

Death, Hegel, and Kojève

Abstract:

Stemming from a reading of Hegel's account of the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Kojève argued that death is the central notion of Hegel's philosophy. I will discuss several themes in relation to this claim of Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, namely the themes of freedom, individuality, and historicity. I will also discuss Kojève's reading that Hegel rejects both all conceptions of the afterlife, and too the belief in the afterlife as a manifestation of the "unhappy consciousness". I will point out flaws of Kojève's interpretation throughout.

Keywords:

Hegel, Kojève, Death, Freedom, Individuality, Historicity, Afterlife

The most celebrated episode in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* is his account of the acquisition of self-consciousness by two human beings who engage in life-and-death combat in order to gain "recognition" from each other. Each of them risks his life, thereby showing that both are willing to surrender or put at risk their biological life in return for recognition, or at least a hope of it. A dead person may of course gain recognition, as with Achilles who is said to have preferred a short life of glory to a long life of mediocrity. But the presupposition of Hegel's story seems to be that the actual death of a combatant would defeat the combatant's purpose – and also that of the survivor, since while a corpse may receive recognition, it surely cannot give it. The only fruitful outcome of the struggle is therefore the survival of both parties, one of whom surrenders and is forced to work for the other.

This episode inspired Alexandre Kojève, in his famous lectures on Hegel, to interpret him in terms of two other philosophers: Martin Heidegger and Karl Marx. Marx takes up the themes of struggle, work, and

slavery, while Heidegger emphasized the importance of death. In this paper I shall focus on death. In his lectures, Kojève argued that death is the central notion of Hegel's philosophy.¹ If human beings did not die, they would not be proper individuals, nor free, nor historical.² The core of Hegel's philosophy is an appropriate recognition of one's own mortality and finitude.³ Hegel's acknowledgement of death commits him to rejecting two traditional doctrines: first, that we each have an immortal soul and survive death in some transcendent sense;⁴ and second, that God exists.⁵ If death plays the part that Hegel assigns to it, it must be a final death, not a prelude to an afterlife, and there can be no other world inhabited by souls and deities.

In this paper I shall examine Kojève's arguments for his view that freedom, individuality, and historicity require death. I shall occasionally refer to Hegel's view of the matter, but this is not my primary concern.⁶ I begin with freedom.

I. Freedom and Death

In an early essay, *Natural Law* (1802/3), Hegel argued that our ability to die makes us free. Fichte had proposed a system of punishments, including the death penalty, to ensure that people behave properly. Hegel objected that human conduct cannot be coerced in this way. Someone can choose to die rather than do what is required. S/he can submit to the death penalty and can evade any other penalty by suicide: "by his ability to die the subject proves himself [*erweist sich*] free and entirely above all coercion."⁷

This grants only a limited type of freedom, which might leave one rather unfree in other respects. It is the freedom alluded to by the Stoic philosopher Epictetus in such passages as this: "Is there smoke in the house? If it's not suffocating, I will stay indoors. If it proves too much smoke, I'll leave. Always remember – the door is open."⁸ Nevertheless it is, in Kojève's view, the basis of more substantial types of freedom that "realize freedom" and do not end in "nothingness" rather than a "free existence." For the struggle for recognition is also a type of suicide that "reveals and realizes freedom only to the extent that it implies the risk of life," thereby showing that the combatant is not inseparably attached to his life or to "a n y given situation w h a t s o e v e r." If we are not free in this way, Kojève implies, we cannot really be free in any respect.⁹

1) Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel* (2nd ed., Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 529-575. Most of this is omitted from the English translation, but Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Allan Bloom and trans. James H. Nichols (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 241-259, summarizes his central points.

2) Kojève, *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel*, 555.

3) *Ibid.*, 551.

4) *Ibid.*, 536f. Here Kojève seems at odds with Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 292, 247f: "If 'death' is defined as the 'end' of Dasein – that is to say, of Being-in-the-world – this does not imply any ontical decision whether 'after death' still another Being is possible, either higher or lower, or whether Dasein 'lives on' or even 'outlasts' itself and is 'immortal'. . . . The this-worldly ontological interpretation of death takes precedence over any ontical other-worldly speculation." The distinction between the "ontological" and the "ontical" is somewhat obscure, but its implication here is that the crucial role of the prospect of death in our worldly lives is not drastically affected by whatever might happen afterwards or by our beliefs about it.

5) *Ibid.*, 538f.

