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THE FUTURE OF THE FUTURE: KOYRÉ, KOJÈVE, AND MALABOU SPECULATE ON HEGELIAN TIME

Rory Jeffs

... will there and can there be a future after the supposed end of history.... beyond 'absolute knowledge'?

— Jacques Derrida¹

The relationship between Hegel's speculative idealist philosophy and time has a long and complicated history. Since his death in 1831, Hegel's name has inspired a range of interpretations and speculations about what his philosophy entails. In 1946, the Russian-born French Hegelian Alexandre Kojève speculated:

[I]t may be that, in fact the future of the world, and therefore the meaning of the present and the significance of the past, depend, in the final analysis, on the way in which the Hegelian writings are interpreted today.²

Half a century later as we entered the twenty-first century, Catherine Malabou speculated that the future of Hegel depended on how we read the future *in* Hegel's philosophy.³ And more recently, Slavoj Žižek in his own typically speculative manner, claimed that even after decades of anti-Hegelian sentiment and a wilful forgetting of Hegel, "Hegel's century will be the twenty-first."⁴ On the surface, such statements seem to place undue importance on Hegel and may confirm the conventional suspicion of him as an all-encompassing philosopher. However, there is also the implication that the future itself, or to loosely paraphrase Malabou, "the future of the future" is what is at stake. Hegel's value then would be to act as a guide to working out and potentially saving the time of the future itself from insignificance, repetition, or a "levelling down".⁵ Žižek may have also intimated something, that Hegel's time, or future, is yet-to-come—which raises the question of what could have delayed Hegel's true arrival? I will examine in this article one possible response to such a question that

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concerns how the riddle of Hegelian temporality plagued the twentieth-century French reading of Hegel. French Hegelianism has a reputation for its creative and “idiomatic” use of Hegel’s philosophy, and this has been both its strength and its weakness.⁶ From the 1930s onwards though, the French reading of Hegel had difficulty with fully comprehending the nature and role of the Hegelian System. As a result, it was often avoided, or turned into a strategic target and foil for anti-Hegelianism—with Hegel projected as a totalitarian thinker and enemy of difference and existence itself. I will argue that one element that played a part in cultivating this rejection is the issue of temporality and its place within such a System. This issue comes down to not only whether there is a future-oriented temporality (i.e. futurity) latent within Hegel’s System, but as Malabou demonstrates, how Hegel’s System calls on us to continually engage with it. This article selectively focuses on the writings of Alexandre Koyré, Alexandre Kojève, and Catherine Malabou, who, despite their differences, bring to the fore the importance of the question of Hegelian temporality, and as a result, directly pursue this question of the future *in* Hegel’s philosophy—and what effect it has on the future *of* Hegel. One of the key problems discussed in this article is the dualistic hermeneutic taken to Hegel’s work by Koyré and Kojève—who both distinguish the writings of the early Jena-period Hegel with their primacy of the future from the later Hegel of the *Encyclopaedia* with its assumed primacy of the past. The article will end with a discussion of Malabou’s interpretation and test whether it brings a productive traversal of the troubling implications exposed by Koyré’s and Kojève’s reading of Hegel.

The influence of Heidegger’s phenomenological approach to temporality and his critique of Hegel linger heavily in the background of Koyré, Kojève’s and Malabou’s analyses and cannot be underestimated. Heidegger’s briefly discussed, but effective identification of Hegel’s concept of time with homogenous time served as one of the threads in the overall critique of Hegel throughout the twentieth century. Heidegger’s key engagement with Hegel’s work resides in Section 82 of *Being and Time*, from where it has, as Jacques Derrida discusses, gathered “universal currency” and imparted the suspicion that in Hegel, the “future itself is finished!”⁷ Heidegger claimed Hegel had cast “little light... on the source of time,” because he remained trapped by a “vulgar” metaphysical conception of time predicated on a series of discrete “nows”—the future in this case, being merely a not-yet “now”.⁸ Heidegger considered then Hegel no more sophisticated than Aristotle on this question of temporality, only differing in that he brought this determination of “nows” to completion.⁹ The source of much of Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s concept of temporality is drawn from the ‘Mechanics’ section of the *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Philosophy of Nature*, where Hegel had said there is no “stable” difference between past and future in nature.¹⁰ Heidegger’s own phenomenological account of the “ek-static” structure of time differs in that as a “being-toward-death”, *Dasein* experiences a concrete sense of its own finitude and is exposed to what Heidegger calls “primordial time”. The sense of a future is inseparable from the sense of our own mortality. We do not anticipate the future passively as a “now” that is not-yet actual, but resolutely as that which is “coming [*Kunft*]”. Hence, I would argue Heidegger’s own existential analytic of time articulates itself thus: “*The primary meaning of existence is the future*”.¹¹ From this point of view, Heidegger ends up arguing: “‘Spirit’ does not first fall into time,” as assumed by Hegel, “but it *exists as* the primordial *temporalizing* of temporality.”¹² During his 1930–31 lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Heidegger reinforced his line, arguing “Hegel occasionally speaks about having been [i.e. the past], but never about the future”. Accordingly, the “past” in the Hegelian framework becomes “the decisive character of time.” For these reasons, Heidegger says that Hegel bids “farewell to time” in favour of knowing the “immutable” being, and as a result, deals with the problem of finitude as an “incidental” moment in the dialectic.¹³ It is in this post-Heideggerian context that Koyré and Kojève approached the issue of Hegel and temporality. They were the first “Hegelians” in France to respond to Heidegger’s philosophy in a direct way, acknowledging the greatness and originality of *Being and Time*—but also raising the prospect that there was a more concrete sense of futurity in Hegel’s philosophy that bore resemblance to Heidegger’s.

THE “PRIMACY OF THE FUTURE”: KOYRÉ’S DISCOVERY OF THE YOUNG HEGEL

Koyré and Kojève were two Russian émigrés who arrived in Paris in the 1920s via the phenomenological

heartland of Weimer Republic Germany. Koyré had been trained under Edmund Husserl at Göttingen, and Kojève by Karl Jaspers at Heidelberg. For his part, Koyré had been a key player in igniting the French Hegel Renaissance along with Jean Wahl in the late 1920s. Neo-Kantianism and Bergsonism dominated the French *académie* during this time, but for Koyré, they were “not able to answer the burning questions of the day.”¹⁴ Koyré found Hegel to be a more “concrete” philosopher, but believed that in order to bring him back after a hundred-year “exile” from French scholarship; one would have to merge him with the phenomenological tradition marked out of Heidegger and Husserl. To do so though, he would have to class Hegel as the progenitor of the phenomenological method itself in spite of Heidegger’s own misgivings and the distance he created between himself and Hegel.¹⁵

The event that gave impetus to Koyré’s project of reinventing Hegel was the publication of the Jena manuscripts, first by Georg Lasson in 1923, then by Johannes Hoffmeister in the early 1930s.¹⁶ Along with the publication of Herman Nohl’s edition of Hegel’s *Early Theological Writings* in 1907, the posthumously published Jena manuscripts were a breakthrough for Hegelian scholarship in that they revealed the man behind the system and Hegel’s “philosophical apprenticeship”. Koyré thought these manuscripts would help scholars get past the difficult and opaque language of the later writings. Koyré’s main article on Hegel and temporality was ‘Hegel à Jena’, which was in part a summary of his own 1932–33 Course on ‘The Religious Philosophy of Hegel’ at École pratique des hautes études.¹⁷ Koyré proposed that Hegel dealt with phenomenological and historical problems during his formative Jena period (1801–06), and his “ultimate ambition was to dialectically unite rest with movement and to connect time to eternity by his notion of timeless becoming [*devenir intemporel*].”¹⁸ He considered Hegel’s path of thought during these years could be encapsulated by the phrase, “*Geist ist Zeit*”, which Hegel had written in a marginal note to one of the incomplete manuscripts of the period.¹⁹ A major part of Koyré’s article is based on a translation, commentary, and comparison of two versions of Hegel’s Jena Philosophy of Nature—in the *Jenenser Logic* (1804–05) and the *Jenenser Realphilosophie II* (1805–06).²⁰ What Koyré finds uniquely distinctive in these Jena manuscripts is something rather “esoteric” lies within them, that Hegel proposes a radically phenomenological account of time as the “restlessness [*Unruhe*]” of the infinite Spirit and at the heart of being itself. Koyré singles out Hegel’s use of the word “*Unruhe*”, translating it with “*inquiétude*”, and argues that it is Hegel’s “most profound metaphysical intuition” and signifies his “greatest originality.”²¹

Hegel’s philosophy of time sketched in the Jena Manuscripts for Koyré equates to a philosophy of man. And in a foreshadowing of Kojève’s later lectures on Hegel, notes the “*Phenomenology of Spirit* properly understood is an anthropology.”²² Repeating one of Heidegger’s phrases from *Being and Time*, Koyré says it is rather with the young Hegel’s “original” use of “*Unruhe*” that introduces the essential temporalising structure and paraphrases one of Hegel 1804-05 passages as: “The future is therefore the truth of the present.”²³ But Koyré’s interpretation also shows how Hegel differentiates this human experience of time from the natural time of duration determined by life and death—that is, a subsistent “now [*Jetzt*]”, or the “*nunc aeternitatis*” where everything is already realised. Human time gives content and direction to that spatial “now” by negating the present, and altering the past.²⁴ Koyré says:

Hegelian time is, above all, a *human* time, *the time of man* itself, of this strange being that “is what is not and not what it is”, the being who denies himself in what he is in favour [*profit*] of what he is not, or not yet, the being who, starting from the present, negates it, attempting to realise himself in the future, who lives for the future... and who ceases being the day when there is no longer a future²⁵

This means for Koyré that “the Hegelian man is ‘Faustian.’” Even though this model of human temporality based on the movement of “*Unruhe*” makes intelligible the dialectic of time as an interaction between the future, present and past, infinity and finitude, but it also leads to a continual striving and pursuit for what is not here and now. For Hegel, such a kind of existence had tragic implications in the sense of leading to a life that is ultimately without satisfaction.²⁶ But for there to be historicity and the possibility of historical consciousness, whereby there is a concrete sense of the future, Koyré argues there must be this sense of restlessness in this

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negation of the present. However, Koyré recognises the limits of such an interpretation of Hegelian temporality and its over-emphasis, once he closely reads the 1805–06 lectures in *Jenenser Realphilosophie II*—where Hegel’s “System” begins imposing itself and the “rest” point of the present takes primacy. As he interprets it, Koyré sees that after 1805 Hegel began presenting time as derivative from space. Philip Grier has commented on Koyré’s interpretation, and observes that in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* version of the *Philosophy of Nature* (1830) this idea of a dualism between spirit and nature (time and space) no longer stands, and that from 1805 onwards, the earlier rich speculations concerning the priority of the future over the present and past begin to disappear.²⁷ Koyré cannot redeem Hegel’s concept of time presented in the later *Encyclopaedia*, because for him, it is a “time that is paralysed... [and hence] is no longer time”, “[t]his time, in effect, is *space*.”²⁸ Koyré thus confirms at least the sentiment of Heidegger’s critique of Hegel’s concept of time, but only as it was presented in its systematic form in the *Encyclopaedia*, where there seems to be no primordial sense of time as directed towards a future horizon.

