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Relative Absolutes: Alexandre Kojève and Russian Philosophy Abroad

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Standard accounts of twentieth century Russian emigration often describe stages of adaptation for those in exile: first, an effort to maintain continuity with pre-revolutionary Russia, followed by attempts to adopt cultural models of their new countries, and finishing with varying degrees of self-definition and integration. Studies of the Russian diaspora have largely, however, confined themselves to artistic texts. This dissertation rethinks standard models of Russian diasporic culture through the lens of philosophy and intellectual history in Europe more broadly. It examines the work of the philosopher Alexandre Kojève as a thematic bridge, connecting the philosophical activity of Russian émigrés (such as Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Berdiaev, and Lev Karsavin) with major figures in French and German intellectual history (Jacques Lacan, Georges Bataille, Carl Schmitt, among others). Although Kojève began his career in Russian philosophical circles (in Moscow, then émigré Paris), he only emerged as a respected philosophical figure after having "denationalized" his philosophical practice. This denationalization notably took place in his influential seminars on Hegel, held in Paris from 1933 to 1939. The dissertation traces Kojève's transferal of ideas from the Russian tradition to a French, philosophically "universalized" one. The first chapter discusses the shift within consecutive generations of émigré Russian philosophers from religiously inflected work to atheist philosophy. The second chapter identifies the origins of Kojève's theorization of desire in Russian philosophical debates on love in the fin-de-siècle period. The third chapter examines Kojève's philosophy through political theory, examining his influence in debates on political conflict and the end of history on both sides of the Iron Curtain. The last

chapter “returns” the philosopher to post-Soviet Russia and examines citation of Kojève amongst contemporary Russian philosophers writing today. The dissertation concludes by arguing for a new understanding of Russian philosophy within a transnational exchange of texts and ideas. In particular, it signals to more liminal figures of Russian philosophy, including Kojève and his colleague Alexandre Koyré, as those who introduced problematics germane to Russian thought into broader, pan-European philosophy, thereby disrupting the habit of thinking of Russian intellectual history within an essentialized national context.

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Preface

I am deeply grateful for the community of mentors, scholars, colleagues, and friends that I have found within the Slavic department at the University of Pittsburgh. This dissertation would not have been completed without them. I must give thanks in particular to my advisor, Nancy Condee, whose uncanny combination of erudition, generosity, and adroitness helped me to shape the contours of my own scholarly career.

Lastly, to my friends, family, and in particular Jacob: thank you for your inspiration, affection, and patience with me during my years of writing this dissertation. I am a better, and wiser, person because of you.

Introduction

"How does newness come into the world? How is it born?"

The novelist Salman Rushdie asked this question in his *The Satanic Verses* as an attempt to shed light on the productive "third space" of South Asian immigrants to London, neither "fully" British nor "fully" Indian. Something new was born in this interstitial space of diaspora, something that could not fit comfortably into either national category. Later, postcolonialist theorist Homi Bhabha invoked Rushdie in his theory of the global postcolonial subject, claiming that "[c]ultural globality is figured in the *in-between* spaces of double-frames: its historical originality marked by a cognitive obscurity; its decentered 'subject' signified in the nervous temporality of the transitional, or the emergent provisionality of the 'present'" (309). This dissertation is an attempt to find yet another kind of diasporic newness emerging from a decentered subject: in the work of Russo-French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, and in the philosophical circles of the Russian émigré communities in the early twentieth-century.

Various models of world literature have sought to understand the connection between the global circulation of texts and their consequent aggregation of cultural capital. Pascale Casanova, for example, has argued that we think of world literature as a "world republic of letters," a mapped continuum of literary spaces in which certain older cultural traditions are able to dominate lesser established ones globally: those "oldest literary fields are therefore the most autonomous as well, which is to say the most exclusively devoted to literary as an activity having no need of justification beyond itself" (85). Other, more marginal literary spaces are more subject to processes of literary nationalization, where, following the legacy of Herder, their literary output is thought to play some generative role in the building of the nation. Casanova is concerned in particular with how certain

authors "succeed" in denationalization, become cosmopolitan figures of world culture, and are no longer limited in their perception as "merely" representative of national literary traditions: "the writers who seek greater freedom for their work are those who know the laws of world literary space and who make use of them in trying to subvert the dominant forms of their respective national fields" (109). In Russian literature, for example, one could argue that a figure such as Vladimir Nabokov has denationalized, whereas Vladislav Khodasevich, for example, or even Ivan Bunin, despite winning the Nobel Prize in Literature, remain stubbornly "Russian" authors in the global literary imagination.

