno, Beckett, negativity, possibility.

What's the Time? On Being Too Early or Too Late in Hegel's Philosophy

Mladen Dolar

The paper deals with temporality in Hegel's philosophy, starting from the notion of being too late—but too late in relation to what? The paper argues that belatedness is already inscribed in the usual assumptions about time, which was traditionally so often conceived as the time of corruption and degradation in relation to an originary past time, a corruption to be vindicated and redeemed by the future. Hegel, by introducing a radical view of structural belatedness, retroactivity, and precipitation/anticipation, turns the traditional schema upside down while seemingly retaining its framework. The paper concludes with some reflections on the ontological status of negativity in relation to temporality and language.

Key words: Hegel, temporality, belatedness, anticipation, negativity.

Nature's Externality: Hegel's Non-Naturalistic Naturalism

Luca Illetterati

The contribution focuses on the Hegelian conception of nature as “the idea in the form of its externality.” The paper takes as its background the attempt made by much of the literature of contemporary ecological thought to consider externality as a problem to be eliminated in order to properly rethink the relationship between subject and nature. The aim is to show in what sense the Hegelian position can provide a critical framework against this background. In its conclusion, the paper also attempts to outline Hegel's position as a non-naturalistic naturalism.

Key words: Hegel, nature, externality, naturalism, landscape, ecology.

The Time of Philosophy: On Hegel's Conception of Modern Philosophy

Zdravko Kobe

In Hegel's view, the modern age is shaped by the fact that science has replaced religion as the privileged mode of knowledge the spirit has of itself. As a consequence, and contrary to the usual reading of Minerva's owl, it is my contention that philosophy, at least true philosophy, is now inherently political and inherently timely. Hegel is on time.

Key words: Hegel, absolute spirit, metaphilosophy, philosophy of history, history of philosophy.

Is It Too Late?

Bara Kolenc

In this paper, I address the increasingly topical issue of too-lateness as present in the political, environmental, and other public discourses of our time from the perspective of Hegel's onto-logic, focusing especially on his conception of the relationship between finitude and infinity in the section on "Existence [Dasein]" from the *Science of Logic*. Given the general change of perspective after the 2008 global financial crisis, which—this is the initial hypothesis—ended the so-called post-historical era (1968–2008), I argue that although this change appears to be radical, it is actually only a minor shift, which has not changed the prevailing neo-liberal state of affairs, but protects and maintains it. My line of argument leans on Hegel's critique of the qualitative differentiation of being and nothing, and subsequently also of finitude and infinity, which understanding (and the history of philosophy) clings to in a variety of falsifications [*Verfälschungen*], the most adamant of them being the idea of the *eternal being of perishing*. Raising the question of the end of capitalism and its supposed infinity, which has been ever more advocated recently, I claim that capitalism cannot end *not* because the end is not inscribed in its very structure, as some critics of Marx's utopianism would argue, it very much is, but because the end *is* inscribed in

its structure in such a way that finitude and infinity are held apart in a falsification that, supported by the ideology of neo-liberal conservatism, deeply represses their fundamental intertwinement. The problem (and the prosperity) of capitalism is therefore *not in its infinity* but, just the opposite, in its *finitude*. It is a morbid practice, which cannot escape the vicious circle of finitude because it clings to the falsification that perishing is the eternal being of finitude. Similarly, both the posture of the post-historical era and the recent atmosphere of the expectation of a catastrophe keep on holding finitude and infinity apart, and thereby maintain the existent state of affairs. If we are to change the devastating effects of capitalism, it is of crucial importance not only to re-evaluate our utopias and deal with our fantasies, but to re-constitute, both functionally and ideologically, our relation towards finitude and infinity. This means raising human self-awareness to a new level, which would no longer celebrate infinity while silently practicing finitude, killing, and mortality, but would celebrate finitude and practice infinity within finitude itself. This, precisely, is the idea of too-lateness.

Key words: too-lateness, finitude, infinity, capitalism, neo-liberalism, apocalypse.