Koyré refrained from postulating a dialectical solution to the problem of reconciliation between time and eternity, wherein the future could still hold its primacy, or at the least, a dynamic interaction with the past. In his last paragraph of ‘Hegel à Jena’, he illustrates the problem in way that would linger over the French reading of Hegel for decades to come:

... the dialectical character of time alone makes possible a philosophy of history, but at the same time the temporal character of the dialectic makes it impossible... The philosophy of history—and in that respect the philosophy of Hegel as a whole—the “system”—could only be a possibility if history has come to an end, if it has no more future; only if time can stop.

It is possible that Hegel believed in it [i.e. the end of time]. *It is even possible* that he believed not only that it was the essential condition for the system... but also that this essential condition had *already* been realized, that history had effectively ended, and therefore it was precisely because of that [reason] that he could—[or] had been able to—complete it.²⁹

Given there seems to be an irresolvable tension in Hegel’s thought between a dialectic of time (let us say, a philosophy of the future) riddled by uncertainty and a philosophy of history that demands universal judgment and closure, Koyré personally thinks such an end of time synthesis is “unforeseeable [*imprévisible*]”, and the System consequently, “eternally unfinished”. For him, in order for Spirit to “make the past present” as Absolute Knowledge, “it can only do so with the help of the future”, hence, an aporia emerges. Although he avoids speculating on a possible solution that could maintain a dynamic dialectic of the past and the future within a philosophical system, Koyré tends to simply accept the premise of the Hegelian-Heideggerian phenomenology of time. In fact, he repeatedly claims in the article Hegel’s philosophy is at its core primarily concerned with time rather than history and Absolute Knowledge, and furthermore, that “the Hegelian ‘system’ is dead, and really dead [*bien mort*]”.³⁰ Yet as Bruce Baugh and Joseph Flay argue, Koyré ends up “historicizing being” and affirming a “spurious infinite” with “no final term” so as to avoid the falling into a static system, even despite him recognising the essential importance of the System for Hegel’s philosophy as a whole.³¹ Grier on the other hand, finds the crucial point to be that “the end of history is a precondition for the system only given Koyré’s reading of the discarded ‘1802’ [1804–05] passage on time as if they were a crucial element of Hegel’s mature thought.”³² That is, Koyré assumes that Hegel had to “stop time”—for Absolute Knowledge could not co-exist with any uncertain future within it, for that would deny it the very premise of an Absolute standpoint. For Koyré, it was in a way the failure of the System that it could not solve this contradiction if the essence of time and the dialectic was an infinite and restless movement toward the future. Therefore, the task was left to his successor at the *École Pratique des hautes études*, Alexander Kojève, to resolve this issue, but as we will see, he did so by not questioning the Hegelian dualism Koyré had demarcated before him.

THE END OF THE FUTURE: KOJÈVE’S RESOLUTION

As Koyré left Paris for the University of Cairo in the summer of 1933, he offered Kojève the job of leading

his Hegel Course at the École Pratique. Often overlooked is the continuity between Koyré's Course and Kojève's. For example, Kojève said that he saw his lectures as an "extension" of Koyré's, and admitted to using Koyré's method of interpretation, most notably the "revelatory" comments on time, as the basis for his creative interpretation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.³³ Unlike Koyré though, Kojève suspects then a paradoxical solution to understanding world history through a future-driven dialectic that comes to *complete* end. Kojève adheres to the Koyré line that a primacy of the future is integral to the movement of the dialectic of Spirit and human consciousness and progress, but goes further, by separating the two accounts of time in Hegel more so than Koyré had done. The time discussed in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Nature* is simply treated by Kojève as non-dialectical—a process without end and teleology. Transposing Koyré's analysis to the *Phenomenology*, he also claims the Hegelian account of time in this text relates to a human experience of time. However, for Kojève, the appearance of human time is not due to the "inquiétude" of being or an infinite restlessness that comes to emerge from through human beings. Instead, Kojève tackles the appearance of negativity along with Heidegger's "angst" as emerging rather from a *symptom* of a desire for recognition from another *human* being. Kojève's solution to the future-time problem though demands that human beings can no longer act as temporal beings once they mutually recognise each other as equals. In other words, there will be no need for more "future" projects to negate the present, when the state of world becomes universal and homogenous (i.e. "classless") and governed according to principles of equal recognition and justice for all citizens. Missing from Koyré's account of Hegelian time then was this shared form of historicity—the future as a *collective* "project" toward realising mutual recognition.

Kojève's method of attaining and demonstrating this controversial end of history/end of time conclusion operates via a series of radical revisions and breaks from the Hegelian text that arguably isolates the importance of the later encyclopaedic works. In the context of the issue of the end of time, *three strategic "corrections" stand out*. The first one is a critique of Hegel's dialectical monism (i.e. his conflation of natural and historical time). The second correction is Kojève's interpretation of Hegelian "Concept [*Begriff*]" as "human" time. And the third is his idiosyncratic presentation of Absolute Spirit at the stage of Absolute Knowledge as embodied in the form of a "Book."³⁴ For Kojève, an ontological dualism between nature and humanity is necessary to correct Hegel's monism and present his work as anthropology that can account for the non-natural aspects of the human world. Kojève argues that space *ontologically precedes* time, just as homogeneity precedes heterogeneity, and nature, man—simply because for Kojève negation itself is not primordial but secondary to Being (*Sein*). From this starting point, Kojève is quick to differentiate two temporalities—the biological and cosmological time analysed by natural scientists, mathematicians and physicists, and phenomenological or anthropological time—the "human" time of the future.³⁵ Hegel critiqued the sciences, in particular Newtonian physics, because he thought they were bound to a "spurious infinite" of the Understanding (*Verstand*), a "vain unrest of advancing beyond the limit to infinity", but only finding a new limit each time it advances.³⁶ Kojève though thinks with the advent of quantum physics in the early twentieth century through Heisenberg and Bohr that the sciences have become aware of their own limits, and further, philosophy has to concede that it too cannot explain the physical world of nature, especially in terms of an infinite spirit or dialectical totality.³⁷ Unlike Koyré, Kojève seems to side with a systematic Hegelianism that is (to use a neologism) anthropologised—thinking he could unite his two times with an Absolute Concept and updated Hegelian System to articulate it—yet this in fact, remained an unfinished "project" for him after the War.³⁸ He tended to believe that temporality and historicity could have no "objective-reality" if they were purely phenomenological possibilities and speculations of an eternally restless subject or individualised *Dasein*. To show how the phenomenon of time emerges out of social interaction, Kojève's emphasises the struggle for recognition and its resulting master-slave dialectic. Through human beings risking their life for recognition of the other, the appearance of negation and time came to be as well as a second "historical" reality—but such a spontaneous emergence of time could be intelligible retrospectively as being an "error" or break rather than the sublation of nature—and we will discuss later how Malabou revises the meaning of what Kojève's means by "error" in terms of a teleological "accident". Therefore, for Kojève, there is no primordial time of the future in nature or being as such as Koyré assumed; it is only thanks to the "error" of negation in the human being's confrontation with death through an "other" that time and our awareness of finitude even emerged in the first place. Time then is a socialised or inter-subjective

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phenomenon. And as he says, this means:

Man is dialectical or historical (= free) movement revealing Being through Discourse only because he lives in the function of the *future*, which presents itself to him in the form of a *project* or as a 'goal' (*Zweck*) to be realized through action [sic] negative of the given, and because he is not himself real as Man except to the extent that he creates himself through such action as a work (*Werk*).³⁹

Whilst Heidegger says there is only *Dasein* when there is a futural project happening that signifies being is an "issue" for it; with Kojève, the presence of *Dasein* presupposes a prior struggle for recognition. Hence, in Kojève's terms, Hegel's is the "[t]ime of conscious and voluntary action" of human beings towards realising future "projects".⁴⁰ We have a future as long as we can negate and transform the natural world or our given surroundings through labour or struggle and produce something "new" (non-natural) from them. To do so, requires, at the extreme, risking our lives and security, or labouring and developing a new "second" nature whose meaning can only be understood in terms of a socially constructed world shared with other human subjects. Kojève suggests that this anthropological time only appears or functions as a negation of an ontological homogeneity that underlines the human and social world and which exists prior to it and is essentially indifferent to it. Time then is not as *absolute* or infinite as Koyré had made it out to be. As it has to find support in an historical dialectic and give itself determinate form in our objective environment rather than relate to itself abstractly.