While Casanova lists several major metropoles and dominant literary cultures (notably including Moscow), the most obvious dominant space in the twentieth century is Paris. It was there, at the epicenter of the great modernist experiment, that an ever-changing cast of émigrés figures came to experiment in form and challenge the doxa of their home traditions. Thus, the modernist art critic Harold Rosenberg described interwar Paris as the following:

> Yet up to the day of the occupation, Paris had been the Holy Place of our time. The only one. Not because of its affirmative genius alone, but perhaps, on the contrary, through its passivity, which allowed it to be possessed by the searchers of every nation. By Picasso and Juan Gris, Spaniards; by Modigliani, Boccioni and Severini, Italians; by Brancusi, Romanian; by Joyce, Irishman; by Mondrian, Dutchman; by Lipchitz, Polish Lithuanian; by Archipenko, Kandinsky, Diaghilev, Larionov, Russians; by Calder, Pound, Gertrude Stein, Man Ray, Americans; by Kupka, Czechoslovak; Lehmbruck and Max Ernst, Germans; by Wyndham Lewis and T. E. Hulme, Englishmen…by all artists, students, refugees. (209-210)

It was only in the most dominating cultural metropoles that figures of less cosmopolitan origin were able to achieve the sought-after designation of the "universal" — "in the 'School of Paris,' belonging to no one country, but world-wide and world-timed and pertinent everywhere, the mind of the twentieth-century projected itself into possibilities that will occupy mankind during many cycles of social adventure to come" (Rosenberg 211).

Casanova has made the case for a mapping of cultural capital for literature. I argue that similar models can and ought to be considered for the circulation of philosophical texts. Resistance to this method in the study of philosophy perhaps lies in the very nature of philosophy as a discipline, where truth claims are often thought, at least theoretically, to transcend any allegiances to cultural specificity. Any scholar of Russian philosophy, however, understands all too well the role that politics and the censorship of publication, the choice of language and reading audience, and the specificity of cultural citations play in the proliferation and estimation of philosophical works. In the context of interwar Paris, moreover, one is faced with the historical fact of a *nearly complete* expulsion of the Russian philosophical tradition from Russia and into diasporic France. These expelled Russian philosophers would not cease their work, but instead left behind an astonishingly productive legacy that still informs most definitions of Russian philosophy as a discipline. It is almost certainly in this window of time, between the waves of Russian emigration post-revolution and the Second World War, that one can best see how a world republic of *philosophical letters* informs our ideas of what (and who) constitute a national philosophy. The topic of this dissertation, Alexandre Kojève, born Aleksandr Kozhevnikov in Moscow, has transcended the designation of a national philosopher; numerous Russian philosophers with him in Paris and Heidelberg, several of the most prolific in Russian history and the most respected in Russia today, have not. Underneath this paradox lies not a question of *individual talent* but instead

an intricate story of the circulation, proliferation, and translation of the work of these philosophers, complicated all the more so by the cultural politics of the Cold War.

This dissertation is therefore an attempt to make sense of that story. I approach the philosophy of Alexandre Kojève through the liminal exchanges laid bare in his work—I have tried, in varying degrees, to unearth how a transferal of ideas across cultural, and political, borders gave birth to Kojève's unique philosophical legacy. These transferals are broad and (sometimes) multidirectional. They include the Russian philosophical canon's adoption of (and reaction against) the German philosophical tradition at the moment of its modern emergence; the distancing of Kojève's philosophical generation from its more religious, arguably more "Russian" predecessors; the absorption of Russian philosophical problematics into French post-war philosophy through Kojève; and the reintegration of Kojève and diasporic Russian philosophy into contemporary Russian cultural life in the aftermath of the Cold War.

Each of these exchanges has in some way involved questions of translation, transnational publication, and even geopolitical intrigue. They illustrate how an understanding of national (Russian) philosophy has informed Kojève's legacy, even if, for him, the question of writing for a nationally-defined audience never seemed particularly important. Instead, one can see parallel developments with Russian philosophers writing in the diaspora: some, writing in Russian, referencing explicitly their Russian legacy, continued to develop a national tradition in exile, their works written in the shadow of a country they no longer recognized. Others, including Kojève, successfully entered into the evasive "denationalized space" of cosmopolitan Paris, a world republic of philosophical letters in which their works were perceived as universal and uninformed by any limiting national context. In what follows, I am interested in both the affinities between

these two loosely defined groups of Russian philosophers, as well as the geopolitical and historical factors that continue to separate them.

The dissertation is divided into two halves: the first half discusses Kojève's legacy from a philosophical perspective, whereas the second half is devoted to Kojève through the lens of twentieth and twenty-first century political thought. I have decided on this division given an already existent bifurcation in his legacy: some know of Kojève solely through his philosophy, while others are aware of him from his influence in politics, and only rarely are these two groups placed in dialogue with one another. Arguably this, too, has prevented an adequate assessment of his work.

The first chapter addresses the question of Kojève and Russian philosophy more broadly. I discuss the challenges in delineating a Russian philosophical canon, as well as debates surrounding "which" Russian philosophy one can find in Kojève's writings. I have chosen to approach this problematic through an analysis of Kojève's work on atheism, as I have found one of the greatest paradoxes of his status in the Russian émigré community in Paris to be his atheist philosophy, in comparison to the vast majority of Russian philosophers working through the theological tradition of Russian Orthodoxy. The question of secular versus theist philosophy has long haunted Russian philosophical history, and the return to it in diaspora with Kojève is fitting.