6) I explored Hegel's views on death in M.J. Inwood, "Hegel on Death," *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies*, I (1986), 109–122. There is some overlap between this paper and the present one, but the two papers are substantially different.

7) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Natural Law*, trans. Thomas Malcolm Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 91. This passage is quoted and discussed in Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 247f.

8) Epictetus, *Discourses and Selected Writings*, trans. Robert Dobbin (London: Penguin, 2008), 60 (I. 25).

9) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 248.

All of this may be true, but does it entail that human beings are intrinsically mortal? It does not, for the following reason. There are three causes of death: aging (the human life-span at present has an upper limit of about 120 years), diseases (including organ failure), and trauma (such as car-crashes, falls from a great height, and the like). It is conceivable that scientists will eventually eliminate aging and disease as it is logically conceivable that human beings need not die from them. In either of those cases, suicide would still be an available option, since death from trauma still remains and it is hard to see how the possibility of it could ever be eliminated. Life-and-death combat would still be possible too, assuming that the combatants made sure that no ambulance and medical team were on hand. But the default condition of human beings would nevertheless be immortality, as long as they avoided mortal combat and other such traumatic events.

II. Freedom and Individuality

Kojève presents a complex argument for his claim that an immortal human could be neither free nor an individual. He says: "Aristotle himself saw very clearly that a 'possibility' which would never (=as long as Time lasts) be actualized or realized, would in fact be an absolute impossibility."¹⁰ In other words, whatever is possible is always realized in the long run. Jaakko Hintikka formulates Aristotle's view as: "(T) no unqualified possibility remains unactualized through an infinity of time," which entails "(T)₁ that which never is, is impossible" and "(T)₂ what always is, is by necessity."¹¹

These propositions entail that an immortal being would not be free. A mortal being may never visit Athens, but s/he was nevertheless free to visit Athens. But if an immortal being never visits Athens, then, by (T)₁, his/her visiting Athens is impossible and so s/he is not free to do so. This still leaves him/her free not to visit Athens, but this freedom may well seem paltry if it goes together with a lack of freedom to do so.

An immortal being would fulfil all its possibilities: anything it does not do, it cannot possibly do. Since different immortal beings would presumably do different things, one immortal being would differ from other immortal beings, and would therefore be a "particular" being. But in the view that Kojève derived from Hegel's *Logic*, a proper individual (*Individuum*) must be universal as well as particular, and our immortal being, however different it is from other immortal beings, lacks universality.¹² A mortal human being, by contrast, is universal. That is, such a being has a range of possibilities from which some are chosen and fulfilled, but not others.

This range of possibilities, far wider than the subset realized, constitutes an individual's universality. A member of another animal or plant species does not differ so conspicuously from other members of its species because it does not have a wide range of possibilities from which to choose. Thus a single member of a non-human species lacks the "universal value" of an "absolutely unique" human being, and so "it does not seem evil at all to kill or destroy some representative or other of an animal or vegetable species. But the extermination of an entire species is considered almost a crime."¹³

If humans were immortal, Kojève argues, they would be as Calvin regarded us: mortal beings whose whole lives would be fixed in advance, leaving nothing to their free choices. The only universal individual would be God himself, freely choosing the fate to be assigned to each of us.

10) Ibid., 249.

11) Jaakko Hintikka, "Aristotle on the Realization of Possibilities in Time", in *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 96.

12) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 249f.

13) Ibid., 235.

Kojève's argument here has two major flaws. First, there is no obvious reason to accept Aristotle's account of possibility. Indeed, it is not clear that Aristotle himself accepted it. In *De Interpretatione* 9, he says: "For example, it is possible for this cloak to be cut up, and yet it will not be cut up but will wear out first." It is true, as Hintikka says, that this is "a possibility concerning an individual object [in a sense of "individual" distinct from Kojève's], and not a possibility concerning kinds of individuals or kinds of events."¹⁴ But why could it not be the case that an immortal being could freely cut up some cloak or other on some occasion even though s/he never in fact does so? Kojève believes otherwise, which brings us to our second objection.

Kojève puts the cart before the horse in assuming (a) that the being's omitting ever to cut up a cloak retroactively affects any occasion on which it seemingly could have done so in making that possibility of cloak-cutting impossible. But this is not so. Assuming that this being was born and is not ungenerated at any time when it might have cut up a cloak, but did not do so, this being has lived for only a finite time. So far, it is in just the same position as a mortal creature. Since it has not yet lived beyond this time, and has certainly not completed its infinite career in time, there is no infinite period of failure to cut up cloaks to retroactively affect its present situation. We may, if we choose, say that its particular cloak-cutting is impossible in virtue of its failure ever to cut a cloak, but this is not because its failure ever to do so makes the particular act impossible; rather, it is the multitude of particular failures that accounts for the overall general failure.