Following on from his "correction" of a dual ontology, Kojève makes another important adjustment to the Hegelian text, emphasising that the "Concept [*Begriff*] is Time".⁴¹ Kojève cites two passages from the *Phenomenology* he thinks demonstrate the importance of such an equation of thought and time. The first one from the preface to the *Phenomenology*, where Hegel writes, "[a]s for Time... it is the empirically existing Concept itself." Indeed, Kojève argues this quote sums up "Hegel's *whole* philosophy".⁴² The second quote is from the last chapter of the *Phenomenology* ('Absolute Knowing'): "Time is the Concept itself, which is there."⁴³ And as Malabou notes herself, it was this last line in fact, that with the help of Heidegger "signed the death sentence" of Hegel.⁴⁴ Kojève's lectures at length on the problem of eternity and time to show how Hegel's Absolute Knowledge serves as an entry point into "the last moment of Time", which he says, is a "moment without a *Future*".⁴⁵ That is, time not in the proper historical sense, but as he will later add, cyclical or eternal time, and annotate in his footnote on the post-historical condition, "the eternal present". It is at this point that Kojève must have believed he solved Koyré's paradox of time and eternity in Hegel's philosophy—but at what price? Once we accepted the circularity of the System of Knowledge and the identity of time and the Concept, then there appears to be no further projects on the horizon, but only a deeper understanding of the past. What Kojève conceals in this interpretation of Hegelian Absolute Knowledge is the ambiguity and instability of the temporal remainder that lies *after* this "appearance" of the assumed "last moment of Time". In other words, he is simply silent about the prospect of future human activity and socio-political realisation of Wisdom *after* Hegel. If there were no such further possibilities, it is impossible to comprehend why any philosophy (let alone political action) could make sense after Hegel, and for that matter, Kojève's interpretation—and any possibility for the "empirical-existence" of Self-Consciousness or Spirit.⁴⁶

Despite what may seem like a breach of common sense, Kojève in his last lectures in the Hegel Course ploughs on with his speculative vision stating, that "[i]n order to live in the Concept... it is necessary to live *outside* of Time in the *eternal* circle."⁴⁷ Yet he still has to explain how this historical or linear form of temporality directed towards the future can simply disappear and become irrelevant to how we experience and interpret the world. Time, as Hegel even says, will only be "annulled" once the Spirit has comprehended its "pure Concept".⁴⁸ Therefore, as long as we have an "empty intuition" of historical time as something *opposed to* natural-biological time or transcendental time, we cannot strictly make the Concept equivalent to time. And as John Burbidge remarks with allusion to the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel was never adamant about a strong connection between the concept and time that would neutralise the negativity and historicity of Spirit. For Burbidge, "the time is the concept as it is intuited rather than comprehended".⁴⁹ Hegel does say in the *Philosophy of Nature*, which

Heidegger cited, that the Concept is not *in* time or temporal, but that which has “the power over time”—i.e. the power to comprehend it (“*begreifen*”).⁵⁰ For Kojève and Heidegger, it seems such a power requires the mastering of time and finitude by an eternal Spirit (*Geist*). Kojève’s way of resolving this dilemma of what happens after the realisation of Absolute Knowledge, and assumedly time comprehended, is to argue for a *third* “update” of the meaning of the System, by way of presenting the “Book” as the “empirical existence” of Spirit. The “Book” is loosely applied by Kojève to include the *Phenomenology*, the *Logic*, and the whole Hegelian Encyclopaedia; as well what he claims will be their endless commentary. The issue Kojève has to solve though is how will the “Book” *no longer* be re-temporalised, and how will it not be dependent on or destroyed by the actions of living and dying mortals who experience time toward an uncertain future? As Kojève explains it, “[t]he Time in which it [Book] lasts [*dure*] is thus natural or cosmic, but not historical or human. Certainly the Book, in order to be a Book and not just bound and stained paper must be read and understood by men.”⁵¹ What is confounding in this particular interpretation is that Kojève attempts to explain both the eternity of Absolute Knowledge in the form of the “Book” and the finitude and material existence of the human beings who read and re-write it as somehow co-existing on the same ontologically homogenous plane. But as he lets slip in another passage, finitude makes something of a comeback, as he admits, “I am only this Book to the extent that I write and publish it, in other words to the extent that it is still a future (or a project).”⁵²

In such passages, Kojève seems to be really subtracting the essential inscrutability of the future that Heidegger revealed in *Being and Time* as confronting *Dasein*—and ended up holding sway in Koyré’s understanding of futurity. The new model of future (if we can still call it that) to be experienced by mutually-recognised citizens, is one that will exclude the possibility of radical transcendence, because it is assumed such citizens will accept their finitude and mortality without the restlessness that made time first possible. Once understood as a circular process, the repetition of writing and re-reading the “Book” becomes a cyclical movement, where there is “no true Future” in the abstract or transcendent sense that will introduce radical alterity or break with the past. And for Kojève, this means essentially that it is then no different from “the biological Time of Aristotle”.⁵³ The problem though with Kojève’s revaluation of Hegelian time is that the dual ontology he has worked with to get to the end of time conclusion ends up confirming in essence Heidegger’s initial critique—that Hegel’s concept of time from the Absolute standpoint was no less a metaphysics of presence than Aristotle’s. From this standpoint, the future of the human being in such an end-time scenario becomes trivialised or an afterthought. Kojève is either conspicuously silent or when he does make some kind of comment is contradictory on the shape of spirit at the end of history. Does the ontological difference between nature and spirit simply collapse? The so-called “disappearance of man” that Kojève speculates on is really death of a human and historical “Subject” that had the power of negativity over the external world, which he adds, will potentially be displaced by technology. There is an ambiguity over whether there is no more philosophical “reason” for humanity to change or negate the world and itself for a new future reality, or no actual ontological “possibility”. I would argue that Kojève’s pessimistic (even if given with his typical sense of wry irony) speculations of an end of time are misleading and remain ambiguous over what really lies on the horizon. For they remain inextricably determined by Koyré’s contrast between dialectic of time with its uncertain future and a philosophy of history that has everything sublated as pure past. Kojève’s “solution” then is essentially the other side of this dualism. Hence, why Baugh says the difference between Koyré and Kojève’s responses to it is of “little consequence”.⁵⁴ But such a dualism and its resulting impasse led Kojève to annotate further in his well-cited 1962 footnote to the *Introduction*, and speculate from his personal observation of the “Japanese way of life”, with its cultural practice of snobbery for instance, implied there could be a continuation of negation in a “formal” mode as a way to resist “reanimalization” and the trappings of an “eternal present.” In order to remain human in this formal sense, he proposes, “it is necessary [*doit*] to remain a ‘Subject *opposed* to the Object’,” and as Derrida notes, given Kojève’s general lack of specificity, this implies some form of “promise” that “it is necessary [that there be] a future.”⁵⁵ Like Koyré in one respect, Kojève at least showed some concern for the potential end of time scenario, and sought to save a formal sense of futurity, even if he could not foresee further significant *historical* changes on the horizon.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: MALABOU'S PLASTICISATION OF HEGELIAN TIME

Given that this was the Hegelian framework with which Koyré and Kojève initiated the French reading of Hegel, I think it is important to bring Catherine Malabou into this kind of discussion of the future in Hegel. By looking at it from a different angle, Malabou has offered us a welcomed relief to the problem that has arguably stuck with the French reading throughout the twentieth century. She seeks to avoid the “impasse” that Koyré and Kojève took the question of the Hegelian future into, which she describes as a “non-dialectical contradiction”—a contradiction that cannot reach any genuine resolution. Malabou argues that “the project they represent, as significant as it is, does not give us the means to respond to the question of the future of Hegel.” I note Malabou says here “the future of” rather the “future in” Hegel.” Although Koyré and Kojève found a neglected aspect of the future *in* Hegel’s Jena manuscripts—they “could only grant the future a priority over the other moments of time by suspending at once all future yet to come.”⁵⁶ The challenge for Malabou then is to overcome the dualism between the “pan-tragicist” and “pan-logicist” readings that have plagued French Hegelianism since Koyré and Kojève, or what she calls herself the Hegelian “schizology”, which she traces back to Heidegger.⁵⁷ Where Koyré and Kojève failed to suture such divisions within Hegel’s thought, Malabou attempts to make way for a dialectical middle ground between varying tendencies, and as she has recently explained her methodology, to find “a way to respond to the deconstruction and destruction of Hegelianism” that does not concede *all* points to Hegel’s opponents.⁵⁸ It makes sense then that since her first book, *The Future of Hegel*, Malabou’s work has so far navigated the connections between Hegel, Heidegger, and Derrida. In her more recent book, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction*, she situates her thought “at the crossroads of two negative logics” that emerge from these three thinkers: “dialectical negativity” and “deconstructive negativity”.⁵⁹ Therefore, despite Koyré and Kojève’s own revolutionary efforts at restoring Hegel’s legacy, Malabou asserts that the future *in* (and *of*) Hegel’s work “remains to be demonstrated and discovered.” When it comes to the question of time, Hegel has always been assumed as guilty as charged—for “[if we agree with] Heidegger, that Hegel never speaks about the future amounts to saying that Hegel does not have a future.” She contests this either-or scenario, and goes further than Koyré and Kojève in claiming that Hegel *does* have a future and identifies such a future temporality within the framework of the System itself—where it had been declared dead, rather prematurely.

Although Malabou rarely refers to Kojève, she begins her analysis with his adequation of Absolute Knowledge and the “end of time”—and asks, “[b]ut can there be any temporality which corresponds to this ‘end of time’ except time’s stasis in the congealed form of a *perpetual present*?”⁶⁰ It is admirable that she begins with such a confronting question, and does not revert to Hegel’s Jena work and expound on the “*inquiétude*” of Spirit, but actually looks directly into the much-denigrated System and finds something she considers uniquely dialectical: namely, “plasticity.” Interestingly, Malabou treats the *Encyclopaedia* as the “ultimate expression of Hegelian thought”, and his discussion of time therein as the point in which Hegel *questions* rather the recapitulates to the ordinary conception of time. She cites from the very same passages of the ‘Mechanics’ in the *Philosophy of Nature* that Heidegger, Koyré, and Kojève do. She interprets Hegel’s meaning in such passages to be that “time itself is not what it is”—and rather than as an Aristotelian series, Hegel is really addressing time in such passages as a synthetic unity in the Kantian sense.⁶¹ Presenting the concept of plasticity in a Hegelian context helps Malabou reach a new definition of the future, distinct from the conventional definition of it as a “*moment of time*”, or another “now.” Malabou observes that Hegel’s work actually imparts to the reader to go beyond ordinary concepts of time and even live in two times at once. As she rightly reminds us, Absolute Knowledge is the synthesis of two temporalities, the Greek and the Christian. Kojève speculated at the end of his Hegel Course that the “Christian” time of the future would be re-absorbed by the Greek cyclical time at the stage of Absolute Knowledge. Malabou does not accept the conclusion that such an end of history would mean the end of time in its future sense, because for her, it “does not mark the end of all sudden and new appearances.”⁶² Kojève’s rather blunt presentation of the end of history disavows the element of surprise that lies in waiting after Hegel at the Absolute standpoint. Yet Kojève would, like Hegel himself, concede in private after the Hegel Course that he could not “play the prophet” surely implies his account of an end of time as the end of uncertainty was a speculative proposition that the future would simply repeat the same dialectical logic of the

past.⁶³

Malabou begins her analysis at this critical juncture, and attempts to get beyond the non-dialectical contradiction inherited from Koyré and Kojève. She says one reason why such a contradiction appeared was Hegel did not clearly reconcile enough the two meanings of the future in his System:

... on the one hand, a chronological future, whose dynamic is the foundation of all historical development, and, on the other hand, a future as the logical “happening” of the concept, i.e. the concept in “the act-of-coming-to-itself (*Zu-sich-selbst-kommen*).”⁶⁴

Malabou’s inclusion of this second part of the Hegelian synthesis of time will be important for her theory of plasticity, as well distinguishing her understanding of Absolute Knowledge from the Kojevian and Koyrean interpretations of it as an enclosed “repetition” of an “eternal present”. Malabou also seeks to test the Hegelian dialectic itself, by seeing if she can put it to work through her theory of plasticity without the aid of historical negation. Plasticity has often been assumed to relate only “to the field of art”—namely, architecture and sculpture—the arts of form-making.⁶⁵ But Hegel in *Lectures on Aesthetics* also describes “plasticity” in relation to historical “self-made” individuals such as Pericles and Plato who had “plastic and universal yet individual character”.⁶⁶ Malabou cleverly adapts Hegel’s two concepts of plasticity in the *Aesthetics*, and adds a third, in “philosophical plasticity”—which is exemplified by the “philosophic attitude” and the transition from the “predicative proposition” to the “speculative [dialectical] proposition”. Hence, she raises one of Hegel’s little known concepts to the level of the Absolute and changing the function of Hegel’s philosophy in turn. For Malabou this plastic art of speculative dialectic requires the “activity-of-form,” that is, the power to “give-form” and “receive form”. Following Hegel’s lead, she does not believe in the possibility of radical transcendence or alterity, “the other of form but [rather] the *other form*.” For this reason, she thinks plasticity allows for the experience of an “alterity without transcendence”.⁶⁷ Perhaps more importantly, given the implication of Kojève’s post-historical “cage”, plasticity could be a way to help us *think* of a “way out” where there appears to be no way out by reshaping the “cage” itself.⁶⁸

To help explain this new sense of the future in *and* of Hegel via plasticity, Malabou uses the syntagm, “*voir venir*,” translated as “to see (what is) coming”. She explains that this phrase implies, “*at one and the same time*, the state of ‘being sure what is coming’ and of ‘not knowing what is coming’.”⁶⁹ “To see (what is) coming” is the ultimate “plastic concept”, because it involves simultaneously the interplay of form-giving and form-receiving. But it also means, as Derrida notes, that the future has the dual aspect of being determined according to teleological necessity, yet at the same time, experienced as an aleatory accident or “absolute surprise”.⁷⁰ Therefore, Malabou is reflexively stretching the meaning of Hegelian Absolute Knowledge away from the hegemonic view of it is as closure, and invigorating it with a sense of philosophical encounter. Malabou explains “*voir venir*” as her own “idiomatic” interpretation of the “anticipatory structure” in the dialectical composition of time in Hegel. Furthermore, she distances plasticity from any Heideggerian temporal uncertainty, “[t]he future is not the absolute invisible, a subject of pure transcendence... nor is the future the absolutely visible... it frustrates any anticipation by its precipitation, its power to surprise.” In other words, we project ourselves into the future by “see[ing] without seeing” and “await[ing] without waiting”.⁷¹ But how *plastic* is the future in the sense of being a “surprise”? How open-ended is this form of Absolute Knowledge? Malabou refrains from asserting the movement of “*voir venir*” as a transcendental condition—separate from what it organises or *a priori*. This is why Malabou treats plasticity “strategically” rather than “thematically” for it is not something “external to the System”—to systematic thinking as such.⁷² Malabou’s strategy remains Hegelian in that it demands that we see necessity where we would be inclined to want to see contingency and discontinuity. Žižek recently reminded us that the common critique against Hegel in the twentieth century has been of the totalitarian thinker who justifies historical violence, and of “converting nonsense into sense, chaos into new order.” Žižek claims such a critique “has a grain of truth,” yet such extreme and contingent events of the last century actually call for such a Hegelian reading, which arguably Kojève had himself attempted to convey also with respect to revolutionary violence in the USSR.⁷³ Malabou herself is not as explicit as Žižek

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in her words, or perhaps as reductive as Kojève in her intention, but her use of the metaphor of the “atom bomb (*Plastikbombe*)” to illustrate the level of “surprise” plasticity brings and its potential destruction offers us insight into the speculative demand involved in the process she is outlining.⁷⁴ Here Malabou recognizes the need for the systemising of events, and thus, she distance herself from the anti-Hegelian strategy of subverting such systematic thinking altogether—but the System she is positing is one that can never fully closes itself, or fixes its form for all eternity. In Malabou’s own words: “one never learns Hegel once and for all.” Here, she follows Bernard Bourgeois’ summation that the Absolute is “actualised in the final, concrete identity of the book’s reading”—a reading is always a personal engagement rather than a repetition of the text—and therefore, “to re-read the *Encyclopaedia* is to rewrite it.”⁷⁵

Whether Malabou’s plastic model of philosophy really differs from Kojève’s model of the “Book” depends on how we interpret the nature and impact of speculative philosophy itself. In ways, she has made the Hegelian enterprise more “supple” and humanly mortal and fragile than Kojève’s paradigm of the “Book.”⁷⁶ With Malabou, the act of reading Hegel demands the rewriting, rather than simply repeating some doctrine, or “updating” it. What she finds missing in the French Hegelian reading hitherto is a revaluation of Hegel’s use of *Aufhebung* (sublation) as a “plastic operation” of speculative thought. Malabou finds the problem has been that no one in the French Hegelian tradition has put into practice an *Aufhebung* of the *Aufhebung*—the sublation of what has become via Hegelian interpretation itself the reification of sublation (i.e. end of time, end of history, the “Book”, etc.), where it is perceived as closure, re-appropriation, and the consummation of meaning.⁷⁷ But also, the Absolute requires as she cites Hegel, a “letting-go” or “abrogation” (“*aufgeben*”) of the self, by way of consciousness giving up its antithetical stance to the world once it “grasps itself as Absolute Spirit”. Interestingly, Kojève alludes to this process when he announced the “disappearance of man”—but as we noted earlier, was ambiguous over what it really meant.⁷⁸ Malabou therefore continues the Hegelian idea that was carried through by Kojève of the subject-object unity, yet is able to differentiate what this speculative identity may entail from her predecessors. She does so by encouraging us to think of the *Aufhebung* as “[f]ar from enforcing a violent stoppage of the dialectic progress,” à la Kojève and Koyré’s “dialectical-suppression”, but rather implying “its metamorphosis”, one always “susceptible to [further] transformation.”⁷⁹ If one were to fix the movement of Absolute Knowledge as purely reflective and retrospective and thus a closed circle, “there is no way to escape from the vicious circle”, where such a moment would either be an arbitrary intervention or question of chance. Such a closed circle account of Absolute Knowledge is no different to the classical standpoint of substance ontology—involving an immediate relationship with the world and things where one fails to be surprised. I would propose that Malabou might be overlooking the deeper reasons for Kojève and Koyré’s projection of a “closed circle” account of Absolute Knowledge that were not influenced directly by Heidegger. For instance, Kojève comes to this conclusion of the closed circle after comprehensively traversing the history of Western metaphysics (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger) and its treatment of the relation between time and eternity. His main point that Hegel resolves the aporias afflicting the history of Western philosophy by accounting for its own historical genesis and subjectivity remains true with Malabou’s rendering of the System as more plastic, reflexive and synthetic compared to previous philosophy. But I think there is more than a battle here over how to interpret the metaphor of the circle of Hegel’s Absolute Knowledge.⁸⁰ Although, Kojève’s post-war writings remained open to historical contingencies and continued to address and explain geo-political changes around the world, he did not really see in such contingencies any real “surprise” that breached a Hegelian logic, but rather an unfolding whose structure he could subsume under the categories of universality and homogeneity and the principle of mutual recognition.

Key to Malabou’s way of distancing herself from Kojève’s problematic of producing an enclosing discourse is her “plastic” understanding of post-Hegelian hermeneutics. For Kojève (as cited at the beginning of the article), Hegelian hermeneutics had a political significance. As one was not a neutral commentator when one engaged in Hegel’s writings, one’s interpretation would always uncover one’s general ideological disposition, whether as a “Left” (radical) or “Right” (conservative) Hegelian, or even “anti” Hegelian (liberal “relativist”). For Malabou, the differences in Hegelian interpretations are due primarily to the plasticity constitutive of the act of reading itself—the multiplicity of form-giving and receiving, which Hegel’s work in particular lends itself to in

spades. Hence, why Malabou takes Hegel's phrase to "philosophise in one's idiom" seriously—for this is what ensures the plasticity of Absolute Knowledge. From the act of reading and interpreting in one's idiom is like accessing the universal through one's particularity.⁸¹ For Malabou, there is no superior or meta-"idiom", or for that matter, a final "objective-reality" that could settle an interpretative discussion. Plasticity stands in then for the real base structure of society, unlike Kojève's Marxist-influenced model of action and work, where "verbal" dialectics of interpretation were considered its super-structure. Therefore, Malabou potentially exposes the process of plasticity to the fate of an open-ended "spurious infinite", where the "excess of the future over the future" can never fully sublated or mastered, and that no amount of objective-reality or assumed harmonious state of social relations could overcome the plasticity of Spirit.⁸² On this point, the only basis Malabou provides from the Hegelian text is in the 1831 preface to the *Science of Logic* concerning "plastic discourse".⁸³ This idiomatic hermeneutic highlighted by Malabou is made possible by Hegel's view that there is no superior language for speculative philosophy as every language participates in it. Without this clause, Malabou is aware of the objection that such a model of reading may be "nothing but simple repetition, with no invention at all"—that Kojève himself risked suggesting due to his post-historical model of pure stasis.⁸⁴ Furthermore, without perhaps knowing it, Malabou is heeding Kojève's wager, more so than he had—that new "active" and engaged readings will decide Hegel's future, but not in the sense of *once and for all* or without "surprise". Important to Malabou's concept of plasticity is its openness to criticisms and its continual re-invention. This is the point where her idea of the future differentiates from the others in that she reflexively discusses plasticity in a way that risks its own transformation. Jean-Paul Martinon argues that Malabou's concept of plasticity cannot be grasped with a strict method of critique or even commentary, but only "*set it in another context*" by "testing" it so to speak, and seeing if it is "*truly plastic*".⁸⁵ Plasticity is not simply reducible to a single method or strategy of reading or acting, be it normative, or deconstructive.