“What, If Anything, Has Not Been Called Philosophizing?”
On the Relevance of Hegel’s Conception of a Philosophical
History of Philosophy
Christian Krijnen

Identity politics and its call for justice for marginalized social groups have also entered academic philosophy. Its curriculum and historiography are criticized for being far from inclusive. In this discourse, however, it is insufficiently reflected that in the call for philosophical diversity and inclusiveness, a particular concept of philosophy and its history is presupposed. The author shows this by analyzing current arguments and confronting them with Hegel’s conception of the history of philosophy. In this conception, it is important to take into account the

distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical history, as well as Hegel's famous thesis of the parallelism of the logical determinations of thought and the historical succession of philosophies, decisive for a philosophical history.

Key words: Hegel, philosophy of history, history of philosophy, identity politics.

What Is to Be Done: On the Theatricality of Power

Gregor Moder

The paper examines Hegel's claim in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* that philosophy always comes too late to instruct us as to what the world ought to be from a dual perspective. In the first move, Hegel's intervention in the field of political philosophy is compared to that of Spinoza, who similarly criticized philosophers who describe men from a moralist perspective and thus fail to write a political theory because they "conceive men not as they are, but as they would like them to be" (*Political Treatise*). Similarly, Marx writes that a proper historical enterprise sets out from "real, active men," and demonstrates that "morality, religion, metaphysics, and the rest of ideology" (*The German Ideology*) depend on the material processes of those real, active men. In the second move, the article discusses Hegel's concept of history and philosophy's late arrival from the perspective of the metaphor consistently used not only by Hegel and Marx, but also by critics such as Louis Althusser: the metaphor of stage performance. The aim of this contribution is to tackle the intricate relationship between thinking and acting by way of a detour through the metaphor of theatricality.

Key words: Hegel, Spinoza, Marx, theatre, theatricality, power, political philosophy, subject.

Thinking Nothing

Sebastian Rödl

Hegel presents philosophical understanding as absolute knowledge. Therewith, it seems, he is obsolete. As we have learned and know today, knowledge is fallible and reversible, local and embedded, shot through with blind spots and blurred with impurities. Hegel did not appreciate this and hankered after an eternal, uniform, and self-transparent system of knowledge. This essay undertakes to unsettle this conception of Hegel and our allegedly superior understanding by suggesting that absolute knowledge knows nothing. Its exposition of the idea of absolute knowledge proceeds by way of a passage through naturalism, which is the mainstream of philosophy today, and through formal idealism and quietism, which attempt to break free of this naturalism.

Key words: Hegel, absolute knowledge, naturalism, idealism, quietism.

The Purlieu Letter. Toward a Hegelian Theory of Conditioning

Frank Ruda

It is almost a cliché that Hegel's philosophy is conditioned by the French Revolution. But what does this mean? What is it to think from the perspective of the revolution? It cannot simply be to constantly think and talk about the revolution nor can it consist in performing a revolution in our ways of thinking. Rather, it must imply that we revolutionize what we mean by thinking and think in a *modo revolutionarii*. The French Revolution therein becomes the affirmative point from which one can unfold a Hegelian theory of philosophy's conditioning.

Keywords: Hegel, belatedness, French revolution, Habermas, Ritter.

Hegel and the Opaque Core of History

Jure Simoniti

In opposition to regarding the subject as a function of full self-transparency, of Cartesian self-evidence (in this vein, Anglophone readings still tend to present the Hegelian subject as a function of the social world achieving its final manifestation and externalization in mutual recognition between rational agents), this paper will interpret the Hegelian subject as an effect and a placeholder of the opaque core of sociality, exposed to the contingencies of history. It was Kant who invented the self-opacity of the theoretical subject, which enabled him to perform a categorical redefinition of the pure concepts of understanding. Fichte extended this opacity to the practical and Hegel to the social sphere, thus outlining a specific logical space of the possible idealizations of concepts. Just as Kant, in his implicit realism, provided a philosophical justification of a “physics without the big Other,” the ultimate scope of Hegel’s method of dialectical idealization is to conceptually underpin a “sociality without the big Other,” one entirely deprived of any possible metaphysical warranties.

Key words: Hegel, Kant, Fichte, idealization, history.