The second chapter is devoted to Kojève's most famous legacy: his seminars on Hegel, delivered in Paris in the 1930s. I compare here the long tradition of non-erotic desire in Russian religious philosophy to the unique philosophy of desire inaugurated by Kojève in these seminars. This chapter is devoted to the question of a transposition of themes germane to Russian philosophy into the circles surrounding Kojève's seminars in interwar France. Of particular concern there is

the question of intersubjectivity, the Self and the Other, and how this could move from Russian religious thought into a reigning paradigm for French philosophy in Kojève's wake.

In the third chapter, I move to the question of politics. Kojève's reception in political thought has been somewhat controversial. He is viewed in according with two lines of thought: through his citation by Francis Fukuyama, he has become the reigning ideologue of teleological political thinking, where history is understood as a singular trajectory toward a final political system (for Fukuyama, neoliberal democracy). Nearly simultaneously, however, Kojève is often cited in the spiritual lineage of Carl Schmitt, who understood the very essence of politics as an insurmountable conflict between "us" and "them," thereby denying the possibility of an end of history. I examine Kojève's role in these two competing views, particularly as they are expressed within and across the geopolitical divide of the Cold War. Indeed, as I illustrate, the most fascinating aspect of Kojève's participation in this split is his capacity to speak to these positions in both Russo-Soviet and American/Western debates.

The final chapter is an attempt to look beyond these political formulations of the Cold War. I examine here the use of Kojève in Russian philosophy today, as seen in the works of Artemy Magun, Sergei Prozorov, Alexey Rutkevich, and Oksana Timofeeva. I am particularly interested here in the attempt to overcome teleological aspects of Kojève's work, given a widespread cultural exhaustion with the idea of historical utopianism. Since I am discussing here the contemporary, this chapter is necessarily the most speculative. I nevertheless claim that an examination of Kojève and philosophy in a post-socialist context is particularly apt for identifying the current challenges in thinking a radical politics more globally: disintegration of overarching political narratives of the twentieth century becomes fully expressed in the need for Russian philosophers to rethink traditional Marxist narratives of emancipation.

Lastly, this dissertation should not be thought of as a comprehensive study of Alexandre Kojève as a philosopher. In researching his legacy, I have often thought that an exhaustive study of Kojève would necessitate a study of the entirety of twentieth century thought itself. Instead, I have hoped to reflect the impressive diversity of interpretations of this admittedly difficult philosopher, who consistently seems to evade facile definitions and challenge our base assumptions. If I have left any gaps or have been inattentive to certain aspects of Kojève's legacy, it has been done in order to express more fully the productive tension between national and transnational thinking in Kojève and his philosophy.

1.0 Kojève, Russian Philosophy, and the Atheist Religion

What is Alexandre Kojève's relationship to Russian philosophy in diaspora? To answer the question, one must pose another: which Russian philosophy? The challenges of defining Russian philosophy have long plagued Russian intellectual history: indeed, Russian philosophy is *not only* a mythological tradition of introspection on the "Russian soul," a tradition whose religious speculation has led to both its enduring appeal as an alternative to allegedly more rationalist Western thought and as well as its denigration as an exoticized national stereotype. Alyssa DeBlasio defines this specific definition of Russian philosophy as the following:

> First, it is always religious, never secular. Second, its style of inquiry is literary, not analytic. Third, we are told that the Russian philosophical tradition has roots as far back as Byzantium. Deviations along the way, such as the Soviet period, are seen as a result of external or hostile forces rather than as part of a broader intellectual continuity. (*End of Russian Philosophy* 16)

DeBlasio, however, makes the pragmatic distinction of delineating this tradition ("Russian philosophy") from the larger category of "philosophy practiced in Russia," which can usefully incorporate arguably less characteristic philosophical schools (e.g., analytic philosophy, or the large and diverse corpus of dialectical materialism) in its description of the discipline.

This dissertation does not lay claim to a new or even concrete definition of Russian philosophy and the competing canonical traditions within it. Instead, I argue that the history of a philosopher such as Alexandre Kojève brings to light the very challenges in delineating a national intellectual tradition. Is Russian philosophy, for example, philosophy conducted in the Russian language, or on the territory of the (past/present) Russian empire or Soviet Union? Kojève would

fail this litmus test in both respects, yet curiously enough so would some of the most canonical figures of the Russian tradition—be it the Russian philosophers writing in French or German in the nineteenth-century (Chaadaev, Belinskii, Herzen), or the prolific modern Russian philosophers of the early twentieth-century, who frequently wrote in Russian but in the position of forced emigration, in Berlin, Paris, or Harbin. This is to say nothing of the inclusion in the Russian philosophical canon of ethnically non-Russian philosophers from Russian or Soviet spheres of influence, such as the Georgian Merab Mamardashvili,[1] or the recent controversy surrounding Immanuel Kant's birthplace in Kaliningrad (then Königsberg, Prussia) and the very suitability of recognizing his origins in a now Russian city.[2]