I think Malabou has noted something philosophically important about the future—the formal aspect of it—it is dependent upon this act of "giving form" to what is coming. Philosophy itself is a dialogue of giving form to thought (*Denkformen*) and receiving it and re-forming, and so on.⁸⁶ Philosophical readings create "new meanings" of propositions by the simple production of new propositions in return. To ask whether Hegel really intended such a meaning and implication of plasticity in his work might miss the point of Malabou's strategy here—it seems she believes this is the only way to save Hegel and the future in its dialectical sense from the Heideggerian and deconstructive counter-strategies. Her strategy is not to save the future in Heidegger's self-understanding of it as perhaps Koyré arguably tried, nor follow Kojève attempt to disprove that "*history refuted Hegelianism*", but tarry with the forces unleashed by Heideggerian "*destruktion*" and after the linguistic turn, Derridean deconstruction, and to propose that they have not "refuted" the core of Hegelian plasticity. However, despite its initial advantages, there is a problem with taking this path toward a Hegelian plasticity too far. Although, Malabou questions the "arbitrary exegesis" that anything goes with interpretation and tries to differentiate plasticity from elasticity, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what makes a *good* "plastic" (speculative) reading here, especially when knowing or presupposing a "meta"-plastic form is barred. There is a sense in her analysis that the content and context involved in interpretations is secondary to the plastic and transformative process of the form received and returned. With Kojève's analysis, there was at least, before his late period, a view that one should not interpret or read Hegel out of "purely literary interest", but that one's reading of Hegel should determine the basis of a form of praxis or ideological struggle that could directly influence and change our political-social relations, by way of creating new "objectifications" of mutual recognition.⁸⁷ But for Malabou, the value of reading Hegel seems to chiefly lie in making possible the eternal return of the "gift" of plasticity itself, rather than as Kojève would have it, in realising or giving universal objectivity to one's interpretation and political ideal via collective action. The implication would be to maintain a plurality of meaning continues and arguably make Kojève's "future of the world" an unending process and end-in-itself.

Malabou's theory of plasticity serves to save both a sense of finitude and teleology to Hegel's thinking of the future, yet she does so in a way that implies no form of thought or life is immune enough to its own radical transformation. It is not entirely clear then whether she has saved plasticity from exposure to indeterminacy, or Derrida's own "*relève*" of a "Hegelianism without reserve".⁸⁸ It is of arguable significance that in her writings

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published after *The Future of Hegel*, she has turned toward a more materialist theory of plasticity based in the biological and neurological sphere, rather than in relations between labour and capital. Whether this strategy signifies a retreat or reluctance in dealing with the specificity involved and difficulty of changing the social and political forms of mediation is open to debate. Nevertheless, Malabou considers her project one that concerns pursuing the revolutionary potential of plasticity. However, plasticity is still presented as a double-edge sword, which Malabou is to her credit aware of—where the assumed Hegelian “Sunday of Life” that brings plasticity to the surface, risks the “peril of” leaving us still in the shadow of Kojève’s post-historical condition that struck figures before her from Georges Bataille to Giorgio Agamben. As she ends her book, she reflects on this issue of risk in the plastic (post-Hegelian) age:

[T]he major problem of our time is in fact the arrival of *free time*. *Technological* simplification, the shortening of distances ... bring about a state where there is nothing more to do. The most sterile aspect of the future lies in unemployment, both economic and metaphysical, which it promises. But this promise is also a promise of novelty, a promise that there are forms of life which must be invented.⁸⁹

The issue of whether the emergence of “free time” in modernity converts into new political tasks or humanised “projects” was one Kojève briefly ruminated on just after the War, and noted its philosophical importance for both Aristotle and Marx.⁹⁰ But does plasticity really deliver socio-historical changes that enhance the freedom of modern life in the public realm via public institutions or practices? How can Malabou transition from the plasticity in Hegel’s work with its remnant of future temporality to a specific form of politics or resistance that attempts to give the future a new and more singular direction as well as form? One concern is how it insures itself against de-politicisation or being assimilated into the self-making industries of late capitalism. But it is Malabou’s chapter on Hegel’s anthropology, drawn from the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Mind* rather than Koyré and Kojève’s resource the *Phenomenology*, which holds an important place in her overall theory of plasticity and connecting to the real everyday lives of people. For it is in her interpretation of Hegel’s later anthropology that she is better able to relate plasticity to concrete aspects of a human condition. Here the analysis focuses on the re-duplication of “habit” as the human being’s capacity for *bildung*, or formation of a “second nature” that distinguishes it from the another object in the natural world.⁹¹ Whilst Kojève considered the question of humanity’s emergence from nature to be “undeducible” in naturalistic terms, Malabou presents a more robust materialist anthropology than Kojève’s rather “spiritual” dialectic of anthropogenesis, which ended up in anthropological formalism and symbolic re-enactment of negation. Unlike his late gesture of formal negation as a way out of biological reductionism(s) the “timeless” future may bring, Malabou believes life after Hegel is not a repetition of the same, nor a process of “reanimalization” or simple re-naturalisation, but a life exemplified by a free and self-conscious life of habit. She has in mind here habits that enable the “mechanism of self-feeling”—the reduplication of human negativity (“non-biological desire”) in symbolic yet plastic practices and projects, which with Aristotelian inspiration involve the “work of the art of the soul.” Life understood in terms of plasticity is neither a passive animalistic life of consumption, nor an active life of a “sovereign” subject detached from the natural world without need of substitution. Plasticity negotiates the interaction between the symbolic and the natural worlds. Malabou argues, “what is exemplary in man is less human-ness than his status as an *insistent accident*.” Humans are like “plastic individuals,” giving presence to a singularity that converts accidents or improvisations into “an *essence a posteriori*.”⁹² The contingent becomes essential—the “accident” of our evolutionary development our unique strength. Following the existential terms that preoccupied Koyré and Kojève, Malabou reappraises the view that for Hegel human beings have no fixed or eternal substance—the Hegelian human is one concerned with habit-creation. This revaluation of habit provides a way of understanding the need to keep the “speculative clock alive” and the sense of time as future-directed (“*voir venir*”). For without the activities our capacity for habit render and shape in us, we could “not know how to tell time” or really be alive and know ourselves with a strong sense of finitude, and the work of Spirit throughout history would risk becoming undone.⁹³ Even though this aspect of Malabou’s consideration of plasticity in everyday life is significant, how one preserves the practice and culture of habit from being reduced to “technological simplification” and losing its vitality still poses a challenge to the dialectic of plasticity.

Besides these considerations, Malabou's *The Future of Hegel* has at least opened up the debate on what the future means in Hegel, and not let post-war schisms undermine it or foreclose its discussion. The value of her book lies not just in its risk of giving Hegel *another* chance, but also freeing the very conditions of Hegelian temporality from the simple terms of negation and otherness that were arguably over-emphasised by Koyré and Kojève. But as for the applications of a Hegelian plasticity in a socio-historical context, further discussion or "testing" is needed over the possible implications. Not to say Malabou's analysis *could not* be transposed into political, social, or ethical theory—but the way in which plasticity would be adopted in such a case I think would be arguably more complex than the connections she has shown between plasticity and philosophy and reading. Malabou herself has considered the issue of the application of plasticity since the publication of *The Future of Hegel* and delved into the field of neuroscience to discuss plasticity in more detail—noting in her observations that Hegel's System is not essentially different from the systems of neurobiology. In part, this recent part of her work again raises the significance of the dynamic role of the biological element in the re-duplication of our "second" (humanised and temporal) nature. Yet it is still difficult to know how plasticity can actually resist the logic of late capitalism given that one could argue it reflects the process of capital and commodification rather than being distorted by it. In her book on neuroscience, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* Malabou recognises the pitfalls of a "neuronal ideology of flexibility," which she knows enough not to mistake for a political basis for resistance. But she remains committed to distinguishing plasticity from flexibility and elasticity, by arguing that it holds a tension and turbulence that can resist change as well as will it, and for this reason, provide an "emancipatory political understanding".⁹⁴ She has, I would argue, made her speculative wager on neurology to help plasticity overcome both the stalemates of traditional Hegelianism(s) and their deconstruction—but one wonders if it will deliver in actuality the revolutionary potential she seeks. Žižek is one commentator who has kept an eye on the political implications of plasticity. Awakened by the possibility of a dialectical union between materialism and neuroscience, Žižek poses an important response to Malabou and with it the "cognitivist Hegel" reading:

... in terms of plasticity, do we mean by this merely a capacity for infinite accommodation to the needs and conditions given in advance by our environs—in which we can get the infinitely adaptable "protean self"—or do we mean a Self capable of "negativity," of resisting and subverting the pressures of its environs, of breaking out of "self-maintenance" whose ideal is to maintain one's homeostasis.⁹⁵

Even if Malabou rejects the dichotomy between reductionist arguments of natural science and anti-reductionist ones from philosophy, she may still be speculating and investing too much in the brain and presupposing there is an untapped immanent excess there or dialectical potential that awaits its own release.⁹⁶ As Derrida would say there is an essential "Undecidability" in the framework of Malabou's speculative *oeuvre*, which for better or worse, resists anticipating its own implications.⁹⁷ She frames the whole question of the future as one involves a risk of thinking and being open to possibility and transformation. Although she circumvents the "impasse" of the end of time confronted by Koyré and Kojève, it is another question whether a theory of plasticity is enough to reinvigorate the historical or political meaning of the future to the point of compelling us to take the risk of projecting ourselves into it through action. What this implies is that the speculation of the future in and of Hegel needs to continue—but transitioning from the question of *that* there is a future to *what* do we want the future to be, and *how* will it be realised.