Against Leviathan: Hegel’s, Fichte’s, and Schiller’s Critique of Modernity, Alienation, and the State

Árpád-Andreas Sölter

The paper discusses Hegel’s, Fichte’s, and Schiller’s political radicalism in their fundamental critique of modernity, of the human condition defined by alienation, and of the state. They express an outspoken desire for fundamental political change and urge a radical rethinking of the state and our entire modern age. This is discussed through a cultural diagnosis of art, machinery, and the state at the dawn of modernity. Hegel’s, Fichte’s, and Schiller’s claims address key questions, such as: What would a rationally organized society look like? What is a truly rational state? Which

state do we actually want? Do we really need one at all? The author argues that Leviathan must be tamed again. The relationships between the individual and freedom, culture and art, and the state and society, need to be balanced out in a fresh manner. In view of curtailed civil liberties, with digitally driven hyper-surveillance capitalism unleashing market forces largely beyond democratic control, overcoming the state of the state in the process of globalization calls for new alternatives and approaches. The current enormous expansion of government spending and government intervention, casting long shadows of public control over the individual's private existence and movements, is not sustainable. Excessive government activity, astronomical government debt, unchecked bureaucratic growth in combination with monetization and increasing juridification, and current emergency measures imposing massive restrictions on basic democratic rights, including bans on cultural events, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic—all these tendencies lead us to one crucial question: Are we facing “the final countdown”? Is an immediate and comprehensive systemic overhaul required? Even a “Great Reset”? What kind of freedom do we wish to open up for ourselves at the end of the day?

Key words: Hegel, Fichte, Schiller, state, Leviathan, modernity, freedom, crisis.

The Athenian Owl and the Gallic Rooster— Dusk or Dawn?

Klaus Vieweg

In Hegel's metaphor of the owl of Minerva, thought is represented using the images of a *goddess*, an *animal*, together with a time of day, *dusk*. World history must first reach a certain stage of development before sufficient knowledge is possible. The general, universalistic concept of freedom, the idea of the freedom of all, could not dominate in the ancient world. Hegel alludes to the idea that his time represents the actual *beginning* of the modern world. The key concept of freedom allows the owl of science to begin its flight. This substantiates Hegel's interpretation of the

French Revolution: For the first time, a constitution is based on law, and this Minerva-like “headbirth” is what the prelude to modernity is based on. The revolution is a glorious sunrise, the beautiful dawn of freedom. It is the beginning of the possible realization of individual freedom in a free community. The goal or end purpose of history was considered to be *universal freedom*, the *freedom of all*, the modern world as the “end of history,” the freedom of everybody. The end of history can be interpreted—and this is the main intention of Hegelian thinking—as the actual beginning of human existence.

Key words: Hegel, belatedness, the owl of Minerva, French Revolution, end of history.

Adorno’s Beethoven: Undoing Hegel from Within

Sven-Olov Wallenstein

Adorno’s idea of “late style,” which he developed in his interpretation of Beethoven, also unfolds as a debate with Hegel. Late style signals a process of disintegration of the mediating power of the subject that held the classical form together, and leads into a landscape of ruins, where the status of the subject remains undecided. The problem of subjective mediation would continue to haunt modern art up to the present. Important here is also the connection to Hölderlin’s translations and interpretations of Greek tragedy, as well as his late poetry, which are crucial to Adorno’s view of modern art in general, but also form a counterpart to his interpretation of Beethoven.

Key words: Hegel, Beethoven, Hölderlin, Adorno, late style, mediation, modern art.

Hegel In the Future, Hegel On the Future Slavoj Žižek

Hegel is the philosopher most open to the future precisely because he explicitly prohibits any project of how our future should look—as he says towards the end of the “Preface” to his *Philosophy of Right*, like the owl of Minerva, which takes off at dusk, philosophy can only paint “grey in grey,” i.e., it only translates into a “grey” (lifeless) conceptual scheme a form of life which has already reached its peak and entered its decline (is becoming “grey” itself). Hegel’s basic axiom is not the teleological premise that, no matter how terrible an event is, at the end it will turn out to be a subordinated moment that contributes to the overall harmony; his axiom is that no matter how well-planned and well-meant an idea or a project is, it will somehow go wrong.

Key words: Hegel, belatedness, teleology, future, openness.