The "question" of Russian philosophy, and Kojève's inheritance of it, must therefore be addressed thematically, rather than ethnically, geographically, or linguistically. G.M. Hamburg and Randall Poole, for example, argue that Russian philosophy is thematically best understood as a rich tradition of "religious humanism," while admitting that several canonical Russian philosophers must therefore be excluded from this definition (5). This thematic approach, too, however, poses difficulties with respect to Kojève. In his recent work on Kojève and Russian philosophy, Jeff Love has found this thematic influence in the "Platonic notion of perfection or divinization that has played such an important role in Russian religious thought," using the concept of humanist, spiritual perfection as a springboard to analyze Kojève's inheritance of Russian concerns for Sophia and divine humanity (*Black Circle* 3-4). Love has in mind the tradition

[1] DeBlasio has recently published a book devoted to Mamardashvili and his legacy as it relates to a generation of Russian film production. See Alyssa DeBlasio, *The Filmmaker's Philosopher: Merab Mamardashvili and Russian Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

[2] Various Russian inhabitants of Kaliningrad rejected efforts to rename the local airport in honor of the philosopher. While public opinion seemed split on the issue, critics claimed (without evidence) that Kant had at one point disparaged Russia, and a plaque commemorating his former home in the city was vandalized. "No you Kant: Russians reject German thinker's name for airport." *BBC*, 4 December 2018, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46440713. Accessed 20 May 2019.

described by DeBlasio above, moving from Neo-Platonism within Russian Orthodox theology into the eschatological religious philosophies of such figures as Vladimir Solov'ev and Nikolai Fedorov. Love's analysis of Russian influences, however, largely ends with the nineteenth-century, leaving the field to future scholars who would address the prolific output of Russian religious philosophy in the early twentieth-century and Kojève's presumed direct contact with both these works and the philosophers who wrote them.

Furthermore, when juxtaposing Kojève to his Russian contemporaries, both first in Russia and later in diaspora, one is struck by the incongruency of Kojève's atheism and anti-humanism in comparison to the deeply religious Russian circles in which the philosopher began his development. The renaissance of early twentieth-century Russian philosophy, linked intimately to a modern reevaluation of Orthodox theology, was largely religious in nature and in direct opposition to dominant materialist trends in the nineteenth century. Kojève's philosophy, however, is neither religious nor, to borrow Antoine Arjakovsky's term, mytho-logical.[3] It nevertheless borrows heavily from this tradition, responding directly to Russian religious philosophy's debates on love, eschatology, and subjectivity, all germane to the writings of his fin-de-siècle peers.

In the broader context of Russian philosophy's relationship to theology, Kojève's philosophy, as a transition from religiously oriented Russian thought toward atheism, is particularly telling. DeBlasio borrows from Tomáš Masaryk the assumption of a "split" between competing religious and secular narratives in Russian intellectual history, each with its own cast of characters and ideological parameters, and indeed the history of modern Russian philosophy

[3] Arjakovsky defines the "epistemological stance of Russian religious thought" as a synthesis of *mythos*, understood here as intuitive, collective symbolism, and *logos*: "[t]he mytho-logy of Russian thought, then, is a personal and generational immersion in the space that stretches between poetic or religious myth, and thought. Mytho-logy is the living relationship of myth and thought, that is, an event, or in Russian, *so-bytie*—'a being-with,' an encounter" (32).

has often been marked by oscillations and contestations between theism, atheism, and back again. Kojève appears to take inspiration from these disparate lineages, both operative in Russian philosophy, leaving the question of theological influence on his work a continuous, and unresolved, source of tension in critical literature on the atheist philosopher. In order therefore to approach Kojève's relationship to Russian philosophy as a *thematic* question, this chapter is structured around a deceptively facile question: why did Alexandre Kojève become an atheist philosopher?

1.1 Kojève and the Two-Faced Janus

In what is frequently cited as one genesis of modern Russian philosophy in the early nineteenth-century, two philosophical camps emerged in response to an infamous letter by Petr Chaadaev, in which the Russian philosopher criticized Russia's national ambivalence toward larger (European) intellectual and sociopolitical history. Chaadaev's provocation that "we [Russians] belong to none of the great families of mankind; we are neither of the West nor of the East, and we possess the traditions of neither" led to the formation of two major camps amongst Russian figures of the 1830-40s, each of which sought to explain Russian intellectual history's particular divergences from Europe (323).[4]

In one camp, those who came to be known as "Westernizers," such as Aleksandr Herzen and Vissarion Belinskii, developed a materialist, socially critical, realist tradition which involved an entire generation's disavowal of their previous theological training—many adherents of this

[4] "мы не принадлежим ни к одному из известных семейств человеческого рода, ни к Западу, ни к Востоку, и не имеем традиций ни того, ни другого."