RORY JEFFS is a PhD candidate in philosophy at Deakin University. His thesis is a critical examination of the work and legacy of the Russian-born French Hegelian philosopher Alexandre Kojève, and its philosophical and political reception in the work of Georges Bataille, Leo Strauss, and Carl Schmitt.

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NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, "Preface: A Time for Farewells Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou." Trans. Joseph D. Cohen, in Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, viii.
2. Alexandre Kojève, "Hegel, Marx and Christianity (1946)." Trans. Hilail Gildin. *Interpretation* 1 (Summer 1970), 41. Hereafter as *HMC*.
3. Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, Dialectic*. Trans. Lisabeth During. New York: Routledge, 2005, 1. Hereafter as *FH*. Originally published in French in 1996 as *L'Avenir de Hegel*.
4. Slavoj Žižek, "Preface: Hegel's Century" *Hegel and Infinity: Religion, Politics, and the Dialectic*. Eds. Slavoj Žižek, Clayton Crockett, Creston Davis. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, xi.
5. See Malabou, *FH*, 4. What she actually writes is: "If we fail to be aware that the idea of the future has, as it were, a 'future', then we would be ourselves guilty of 'levelling down' that very future and, in a sense lagging behind it."
6. See Derrida, "Preface", xi. See also Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel: From Surrealism to Postmodernism*. London: Routledge, 2003.
7. See Derrida, "Preface", xviii–xix. Derrida also says Heidegger simply reinforced this critique in the 1930–31 lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, xx. It is also worth considering Heidegger's other writings on Hegel, such as *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988. See also the post-war essays and seminars, "Hegel's Concept of Experience" *Off The Beaten Track*. Ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 86–156; and "The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics" *Identity and Difference*. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row, 1969, 42–74.
8. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, § 82, 483. Hereafter as *BT*. Heidegger paraphrases Hegel as saying, "[t]he being of time is the 'now' [*Jetzt*]". Yet Hegel differentiates between the "now" and "present", as he says, "the vanishing of the differences [present, future and past] into singularity is the present as "*Now* [*Jetzt*]", whilst the "true Present [*Gegen-wart*]" is eternity," which does not exclude time, but is the unity of past-present-future, which is not a "flowing stream", see G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature: Being Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, §259, 37-39, and § 238 [Zusatz], 35. Of note is that Hegel had used the word "*Jetzt*" in the dialectic of Sense Certainty, see *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, §102-07, 62-64. Koyré also discusses distinctions see endnote 23 below.
9. See Aristotle, *Aristotle's Physics*. Trans. Hippocrates G. Apostle. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1969. Book IV: 10–14.
10. Heidegger, *BT*, 483. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature* § 259, 37. The 'Mechanics' section is from §253-71 (28-84).
11. See Heidegger, *BT* § 65, 373–76.
12. See Heidegger, *BT*, 486. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 801, 487.
13. See Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 82 and 38–39. The "farewell to time" quote is cited in Malabou, *FH*, 4.
14. Alexandre Koyré, "Present Trends of French Philosophical Thought." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59:3 (July 1998, 534).
15. In his lecture series on the *Phenomenology*, Heidegger critiqued the connections his colleague at Marburg, Nicolai Hartmann, had made between Husserl and Hegel's phenomenological methods as "misleading". See Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 21, 28-29. Cf. Hartmann, "Hegel et le Problème de la Dialectique du Réel." Traduit. R. L. Klee. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 38:3 (Juillet-Septembre 1931, 307). Both Koyré and Kojève acknowledged Hartmann's connection and would interpret Hegel as a phenomenologist in the Husserlian and Heideggerian sense. The "exile" reference relates to Koyré's analysis of Hegel's (non)reception in France in his 1931 conference paper, "Rapport sur l'état des études hégéliennes en France" *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971, 225–252.
16. Hegel, *Jenenser Logik, Metaphysik und Naturphilosophie*. Ed. Lasson. Leipzig, 1923 [1804-05 Lectures]; *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*. Ed. Hoffmeister. Leipzig, 1932 [1803-04 Lectures], *Jenenser Realphilosophie II*. Ed. Hoffmeister. Leipzig, 1931 [1805-06 Lectures].
17. Alexandre Koyré, "Hegel à Iéna [1934]" *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, 147–190. Hereafter as *HI*. All translations from this text as well as other texts by Koyré will be my own. See also, Koyré, *De la mystique à la science: Cours, conférences et documents: 1922–62*. Ed. Pietro Redondi. Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. 1986, 25, 41–42. Koyré wrote in the course *annuaire* for the 1932–33 semester that he used Hegel's *Theological Writings* and the Lasson editions of the *Jenenser Logik* and *Jenenser Realphilosophie*.
18. Koyré, "Note sur la langue et la terminologie hégéliennes" *Études d'histoire de la pensée philosophique*, 212–13. All translations from this text are my own. Koyré links this "timeless becoming" to the influence of Jacob Boehme and Nicolas De Cusa on Hegel, and questions John McTaggart's interpretation of it to mean a "timeless state" in *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic*.
19. Picking out one marginal note from the incomplete 1803–04 lectures, Koyré cites Hegel (from the *Jenenser Realphiloso-*

phie D): “spirit is time, *Geist ist Zeit*.” Koyré adds, “Hoffmeister proposes the correction: spirit is in time, *Geist ist IN DER Zeit*.” Yet he does not follow Hoffmeister’s correction and is adamant that “[t]he Hegelian Spirit is time.” Koyré, *HI*, 179. In the 1938–39 semester of his Hegel Course, Kojève analyses the same note, and says: “In the Jena Lectures, Hegel had said: ‘*Geist ist Zeit*’: ‘Spirit is Time’. Here [in the *Phenomenology*], he says: “*Der Geist erscheint in der Zeit*”; “Spirit appears in Time”. Has he changed his opinion? I don’t think so. It is, according to me, a simple terminological difference.” See Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: leçons sur La phénoménologie de l’esprit, professées de 1933 à 1939 à l’École des hautes-études*. Ed. Raymond Queneau. Paris: Gallimard. TEL Edition, 1968, 386. Hereafter as *ILH*. All translations from this text and other cited texts from Kojève in French are my own. I will also be citing from the English translation: *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Trans. James H. Nichols Jr. Ed. Allan Bloom. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980. Hereafter as *IRH*. See also Hyppolite’s 1938 article, “The Concept of Life and Consciousness in Hegel’s Jena Philosophy” *Studies on Marx and Hegel*. Trans. John O’Neill. New York and London: Basic Books, 1969, 13. Hyppolite connects Hegel’s marginal note to the *Phenomenology*. It is worth noting too that Heidegger in his reading of the Jena-period of Hegel refers only to the Lasson’s 1923 publication and claims “[i]n the *Jena Logic* [1804-05]... the analysis of time in the *Encyclopaedia* has been developed in all its essential parts.” See Heidegger, *BT*, fn. xxx, 500. See also Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 77–78.

20. See Koyré, *HI*, 165-73 (trans. *Jena Logic*) and 180-87 (trans. *Jena Realphilosophie II*). Koyré incorrectly claims that Hegel wrote the Jena Logic manuscripts in 1802, citing the 1915 Ehrenberg edition, which had been re-edited by Lasson. *HI*, 152, fn.4. The real dates being during the 1804–05 lectures as pointed out by Philip Grier. See “The End of History and The Return of History” *Hegel: Myths and Legends*. Ed. Jon Stewart. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996, 186. The correct dates for the manuscripts were never confirmed until Heinz Kimmerle wrote up a detailed chronology in 1967; see “Zur Chronologie von Hegels Jenaer Schriften.” *Hegel-Studien* 4 (1967, 125–176). It is worth noting too that Heidegger in his reading of the Jena-period of Hegel refers only to the same Lasson edition as Koyré and claims “[i]n the *Jena Logic* [1804-05]... the analysis of time in the *Encyclopaedia* has been developed in all its essential parts.” See Heidegger *BT*, 500, n. xxx. See also, Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 77–78.

21. Koyré, *HI*, 162, fn. 3; see also 166, 177 and 187 (for the “esoteric” reference). Interestingly, Herbert Marcuse interprets these same Jena manuscripts featuring the word “*Unruhe*” in terms of the movement of “life” (qua historicity), not time. See Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel’s Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*. Trans. Seyla Benhabib. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1987, 60, 219–227. In contrast to Koyré, Marcuse sees continuity between Hegel’s use of “life” in the Frankfurt *Systemfragment* (See *Early Theological Writings*. Trans. T.M. Knox, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971, 309-320) and the Jena Manuscripts, which for him, builds up a tension with the later *Logic*. See also Hyppolite, “The Concept of Life and Consciousness in Hegel’s Jena Philosophy,” 3-21. Of note too is that Jean-Luc Nancy uses “*inquiétude*” for “*Unruhe*” in the title and subject of his book *The Restlessness of the Negative*. Trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002. The translator noting its sense in French has more of an “affective inflection”, 114–15.

22. Koyré, *HI*, 163. See also 179, fn.1.

23. See Koyré, *HI*, 170. Koyré underlines Hegel’s distinction between “*Gegen-wart*” (the present) and “*Jetzt*” (“*maintenant*”—in English—“the now”). He says in a footnote that the time of nature is “*Jetzt*”—that is, an “abstract eternity” rather than the concrete eternity of the “*l’instant*”, which is a “living and *inquiète* unity” or, “what, with Hegel, we call the “present” [*présent*].” See *HI*, 175-177. See also Derrida’s discussion of these two German terms in Hegel and Heidegger and the issue concerning “the metaphysics of presence [*maintenance*]”. Derrida had noted that in §259 of the *Philosophy of Nature* Hegel’s discussion of the “present” both “confirm and challenge” the Heideggerian interpretation. See “*Ousia and Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*” *Margins of Philosophy*. Trans. Alan Bass, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982, 33-67.