The language in which Kojève introduces Calvin makes it clear that the comparison is inapt. For Calvin,

the man who existed eternally would be "chosen" or "damned" before his "creation", by being absolutely incapable of modifying in any way whatever his "destiny" or "nature" by his "active" existence in the World.¹⁵

According to Calvin, a person's destiny is determined before his or her creation, but there is no question of that in the case of our hypothetical immortal being. The impossibilities it supposedly faces depend on what happens afterwards. So unless we are willing to postulate backward causation – and backward from the infinite future at that – there is no reason to suppose that an immortal's possibilities would be any more restricted than those of a mortal. As far as this goes, an immortal may be as "universal" as a mortal, choosing what to do from an extensive range of possibilities, most of which remain unrealized, and therefore no less individual than a mortal is.

III. Freedom, Individuality, and History

Kojève and Hegel believed, as Heidegger did, that human beings are historical in a way that members of a merely animal species are not. Any animal dies, but it has no awareness of its forthcoming death. It has no memory of what its ancestors did and no thought of what its descendants might do after its own death. What it does in its lifetime does not differ significantly from what its recent ancestors did or from what its descendants will do. Its doings follow a predetermined program that does not differ from one generation to the next. An animal may

14) Hintikka, "Aristotle on the Realization of Possibilities in Time", 100. Hintikka adds: "Nor does the unfulfilled possibility Aristotle mentions remain unfulfilled through an infinity of time, for when the cloak wears out, it goes out of existence, and no possibility can any longer be attributed to it."

15) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 249.

acquire new skills and information during its life, but it cannot, as we do, transmit these skills and information to its descendants, thereby giving them a head start in life, so that they can build on their ancestors' acquired assets and acquire new ones.¹⁶

Human mortals differ from animals in all these respects. Crucially, whereas an

animal can be annihilated after realizing everything of which it is capable, ... Man always dies a "violent" death, so to speak, for his death prevents him from doing something other than what he has already done. Every man who has died could have prolonged his activity or negated it; he did not, therefore, completely exhaust his human existential possibilities. And that is why his human possibilities can be realized humanly – i.e., in and by another man, who will take up his work and prolong his action ... It is thus that History is possible, and that is why it can be realized in spite of, or rather because of, death.¹⁷

Let us suppose, however, that humans are immortal and that they, like the Greek gods, generate other immortal beings who, after reaching maturity, retain all their physical and mental faculties. (Immortals who, like Tithonus, continue to age and live eternally in a decrepit and demented condition are of no account. Such a condition is as good as death.) What happens then? Such a being, Kojève says, could have

"undergone an evolution", as animals and plants did. But while "evolving" in Time, he would only "develop" an eternal determined "nature", which would be given to him ahead of time or imposed on him; and his evolution would be anything but a historical drama whose end is unknown ... and something other than a tragedy, if not a comedy, played by human actors for the entertainment of the gods, ...¹⁸

This argument has been disposed of above in my discussion of Calvinism. But there remains the difficulty that, even if an immortal being can freely realize its possibilities and is not confined to a pre-packaged script, an immortal being has enough time to do whatever it wants to do and need leave no loose ends to be taken up by its descendants. But firstly, we can ask: might not an immortal have a history of its own? It is essential, in Kojève's view, that humanity is able to, and often does, "negate" itself and this can only be properly achieved by a new generation:

16) Professor Randall Auxier has contested this point. He points out that there is "empirical evidence of the awareness of death among at least some animals – some of them grieve, some of them – e.g. elephants – even bury the dead. Even for Heidegger, the grasp of our own deaths is by analogy with the deaths of others, so analogical awareness of our deaths is sufficient for awareness of our ontological being-towards-death. It seems that the empirical evidence is sufficient to show, beyond any reasonable doubt, that animals have that much. Obviously, it does not mean that non-humans have the ontic/ontological divide, as Dasein does. They do not. But it suggests that the distinction between humans and non-humans can be seen as less sharp than Hegel, Heidegger and Kojève presented it." I am not entirely convinced by Professor Auxier's case, in particular by the suggestions that Heidegger regards awareness of one's own death as analogical and that non-human animals may be aware of their own prospective death. Nevertheless, it is clearly a logical possibility that the members of some non-human species, such as dolphins, or a species unknown to us, do have an awareness of death similar to our own. Consequently, my account of non-human animals is intended to represent the views of Hegel, Heidegger and Kojève, not my own view. The point of the account is primarily to clarify their view of the human condition by contrasting it with a somewhat idealized and possibly over-simplified conception of the condition of animals that was nevertheless widespread at the time of their writing.

17) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 257.

18) *Ibid.*, 252f.

An animal that has set forth on the road to the right must retrace its steps in order to take the road to the left. Man as an animal must also do this. But as Man – that is, as historical (or “spiritual” or, better, dialectical) being – he never retraces his steps. History does not turn back, and nevertheless it ends up on the road to the left after it has taken the road to the right. It is because there has been a Revolution, it is because Man has negated himself ... without completely disappearing and without ceasing to be Man. But the animal in him, which was on the road to the right, could not end up on the road to the left; therefore it had to disappear, and the Man whom it embodied had to die. (It would be a miracle, if a revolution could succeed without one generation’s replacing the other – in a natural, or more or less violent, fashion.)¹⁹

Given our present mortality, there is much to be said for this. To take a milder example, Charles Darwin said: “if my view is ever to be generally adopted, it will be by young men growing up and replacing the old workers.”²⁰ But even within a single life, human beings often change their views. St. Augustine and Thomas Mann are examples of this. Swings of allegiance between one election and the next are surely not accounted for only by the deaths of some of the electorate and their replacement by others. Why could an immortal not undergo a similar change?

Such changes of mind or behavior might be even more marked when one generation of immortals is supplemented, though not of course replaced, by another. The earlier generation may well have neglected certain possibilities and left them for its successors to realize. But the earlier generation has only neglected such possibilities so far. There can be no guarantee that it will not realize them later, or that it would not have realized them later if they had not been pre-empted by their descendants. A definitive biography of an immortal cannot be written.

IV. Death and the Afterlife

It is generally acknowledged that every human being dies, but this acknowledgement often goes together with belief in an afterlife. Curiously, belief in an afterlife does not usually mean that worldly death is regarded as welcome, or even as a matter of indifference. To kill another human being, even a very good one who might be supposed to face a favorable afterlife, is regarded as a serious offense. Indeed, it is sometimes punished by the death penalty in turn and this, again, is regarded as a serious punishment, not on a par with sending the culprit on a pleasant, albeit enforced, vacation. We generally regard worldly death, especially our own, as regrettable, whatever our afterlife beliefs. With respect to freedom, individuality and historicity, afterlife beliefs seem to make no radical difference. So why does Kojève believe that in disposing of worldly immortality, he is also disposing of the afterlife? What he says is this:

(a) Belief in an afterlife stems from our unique capacity to transcend our present condition. A mortal human knows that his or her death will leave many loose ends, possibilities that s/he could have realized, if his or her life had not been cut short by death. This is so whenever death occurs. S/he therefore imagines that worldly death is not the final end, but will be followed by an afterlife in which s/he can realize these possibilities.

19) *Ibid.*, 251, n. 36.

20) Charles Darwin, “Letter to T.H.Huxley, December, 2, 1860”, in: Charles Darwin, *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, Volume 8: 1860 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 507.

This is a distorted version of the truth: that one's own unrealized possibilities will be taken up, and perhaps realized, by one's descendants.²¹

(b) We are human only in virtue of living in a world. Hence, when we imagine the afterlife, we can only imagine ourselves as acting in a world similar to this world, except that we are now immortal. In effect, then, this afterlife is a continuation of our present life, its endless and continuation. Such human immortality would therefore have the defects that we have found in this world.²²

(c) Consequently, the afterlife thus imagined would not satisfy the individual's requirements. It would not enable us to realize our historical free individuality even if we managed to attain it. Since the imagined afterlife is immortal, albeit usually understood to be in a transcendent realm, such a life could not be the life of a free, historical individual any more than could an immortal life in this earthly world. The afterlife simply kicks the can down the road, reproducing the problems that earthly immortality would present. Moreover, even believing in such an afterlife makes us unhappy and deprives us of the satisfaction that is attainable within our earthly mortal lives.²³

Much of this is contestable. Belief in God and belief in immortality should not be equated. Firstly, belief in God is obviously consistent with disbelief in an afterlife. Secondly, there are respectable philosophical arguments for an afterlife independently of the belief in God (as in the work of J.M.E. McTaggart and H.H.Price). An endless sequence of finite worldly lives, such as Plato proposes in the *Republic*, is not inconceivable. However, this, like most afterlife narratives, faces the problem of identifying the same individual throughout different "lives."²⁴ Moreover, philosophers such as Aquinas have devised accounts of the afterlife that are not merely reproductions of our present worldly life.