"line," such as Nikolai Chernyshevskii and Nikolai Dobroliubov, were educated in seminaries, yet came only later to prominence in (proto-) socialist intellectual circles and publications. In the looming shadow of the 1848 revolutions, and taking inspiration from Fourier, Saint Simon, and the still-emerging Left Hegelians, Westernizers sought pan-European solutions to stagnancy in the Russian Empire, understanding the particularities of Russian social conditions as historic and economic rather than nationally or spiritually essentialist.

In opposition, Slavophiles, such as Ivan Aksakov, Aleksei Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii, would advocate for an organicist model of Russian culture and society grounded in an "authentically Russian" spiritualism. Often choosing Schelling instead of Hegel as their philosophical interlocutor, their political posturing frequently eschewed rationalism and secular individualism as categories contingent to European history and therefore inapplicable to Russia and its unique development. They emphasized instead brotherhood and mystic unity in what Sergey Horujy refers to, tongue in cheek, as Slavophilism's "cult of the commune" ("Slavophiles, Westernizers" 33). Slavophile ideas would regain prevalence several decades later in the renaissance of Russian religious philosophy, when, in the "crisis of positivism" at the fin-de-siècle, several leading members of the intelligentsia, including Kojève's direct predecessors and interlocutors, would again reverse course, this time abandoning Marxism and materialism in the pursuit of a modernized understanding of Orthodox Christian idealism with its respect for love and personhood.

While untold ink has since been spilled on this division between Westernizers and Slavophiles, and its generative role in Russian intellectual history, not only do the two lineages share a common point of origin, but their ideological borders were and remain porous, with figures in both camps regularly undergoing ideological (and, quite literally, religious) conversion and

undermining the proclaimed unifying principles of the respective movements. For this reason, Herzen once aptly referred to the Westernizer/Slavophile divide as "like the two-faced Janus or the two-headed eagle, which stared into opposite sides while its heart beat as one" (*Byloe i dumy* 170).[5]

Herzen's own career is a telling example of such oscillation. Often referred to as the "father of Russian socialism," Herzen's philosophical development parallels the larger evolution amongst Russian intelligentsia toward critical, materialist atheism in the "Remarkable Decade."[6] His evolution through German idealist philosophers reflects a trajectory typical of many of his Westernizer peers in the first half of the nineteenth-century, gradually with each new influence losing any theological inflections to his work: Herzen first moved from Schiller, through Schelling, and ultimately to Hegel and Feuerbach, at which point he transitioned toward what Martin Malia refers to as his "realist" philosophy:

> By its very structure, Hegel's thought lent itself to a breakdown of [German] idealism in a way the philosophies of his predecessors did not. Hence the problem of his role in idealism's collapse in Russia is simply a special case of his role in its disintegration all of Europe east of the Rhine. Bakunin, Belinski, and Herzen in their use of Hegel were simply paralleling the similar, although more complex, developments of Strauss, Bauer, Feuerbach, Ruge, Stirner, and ultimately Marx during the same period in Germany. An identical problem is posed by the same development in both countries: *why could a turn to realism be effected only through the circuitous path of idealism; why should social*

[5] "как двуликий Янус или как двуглавый орел, смотрели в разные стороны, в то время как сердце билось одно."
[6] The term "Remarkable Decade" ("Znamichatel'noe desiatiletie") refers to the 1830-40s and its incredibly productive intellectual contributions, producing some of the most significant Russian thinkers of the nineteenth century. Pavel Annenkov coined the term in his memoirs published in 1880.

> *radicalism take its origin in metaphysics rather than in direct examination of the ills of society*? The relation between the two problems is more than fortuitous, and the fact that social radicalism in both countries had to be sublimated into metaphysics before it could become an active movement left an indelible mark on that movement once it finally emerged. (228-229, emphasis added)

As Malia argues, Herzen's route to materialism had necessarily passed through a "breakdown" of German idealism, from which the Russian materialist tradition ultimately was unable to divorce itself fully. This incomplete move from a (very often) religiously inflected idealism into an explicitly atheist materialism left its "indelible mark" in the equivocal exchanges between religious and non-religious trends in Russian philosophy more broadly.

In Herzen's most characteristically Hegelian phase, namely his "On Dilettantism in Science" (1842-43) and "Letters on the Study of Nature" (1845), the Russian philosopher heralds Hegel as the "first instance of a scientific exposition of natural science" who is nevertheless still tethered to the supremacy of reason and idealism's predilection toward a unification of subjective thought and being:

> The idealism with which Hegel was raised, which he drank in with his mother's milk, drags him back to that one-sidedness which he himself had executed. He attempts to suppress nature through logic, through spirit […] Hegel begins with the abstract sphere so as to arrive at concrete spheres; but the abstract presupposes the concrete from which they have been abstracted. […] Hegel treated however nature and history as *applied logic* rather than

> logic as the abstract wisdom of nature and history. ("Diletantizm" 119-120, emphasis in original)[7]

Hegel, Herzen argues, progressed significantly toward understanding nature and history materially, that is, as determined by its own concrete laws, yet Hegel's philosophy ultimately deferred to reason and therefore was insufficiently materialist in its analysis: the abstract still presupposed the concrete rather than vice versa, so that Hegel remained an idealist in the strictest sense of the word.