24. See *HI*, 160, fn. 1. Kojève presents Koyré’s analysis of the structure of Hegelian temporality this way: “future → past → present (→ future)”. *IRH*, 134.

25. *HI*, 177. Koyré describes Heidegger’s *Dasein* in similar terms, see “L’évolution philosophique de Martin Heidegger” *Études d’histoire de la pensée philosophique*, 279-80.

26. *HI*, 177. cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology* § 361–62, 218.

27. Grier, “The End of History and The Return of History”, 187–88. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, 29, 34.

28. Koyré, *HI*, 178. Koyré compares this kind of time to Bergson’s just as Heidegger did in *Being and Time* (500-01, n. xxx). Koyré also adds more importantly that Hegel’s distinction between “now” and “present” had been abandoned in the 1805-6 manuscripts (183).

29. Koyré, *HI*, 189. My emphases. Cf. Koyré, “Note”, 215. Koyré though had difficulty interpreting whether Hegel meant human beings were essentially within eternity or within time. Koyré argues, “one is, of course, within them both, for time alone allows the realization of dialectical development since alone, being negation and death, it is also the source of movement and life.” Marcuse and Hyppolite also perceived Absolute Knowledge as a “timeless” and ahistorical form of knowledge, with Hyppolite claiming not to perceive any “clear solution to these problems” of how it interacts with time itself. See Marcuse, *Hegel’s Ontology*, 227; Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. Samuel

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Cherniak and John Heckman. Evanston IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974, 596. See also, Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind: Volume II, Willing*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovic, 1978, 39–51. Arendt considers Koyré's essay "brilliant" and argues, "Hegel's ultimate failure to reconcile the two mental activities, willing and thinking, with their opposing time concepts, seems to me evident, but he himself would have disagreed."

30. Koyré, *HI*, 153.

31. See Baugh, *French Hegel*, 27. Joseph Flay, *Hegel's Quest for Certainty*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1984, 406. On the "spurious infinite", see endnote 36 below. Koyré had said to neglect the necessity of the System and focus exclusively on the less-systematic ideas of Hegel's youth would be pursuing "the image of the young romantic Hegel". And by "neglecting the works of mature age... you would run a great risk: to misunderstand and misinterpret the 'Hegelian' Hegel, that of the *Logic*. More precisely: the fact of focusing on the work of youth already implies, *ipso facto*, a disregard [*mésestimé*] and ignorance [*méconnaissance*] of the *Logic*." *HI*, 149–51.

32. Grier, "The End of History and the Return of History," 189. See endnote 20 above on the issue of the date cited.

33. See Kojève, *ILH*, 57. Furthermore, Kojève says that if he had not read Heidegger, he would not have really understood Hegel's *Phenomenology*. *IRH*, 259, fn. 41. Kojève acknowledges the influence of Koyré and Heidegger in *Le Concept, Le Temps et le Discours: Introduction au système du savoir*. Paris: Gallimard, 1990, 32–33; *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne I*. Paris: Gallimard, 1968, 165, n.3.

34. Kojève refers to ontological dualism as "correcting" Hegel's "error" of dialectical monism in the *Introduction*. Kojève, *IRH*, 212–15. Kojève also refers to many other corrections as part of his planned "update [*mise à jour*]" of the Hegelian System. For example, his interpretation of the "desire of desire" in terms of the struggle for pure prestige, and presenting Hegel as a "realist" rather than an idealist in the Fichtean tradition. Realism for Kojève meant the "real" natural world was not reducible to dialectical knowledge per se, as the dialectic was limited to the results of the "interaction" between nature and man, and hence, presupposes an independent reality. See *IRH*, 152–53.

35. See Kojève, *IRH*, 134, fn. 21. Kojève often makes the nature-human distinction, but he does outline also differences between "cosmological" or "physical" time, which bears the primacy of "presence [*Gegenwart*]", and the structure of "biological" time, which contains a primacy of the past.

36. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Trans. A.V. Miller. New York: Amherst Books, 1969, 142. On the difference between "spurious infinity" and its "true" or "affirmative infinity", see *Science of Logic*, 137–50. For Hegel's critique of Newton, see *Philosophy of Nature*, 66–77.

37. See Kojève, *IRH*, 177–78, fn. 2. Before his Hegel Course, Kojève had submitted a dissertation on quantum physics to the Sorbonne in 1932. See *L'idée du déterminisme dans la physique classique et dans la physique modern*. Paris: Librairie générale française, 1990. The dissertation argued that quantum mechanics proved the impossibility of the model of classical determinism as it is outlined by Laplace's theorem that held if there was an "Intelligence" which could know the location and motion of every object in the universe one could know everything about the Universe and know all future motion.

38. See Kojève, *Le Concept, Le Temps et le Discours: Introduction au système du savoir*. This was the first part of his "introduction" to the System, adding four more volumes that also comprised this "introduction", see *Essai d'une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne*, 3 Vols, Gallimard, Paris, 1968–73; *Kant*, Gallimard, Paris 1973. One part of this post-War "*mise à jour*" of the Hegelian System included a planned philosophy of nature called "energo-logy" which would correct Hegel's and incorporate in it the implications of quantum mechanics.

39. Kojève, "The Idea of Death in the Philosophy of Hegel (1947)" *G.W.F. Hegel: Critical Assessment Volume II: Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Readings: From British Hegelianism to the Frankfurt School*. Trans. Joseph J. Carpino. Ed. Robert Stern. London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 315.

40. Kojève, *IRH*, 136–37, fn. 25. One of Kojève's examples of a "project" is Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon as an act of civil war, where Caesar's "*past* distinguishes it [the act] from a simple 'dream' or 'utopia'". See also Kojève's 1942 manuscript *La notion de l'autorité*—which continues the association of a future-oriented temporality with the idea of a "project", in this instance forming the basis of the authority of leaders and revolutionaries. See *La notion de l'autorité*. Ed. François Terré, Paris: Gallimard, 2004, 72–76, 126, 144–45.

41. For Hegel, "that which is genuinely permanent and substantial in the complexity and contingency of appearance and fleeting manifestation, is the notion [*Begriff*] of the thing, the immanent universal . . . the universal which is the thought itself ". Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 36–37 [n.b. Miller translation]. Kojève describes the concept as "the complete system of concepts, the 'idea of ideas,' or the Idea". Kojève, *IRH*, 101.

42. Kojève, *IRH*, 131–32. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology* § 46, 27. Hegel's sentence is: "As for time, which it is to be presumed would constitute, as the counterpart of space, the material of the other part of pure mathematics, it is the existent Notion [*Begriff*] itself."

43. Hegel, *Phenomenology* § 801, 487. The German: "*Die Zeit ist der Begriff Selbst, der da ist*". Kojève cites the German and then translates it. He adds, "it must be understood that in writing this strange sentence, Hegel weighed his words carefully." Kojève, *IRH*, 101. Koyré also emphasizes both of these Hegel quotes. See Koyré, *HI*, 185, and "Note", 216–220.

44. Malabou, *FH*, 1. Cf. Heidegger, *BT*, 485. Kojève though thinks Heidegger also realises that the "Concept=Time", and

- footnotes that this new understanding of time “needs to be *developed*, to be *realized*; for I personally believe that this has not yet been done.” Kojève, *IRH*, 102, fn.1.
45. Kojève, *IRH*, 148.
46. See Michael S. Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth Century France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988, 143–44.
47. Kojève, *IRH*, 107. Cf. Hegel, *Phenomenology* § 802, 488.
48. See Hegel, *Phenomenology* § 801, 487.
49. John W. Burbidge, *Hegel on Logic and Religion: The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1992, 80.
50. See Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature* § 258, “Remark”, 35. Interestingly, Hegel goes onto to say that the notion of eternity (that Kojève believes we fall back into) should not be grasped “as existing, as it were, outside of time”. Cf. Heidegger, *BT*, 485.
51. Kojève, *ILH*, 385. See also, 388–89, fn.1. All Kojève’s passages on the “Book” are not included in the English translation of the *Introduction*. To illustrate how this form of “post-historical” reading is nothing unique, Kojève says, “Paul’s future which has not yet read the Book is Peter’s past who has already read it”. (385).
52. Kojève, *ILH*, 388, fn. Cf. Kojève, *HMC*, 36, 39.
53. Kojève, *ILH*, 393–394. Cf. Malabou, *FH*, 3. “From this standpoint, everything that occurs can only be the indicated of what has already come to pass; everything still in the future is simply a potential return to itself.” Malabou closely reads Hegel’s relation to Aristotle, but in a way that differs from Kojève.
54. Baugh, *French Hegel*, 27.
55. See Kojève, *IRH*, 159–62, Revised fn. [n.b. Nichols translates “*doit*” as “must”]; also at *ILH*, 437. Kojève’s footnote written in 1962 was a revision of his earlier (circa 1946) footnote that viewed that the “American way of life” represented the “post-historical” condition, and now turns to “the Japanese way of life” as far more post-historical, with its practices of snobbery, and formal cultural activities that represent “formal negations” without historical content. Derrida closely reads into this revision, scrutinising Kojève’s strange use of the word “*doit*”, which he finds signifies as indicating for Kojève that “there is some promise and there is some historicity as future-to-come.” Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of Debt, The Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994, 92. Derrida’s reading brings attention also to the changing nature of Kojève’s speculative “sketches [*esquisse*]” of the “universal and homogenous State” he says will emerge at the end of history (e.g. from a Socialist Empire to the European Union).
56. Malabou, *FH*, 6.
57. See Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing: Dialectic, Destruction, Deconstruction*. Trans. Carolyn Shread. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, 23, and also 87, fn. 11. She even says in this text, reflecting on *The Future of Hegel* that in Kojève, Koyré, and Hyppolite’s readings of Hegel, “a figure of Heidegger [is] speaking under a pseudonym.”
58. See Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 9. See also Justin Clemens, “The Age of Plastic: Or, Catherine Malabou on the Futures Market.” *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 6:1 (2010, 154–157). Interestingly, Jean-Paul Martinon suggests Malabou may be continuing Derrida’s reading of Hegel, but taking it in a direction away from relativism. See Martinon, *On Futurity*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 31.
59. Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 5.
60. Malabou, *FH*, 4.
61. Malabou, *FH*, 14. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, §258, 34. As cited earlier, Koyré used this quote from Hegel to describe only “human” time. See also Derrida, “*Ousia and Gramme*”, 44.
62. Malabou, *FH*, 133. See also *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 32–33.
63. See Kojève, “Letter to [Carl] Schmitt, 11/VII/55.” *Interpretation* 29:1 (Fall 2001, 103). Cf. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. Trans. T.M. Knox. Revised. Ed. Stephen Houlgate. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 15–16.
64. Malabou, *FH*, 6.
65. Malabou, *FH*, 8. Plasticity derives from the Greek word “*plessein*” (“to model” or “mould”) and in its modern sense implies things “susceptible to change”. Malabou also draws comparisons of plasticity to human beings, namely children, who are “plastic”. Sculpture provides a useful analogy for Malabou, as it involves the transformation of an object into a form which cannot be changed back to its original state. Kojève did not use the word plasticity per se, but did argue human beings “mould” themselves through work and education. See Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*. Ed. Bryan Paul-Frost. Trans. Bryan-Paul Frost and Robert Howse. Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, 432 and also §65, 398–413.
66. See Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art, Volume II*. Trans. T.M. Knox. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975, 719 [Section II]. Sculpture was listed by Hegel himself as “the genuinely plastic” art “par excellence” (709, 722). Malabou also cites Hegel’s ‘Preface’ to the *Phenomenology* as another occasion where he uses the word “*plastisch*”, *FH*, 11; *Phenomenology of Spirit* §64, 39. It should be noted that Jean-Luc Nancy had also discussed Hegel’s use of plasticity. See *The Speculative Remark: One of Hegel’s Bon Mots*. Trans. Céline Surprenant. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2002, Ch.1.