However, the signal defect of Kojève's account is that he blurs the distinction between two different questions. The first is the question whether there is an afterlife, and Kojève's answer to this is negative. The second

21) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 255f: "Man ... can negate his death, as he can negate (by deluding himself) anything that is actually given to him in and by his consciousness: he can declare himself immortal. But ... Man who negates his death can only 'imagine' himself immortal; he can only believe in his 'eternal' life or his 'resurrection,' but he cannot really live this imaginary 'afterlife.' But [...] Man is not only the sole living being which knows that it must die and which can freely bring about its own death; he is also the only one which can aspire to immortality. ... But Man's 'transcendence' with respect to his death 'manifests' itself in yet another way than by the mistaken 'subjective certainty' (*Gewissheit*) of an afterlife; this transcendence also 'appears' as a truth (*Wahrheit*), being the revelation of an 'objective reality' (*Wirklichkeit*)." Cf. also 257: "The transcendence of death in and by History is the truth (=revealed reality) of the subjective certainty of an 'afterlife'; man 'goes beyond' his death to the extent that his very being is nothing other than his action and that this action of his is propagated through History ... But man attains this truth only very late and always reluctantly. In the beginning, he believes (or better: would like to believe) in his own survival after his death, and he negates his definitive annihilation in his imagination."

22) Ibid., 57f: "But man is human only when he lives in a World. Accordingly he can think of himself as living humanly after his death on earth only by imagining a transcendent World or a 'beyond' said to be 'divine' (the divine or the 'sacred' being nothing other than the 'natural place' of dead men). However, we have seen that where there is eternal life and hence God, there is no place for human freedom, individuality, or historicity. Thus the man who asserts that he is immortal – if he goes beyond contradiction – always ends up conceiving of himself as a purely natural being, determined once and for all in its purely particular and utterly uncreative existence."

23) Ibid., 258: "if [the believer in an afterlife] possesses the idea of historical free individuality, he assigns it to God alone, and thus by that very fact assigns to God the death that he rejects for himself. But man can be satisfied only by realizing his own individuality, and by knowing that he is realizing it. Consequently, the man who believes himself to be immortal, or, what is the same thing, the man who believes in God, never attains satisfaction (*Befriedigung*), and always lives in contradiction with himself: as Hegel says, he is an 'unhappy Consciousness' (*unglückliches Bwusstsein*) and he lives a 'divided condition' (*Entzweiung*)."

24) Ibid., 253, n.38, criticizes Plato's myth of Er. See also Michael J. Inwood, "Plato's Eschatological Myths," in: *Plato's Myths*, ed. Catalin Partenie, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 28-50.

is the question why humans do, or have in the past, believed in an afterlife, and about the effects that such beliefs have. Here Kojève answers that the belief is a sheer mistake, albeit a mistake that stems from our ability to transcend or negate our present condition. He claims that the belief serves only to make us unhappy and, on the slender basis of Hegel's account of "unhappy consciousness," attributes his view to Hegel.

Hegel's answer to the first question is effectively negative too: for him, spirit's immortality consists in "eternity" and eternity "is not simply duration, as duration can be predicated of mountains." The spirit is eternal not because of its future state, because of its present state – its freedom, self-consciousness and "universality."²⁵ But Hegel's answer to the second question is far more nuanced than Kojève's. In his lectures he argued that afterlife-beliefs are not sheer errors that should not have arisen in the first place and that need to be discarded as soon as possible. They are rather ways in which humans became conscious of their essential spiritual nature:

The immortality of the soul lies very close to the freedom of the spirit, because the self comprehends itself as withdrawn from the naturalness of existence and as resting on itself; but this self-knowledge is the principle of freedom.²⁶

Whereas Kojève believes that early humans believed in their individual immortality,²⁷ Hegel believes that they did not. Hegel bases this belief primarily on the Bible and on Greek literature, since he otherwise knew little about early humans. A person is self-conscious to the extent that he has an adequate conception of what he essentially is: "Death takes from man what is temporal, transitory in him, but it has no power over what he is in and for himself."²⁸ Hence beliefs about what remains after death are also beliefs about what a person essentially is.