Herzen's ultimate break with Hegel reflected a larger, pan-European break with a philosophical *Weltanschauung* that was unwilling to distinguish fully the outer world and nature from a subjective mind that constituted it. Put differently, Malia argues that Hegel's flirtation with materialism proved dissatisfactory for his inheritors, who would acknowledge his influence on their own work while simultaneously using him as a stepping stone away from idealism and into materialism: "[i]n Herzen's hands idealism was transformed from a philosophy of withdrawal into a philosophy of action" (238). In this regard, the particularly warm, if still critical, reception of Herzen's philosophy amongst later Russian Marxists is particularly telling. As Lenin described him, Herzen "assimilated Hegel's dialectics. He understood that it was the 'algebra of revolution.' He went further than Hegel, following Feuerbach to materialism" (256).[8] Lenin nonetheless chastised Herzen for not moving beyond the bourgeois mentality that tainted the minds of those who would interpret Hegel as a reflection of the ideology of the French revolution (a mentality,

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[7] "идеализм, в котором он был воспитан, который он всосал с молоком, срывает его в односторонность, казненную им самим, — и он старается подавить духом, логикою — природу. […] Гегель начинает с отвлеченных сфер для того, чтоб дойти до конкретных; но отвлеченные сферы предполагают конкретное, от которого они отвлечены […] Но Гегель хотел природу и историю как *прикладную логику*, а не логику как отвлеченную разумность природы и истории."

[8] "Он усвоил диалектику Гегеля. Он понял, что она представляет из себя «алгебру революции». Он пошел дальше Гегеля, к материализму, вслед за Фейербахом."

for that matter, similar to Kojève's). Georgii Plekhanov also heralded Herzen's development of dialectics, but he criticized the philosopher's uncritical adherence to Hegel's logical absolute idealism: "[f]rom time to time he [Herzen] happens to place his footing on firm 'realistic' grounding, but more often than not he places it on the very grounding of idealism, which he considers necessary to abandon" (360).[9] He stated further that:

> Under the impression of these excerpts [from Herzen] it is easy to think that they were written not in the early 1840s but in the second half of the 1870s, and moreover not by Herzen but by Engels. To this extent the ideas of the first resemble the ideas of the second. This striking resemblance illustrates that Herzen's thought was working toward the same direction as Engels and, thus, Marx. Not without reason did Herzen pass through the same school of Hegelianism through which the founders of scientific socialism passed nearly simultaneously. The main difference, a considerable one, is that Herzen's dialectics remained idealist, whereas Engels and Marx's were already materialist. (377)[10]

Kojève's relationship to Herzen and the "Westernizer" tradition begun in the mid-nineteenth-century is rather obscure, given that the Franco-Russian philosopher never directly cites the lineage in his work. What unites Kojève with figures such as Herzen is nevertheless a direct, if incomplete, opposition to and evolution from the idealist trends in Russian philosophy directly preceding them. Alexey Rutkevich, for example, affiliates Kojève with this line of Russian Young Hegelians:

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[9] "Время от времени ему случается поставить ногу на твердую «реалистическую» почву; но чаще всего он ставит ее на ту самую почву идеализма, которую он находит нужным покинуть."

[10] "Под впечатлением всех этих отрывков легко можно подумать, что они написаны не в начале 40-х годов, а во второй половине 70-х, и притом не Герценом, а Энгельсом. До такой степени мысли первого похожи на мысли второго. А это поразительное сходство показывает, что ум Герцена работал в том самом направлении, в каком работал ум Энгельса, а, стало быть, и Маркса. Недаром Герцен проходил ту же школу Гегеля, через которую прошли почти одновременно с ним основатели научного социализма. Разница лишь в том, — и это, конечно, весьма существенная разница, — что диалектика Герцена оставалась идеалистической, а диалектика Энгельса-Маркса была уже материалистической."