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67. Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 50, 66. Cf. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*. Trans. William Wallace and A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, §377 [Zusatz] and § 384 [Zusatz]. For Hegel, the Absolute has no Absolute Other.
68. See Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 65–66. For the “[iron] cage” reference to Kojève, see Roth, *Knowing and History*, 139.
69. Malabou, *FH*, 13. Translator Lisabeth During explains the parenthesis as “marking the reserve inherent in the waiting.” In *FH*, xlix. Cf. Martinon, *On Futurity*, 44. In standard French, “*voir venir*” means to wait, to observe how events are developing, and also, to be able see where someone is going with something or some point.
70. Derrida, “Preface,” xiii.
71. Malabou, *FH*, 13, 18.
72. Malabou, *FH*, 17–18. She explains it in *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing* as “the form of the dialectic without its metaphysical understanding.” 53.
73. Žižek, “Preface: Hegel’s Century,” xi. Cf. Kojève, *IRH*, 159–61, fn. [revised]; also *ILH*, 145–60.
74. See Malabou, *FH*, 4, 134, 187. The explosiveness of plasticity is very important for Malabou, as it explains not only the fragility of form, but capacity of plasticity to explode “whole centuries of discourse”.
75. Bernard Bourgeois cited by Malabou, *FH*, 185. This also recalls Derrida’s comment: “We will never be finished with the reading or rereading of Hegel... [as] it is something more than the circular closure of its representation.” Derrida, *Positions*. Trans. A. Bass, London: Continuum, 2004, 65.
76. See Malabou, “You Be My Body for Me: Body, Shape, and Plasticity” *A Companion to Hegel*. Ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur. Malden MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, 615. Malabou says, “[i]n the end, Kojève asserts that the genuine spirit’s body is the ‘book’ that the ‘wise man’ (in Absolute Knowledge) has been able to write”.
77. See Malabou, *FH*, 144–46. Malabou uses Derrida’s translation of *Aufhebung* as “*relève*” to capture its three-fold meaning. See *Margins of Philosophy*, 121. In his Hegel Course, Kojève used more stronger words such as “*suppression-dialectique*”, but reflected later that “[u]nfortunately, any translation of this common German word cannot render its triple meaning, which signifies at once suppression or annulation, conservation and elevation or sublimation. This is why I am obliged to replace it by an artificial and technical term, composed elsewhere, as ‘dialectical-suppression’ for example.” See *Essai d’une histoire raisonnée de la philosophie païenne*, 80–81. Cf. Koyré, “Note”, 209, 223–24. Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, 28. For Hegel’s own explanation of the *Aufhebung*, see *Science of Logic* ‘Remark,’ 106–08.
78. See Malabou, *FH*, 156–57; Hegel, *Phenomenology* §33, 20. Cf. Kojève, *IRH*, 157–58, fn.5, and 168. Malabou translates “*aufgeben*” as “*dessaisissement*”, the latter of which has connotations of relinquishment or withdrawing a case from court. For Kojève, Hegel’s use of “*aufgeben*” meant: Absolute Knowledge “is selfless (*selbst-los*)—that is, inhuman. In it, the Subject (Thought, Concept, and so on) coincides with the *Object*.” And consequently, this means the “necessary abandonment of *Individuality*.”
79. Malabou, *FH*, 144–45. Cf. “You Be My Body for Me”, 624. Malabou says, “The anonymous self of Spirit emerges [at Absolute Knowledge], which gives up forever its own struggling essence. The abandonment will never give way to a reattachment. Neither a book [à la Kojève] nor a sovereign [à la Bataille], this new form of self without inwardness, without externality, is subjected neither to anyone nor to anything. It is not even attached to itself.”
80. Malabou accepts a closed immanent totality, but she frames it as one that is “plastic”. See “A Conversation with Catherine Malabou,” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 9:1 (Winter 2008, 1–13). 10. Žižek also re-interprets the closed circle with the metaphor of the Möbius Band (“inner eight”). See *For They Do Not Know What They Do*. London and New York: Verso. Second Edition, 2008, 218–19. It should be noted that Hegel insisted on the “circularity” of his System, which corresponded to a “true infinity” rather than the line of the “infinite progress”. See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 71, 149 and 842.
81. Malabou, *FH*, 13, see also 168. Malabou does not cite the source of this quote from Hegel (“philosophize in one’s idiom”), although she refers to Hegel’s passages on philosophical language in the *Science of Logic* (32). Malabou also refers to “ventriloquism” as another idiomatic strategy used by Kojève, Derrida, Bataille, and Butler in their readings of Hegel, in “You Be My Body”, 616–17.
82. Malabou, *FH*, 6. cf. Kojève, *HMC*, 34 and 41.
83. See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 40 and 42.
84. Malabou, *FH*, 189. Cf. Kojève, *ILH*, 393.
85. Martinon, *On Futurity*, 32, 36. Hence, Martinon approaches Malabou’s book with the “*idiomatic plastic test*” of translating plasticity into English and finding a new idiom (34–35). His example is using the word “*sollen*” in terms of “*voir venir*” to mean “what ought to come”. (54)
86. Philosophy’s form is ambiguous as Malabou explains, and unlike, faith and art, “philosophy does not have its own object... it is unable to put its own content *in front of* itself, to bring itself face to face with its own content.” *FH*, 138, also 137, 151. Even though Hegel critiques philosophers who disavow “determinate universality” (i.e. form), he still realizes in the *Science of Logic*, that “the process of *determining what the absolute is* has a negative outcome, and the absolute itself

appears only as the negation of all predicates and as the void. But since equally it must be pronounced to be the position of all predicates, it appears as the most formal contradiction.” *Science of Logic*, 530. Cf. Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 55—where Malabou refers to an “antiform ideology” being prevalent in aesthetic theory.

87. See Kojève, *HMC*, 40–41. See Roth, *Knowing and History*, 144–45, who discusses this side of Kojève’s thought before his later period.

88. See Derrida, “From Restricted Economy to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve.” In *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Oxon: Routledge Classics, 1978, 317–350. See also Bruno Bosteels, “Hegel in America”. In *Hegel and Infinity: Religion, Politics, and the Dialectic*, 76–78. Bosteels critiques the “finitist Hegel” epitomised for him by Nancy’s reading, but arguably also present in Malabou’s analysis too.

89. Malabou, *FH*, p. 192. Cf. Bataille, “Letter to X, Lecturer on Hegel,” in *The Bataille Reader*. Trans. Betsy Wing. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, 296–301; also, Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*. Trans. Kevin Attell. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.

90. See Kojève, “Outline of a Doctrine of French Policy”. Trans. Erik De Vries. *Policy Review* 126, (August–September 2004, 3–40). Kojève wrote this document as a memorandum sent to General de Gaulle in 1945 on how to reconstruct France after the War. Afterwards, Kojève worked for the French Ministry of Economic Affairs and remained there until his death in 1968. He was also one of the chief architects of the European Common Market in 1957.

91. See Malabou, *FH*, 21–76. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, 25–152. Malabou does argue that a human beings second nature is not a sublation, but a “re-duplication” of nature, and uses the analogy of a “mirror stage” of spirit and “virtuality”. *FH*, 26, 55.

92. Malabou, *FH*, 73.

93. Malabou, *FH*, 75–76. Cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind* §410, 140–47. See also Hegel, *Philosophy of Right* §151 (Addition), 159–60. Of note is Malabou’s use of Aristotle’s theory of potentiality (*dunamis*) to illustrate Hegel’s argument on habit as representing “the possibility of future time which runs ahead of presence (*entelechy*)”. *FH*, 50. Cf. Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, §65, 398–413. Kojève describes family life, education and cultural rites and habits as humanity “in potentiality”, but he still distinguishes this from humanity “in actuality” represented by the historical negativity which involves struggle and labour and the status of the “post-historical” citizen.

94. See Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* Trans. Sebastian Rand. New York: Fordham University Press, 2008, 12, 15, 53. Malabou asks: “What should we do so that our consciousness of the brain does not purely and simply coincide with the spirit of capitalism?” She adds that we need first to distinguish plasticity from its “mistaken cognate” flexibility, and computer and mechanical models of the brain. Later explaining in the book, “[i]t must be acknowledged that neuronal liberation has not liberated us.” (67).

95. Žižek. *The Parallax View*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2006, 209–10.

96. See Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, 69, 80.

97. See Malabou, *Plasticity at the Dusk of Writing*, 22. Malabou writes: “The plasticity of *The Future of Hegel* therefore lies in wait of its future.”