In his account of the deaths of the Homeric heroes, Patroclus and Hector, Hegel focuses not on the thin and unappealing individual afterlife granted to the dead, but on the customs and values of their community, which outlast the deaths of individuals: "With death, only nature is finished, not the man, not custom and ethical life, which requires the honor of burial for the fallen hero."²⁹

Similarly, in the beliefs of Abraham and early Judaism, the idea of individual immortality is hazy and subdued, for Hegel. What remains after death is primarily one's posterity and family property. At this stage, the earliest known to Hegel, a person has only an undeveloped sense of himself, and is therefore an undeveloped self, who finds it hard to differentiate himself from his body, his descendants, and his social order. At the next stage we develop self-consciousness to various degrees by projecting our true selves into an individual life that endures beyond our bodies.

Differences between the afterlife beliefs of early Christians, ancient Greeks, and the Christians of Hegel's day depend in part on differences in their beliefs about the soul and the body.³⁰ Afterlife beliefs depend on self-

25) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, volumes I-III, trans. Ebenezer Brown Speirs and John Scott Burdon-Sanderson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), III, 57. Cf. 102.

26) Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. Thomas Malcolm Knox (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 355.

27) Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, 257: "In the beginning, he believes (or better: would like to believe) in his own survival after his death, and he negates his definitive annihilation in his imagination."

28) Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, I, 311.

29) Cf. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, I, 349: "death has a double meaning: (a) it is precisely the immediate passing away of the natural, (b) it is the death of the purely natural and therefore the birth of something higher, namely the spiritual realm to which the merely natural dies in the sense that the spirit has this element of death in itself as belonging to its essence."

30) G.W.F. Hegel, *Early Theological Writings*, trans. Thomas Malcolm Knox and Richard Kroner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 297f.

consciousness, freedom, an “inner space, ... inner extension, ... [a] soul of such an extent as to lead it to wish for satisfaction within itself.”³¹ It is not the case that afterlife beliefs are a hindrance to self-consciousness, as Kojève claims.³² It is rather only in this way that we can, initially, form a conception of what we essentially are; what I essentially am is what persists after death.

At the third stage, however, which is Hegel’s own stage, we retain and develop the self-consciousness thus acquired, but no longer need an afterlife to support it or, as Hegel prefers, immortality is seen in terms of “eternity” rather than duration. I can, for example, distinguish between my body and myself without supposing that I shall outlast my body.

Like Kojève, Hegel claims that belief in immortality and belief in God go together: “The ideas of God and of immortality have a necessary relation to each other; when a man knows truly about God, he knows truly about himself too.”³³ But Hegel’s meaning is quite different from Kojève’s. Hegel affirms his belief in both God and immortality, but he revises both conceptions drastically. Immortality dwindles from endless duration to durationless “eternity,” while God is no longer transcendent, but immanent; God not an entity distinct from the world, but the unfolding “logical” structure of the world. When the doctrines are taken in this way, it is more plausible to suppose that they do go together, that there is, namely, a deep connection between how one sees oneself and how one sees the world.

31) Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, II, 213.

32) For example, see, Kojève, *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel*, 548: “Or ce n’est qu’en prenant conscience de sa finitude, et donc de sa mort, que l’homme prend vraiment conscience de soi.”

33) Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* I, 79f. Cf. I, 314f.

Bibliography

- Aristotle. *Categories and De Interpretatione*. Translated by John Lloyd Ackrill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- Darwin, Charles. *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, Volume 8: 1860. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Epictetus. *Discourses and Selected Writings*. Translated by Robert Dobbin. London: Penguin, 2008.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Early Theological Writings*. Translated by Thomas Malcolm Knox and Richard Kroner. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Natural Law*. Translated by Thomas Malcolm Knox. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1975.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Volumes I–III. Translated by Ebenezer Brown Speirs and John Scott Burdon-Sanderson. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Translated by Thomas Malcolm Knox. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.
- Hintikka, Jaakko. *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle's Theory of Modality*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1973.
- Inwood, Michael J. "Hegel on Death". *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies*, (I, 1986): 109–122.
- Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel*. Paris: Gallimard, 1947.
- Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the "Phenomenology of Spirit"*. Edited by Allan Bloom and translated by James H. Nichols. New York: Basic Books, 1969.
- Partenie, Catalin. *Plato's Myths*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.