"Russian Young Hegelianism, in the works of representatives such as Alexander Herzen (a reader of *Phenomenology of Spirit*) and Mikhail Bakunin, at least partially finds echo in Kojève's Neo-Hegelianism […] Kojève was an inheritor specifically of Left Young Hegelianism, and not the German but Russian version" ("Formirovanie," 15-16).[11] He cites[12] as support Annett Jubara's claim that Kojève "defends Left Hegelianism from Solov'evian rebuke," namely the Silver Age effort led by philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev to wrench Russian philosophy away from its decades-long recalcitrant positivism (Jubara, 398).[13]

These claims to camaraderie of thought between Kojève and the Russian materialist Hegelians are considerably complicated, however, not only by Kojève's silence on the issue but also by the consistency with which Kojève engages instead with Russian religious philosophy: it is, after all, Vladimir Solov'ev, and neither Herzen, Bakunin, nor any other materialist Russian philosophers, whom Kojève chooses as his argumentative intertexts, most importantly devoting his university dissertation to the religious philosopher. Kojève is both a rejection of the religious metaphysics found in modern Russian philosophy before him as well as a continuation of Russian philosophy's cyclical movement through idealism and materialism, secularism and religiosity. It is necessary therefore to position Kojève within this larger negotiation in Russian thought, beginning in the late nineteenth-century and culminating in the early twentieth, between a theologically-inflected (Orthodox) philosophical tradition and an atheist, materialist one. Kojève's work, I argue, signals a "secularization" of Russian philosophical categories that had, in the

[11] "Русское младогегельянство, представленное трудами как А. И. Герцена (почитателя «Феноменологии духа»), так и М. А. Бакунина, хотя бы отчасти нашло отзвук в неогегельянстве Кожева. […] А Кожев был наследником именно левого младогегельянства, причем не столько немецкой, сколько русской его версии."

[12] In perhaps a telling citational error, Rutkevich mistakenly identifies Jubara's work as that of Boris Groys, whose work on Kojève has also attempted to discuss Kojève's radicalism vis-à-vis his religious philosophy interlocutors.

[13] "Идея конца истории Кожева фактически реабилитирует левогегельянское понимание истории, защищая его от упреков со стороны соловьевской критики, доказывающей, что такое понимание *не является человекобожеством*."

preceding generation, been elaborated theologically, in a sense sublating the divisions that had defined Russian intellectual history more broadly before him.

Perhaps most significantly, this sublation emerges at a pivotal crossroads in early twentieth-century thought: the interwar Russian diaspora, a "third space" both between Russian and Soviet philosophical discourses as well as between Western and Eastern intellectual traditions in the aftermath of mass emigration and social upheaval. The theological shift represented in Kojève's thought is particularly significant for understanding his legacy in modern intellectual history: it is indeed impossible to grasp the uniqueness of his formulation of the end of history, the disappearance or death of man, and his articulation of the desire of the Other without addressing their connection to larger debates, germane to modern Russian thought, on the border of the secular and theological.

1.2 The Theology of Revolutions, 1905 & 1917

Before emigrating to Western Europe (Germany, then France) in 1921, Kojève's youth was spent in the intellectual circles of Moscow and St. Petersburg. These circles were fueled by the cultural flourishing of what Nicolas Zernov famously termed the "Russian Religious Renaissance" of the fin-die-siècle. Zernov argued that the Russian intelligentsia had been largely opposed, both historically and sociologically, to the Orthodox church, which it dismissed as "part of the old order which had failed to check the growth of autocracy and so had perpetuated the injustice and inequality of Russia's political system" (6). To borrow Isaiah Berlin's characterization of the historical intelligentsia, it was:

> a small group of *littérateurs*, both professional and amateur, conscious of being alone in a bleak world, with a hostile and arbitrary government on the one hand, and a completely uncomprehending mass of oppressed and articulate peasants on the other, conceiving of themselves as a kind of self-conscious army, carrying a banner for all to see—of reason and science, of liberty, of a better life. (*Russian Thinkers* 126)

The intelligentsia, at least traditionally, found itself in a position of institutional critique in the nineteenth century, with the church, and by extension religion, a frequent target for its complicity with corrupt governmental rule. The shape of the intelligentsia would undergo a massive transformation, however, at the end of the century, with the growing realization of its own estrangement from the very Russian masses for which it claimed to speak. A result of this shift became a dramatic reevaluation of their long-held religious skepticism.

In Saint Petersburg, the Religio-Philosophical Society (1901-1903), formed by Dmitrii Merezhkovsky and Zinaida Gippius, became a significant meeting place for these two intellectual lineages, "where the spokesmen of the Church met representatives of the intelligentsia for frank discussions of topics never raised before on public occasions" (Zernov 95). The culminative event, however, of this shift toward religious consciousness within the Russian intelligentsia became the publication of *Problems of Idealism* (*Problemy idealizma*, 1902) and *Signposts* (*Vekhi*, 1909), two widely read essay collections that declared openly their disapproval of socialism and revolutionary fervor, promoting instead a new, conciliatory liberalism bound up in "religious humanism." The writers, with few exceptions the same for both publications, argued that socialism had largely failed in its effort to bridge the wide gap between intelligentsia and the masses in Russian civil society, and that part of its failure lay in a refusal to speak to the (spiritual) values of the average Russian or *narod*. In the preface to the first edition of *Signposts*, editor Mikhail Gershenzon

attributes the volume's emergence to the "defeat of the intelligentsia" in the failed 1905 revolution several years earlier:

> The revolution of 1905-06 and the events that followed it served as a nation-wide test of those values which our social thought had preserved for more than half a century as something of the utmost sanctity. Long before the revolution, a few minds, working deductively, had clearly perceived the error of these spiritual principles. (46)[14]

Gershenzon had in mind specifically "those spiritual values" upheld by the Russian intelligentsia's tradition of materialism, socialism, and secular critique. The time had come, so the volume's writers argued, for a midway point between the excesses of autocratic rule and that of radical social thought unintelligible to the masses. The result was a brief, if impactful, re-articulation of liberal democracy within the Russian intelligentsia of the early twentieth century. Indeed, these two volumes, taken with the later *Out of the Depths* (*Iz glubiny*, 1918), "bring into focus the issues the liberal intelligentsia confronted in its bid to overcome the obstacles presented, on the one hand, by the tradition of autocratic rule, and by the lure of positive liberty and Bolshevik utopianism, on the other" (Nethercott 252).

On a political level, the perceived failures of 1905 signaled that the confidence with which the socially-minded Russian intelligentsia had heralded political reform was dramatically misplaced. On a philosophical and religious level, moreover, the contributors to the volumes called for a radical break from entrenched materialist philosophy, with larger repercussions for the role of "intellectual life" in Russia more broadly. In a fashion both remarkably self-aware and self-

[14] "Революция 1905-6 гг. и последовавшие за нею события явились как бы всенародным испытанием тех ценностей, которые более полувека как высшую святыню блюла наша общественная мысль. Отдельные умы уже задолго до революции ясно видели ошибочность этих духовных начал, исходя из априорных соображений."

aggrandizing, the contributors to *Signposts* set for themselves the task of rethinking the role of the intelligentsia, and its erroneously non-spiritual values, in:

> the recognition of the theoretical and practical primacy of spiritual life over the external forms of community, in the sense that the individual's inner life is the sole creative force of human existence, and that this inner life, and not the self-sufficient principles of the political order, constitutes the only solid basis on which a society can be built. From this point of view, the Russian intelligentsia's ideology, which rests entirely on the opposite principle — on the recognition of the unconditional primacy of social forms — appears to the contributors to this volume as inherently erroneous and futile in practice. That is, it contradicts the nature of the human spirit and is practically incapable of achieving the goal which the intelligentsia has set for itself, the emancipation of the people. (Gershenzon 46-47)[15]

While the volumes are often thought of as a turning point in Russian intellectual history, the shift to which they lay claim had been fermented much early. Well before both Russian revolutions, members of the Russian intelligentsia had already significantly shifted from materialist positivism in a return to philosophical idealism.

The philosophy of Vladimir Solov'ev, on whom Kojève wrote his university dissertation, was an important early transition in this direction. In his time, Solov'ev's religious philosophy was relatively marginal, yet in the years after his death his philosophy would come to define the unique

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[15] "признание теоретического и практического первенства духовной жизни над внешними формами общежития, в том смысле, что внутренняя жизнь личности есть единственная творческая сила человеческого бытия и что она, а не самодовлеющие начала политического порядка является единственно прочным базисом для всякого общественного строительства. С этой точкой зрения идеология русской интеллигенции, всецело покоящаяся на противоположном принципе — на признании безусловного примата общественных форм, — представляется участникам книги внутренне ошибочной, т.е. противоречащей естеству человеческого духа, и практически бесплодной, т.е. неспособной привести к той цели, которую ставила себе сама интеллигенция, — к особождению народа."

contours of Russian religious philosophy, for both his followers and critics alike. His first major work, *The Crisis of Western Philosophy: Against the Positivists* (1874), was described by Nikolai Lossky as one of the earliest formulations of Russian philosophy's unique features: "an exhaustive knowledge of reality as a whole and the concreteness of metaphysical conceptions" (95). Kojève himself described the *Crisis* as aiming "toward a religious-metaphysical, comprehensive philosophical system, the formation of which is anticipated in the near future and on Russian soil" ("Die Geschichtsphilosophie" 4).[16] Solov′ev in this work, his Master's thesis, characterized Western philosophy as a historical progression toward rationalism, culminating in Hegel, and dissolving into the positivist/empiricist trends of the late nineteenth-century. Solov′ev criticized what he saw as the one-sidedness of Hegel's rational idealism, which in Solov′ev's view led to an equally unbalanced approach amongst the Left Hegelians and empiricists who inverted the Hegelian dialectic:

> Hegel, rejecting all immediate content, recognized only the formal or logical side to be real. Such a clear one-sidedness inevitably provoked, as we have already shown, a reaction in the opposite, just as one-sided, direction. Considering the absolute form of logical philosophy to be an empty abstraction, one began to search for a purely immediate, empirically given content, without understanding that content taken separately from its logical form is just as empty an abstraction, and to recognize it as that which truly exists is a similar hypostasization of an abstraction. ("Krizis" 99)[17]

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[16] "ein religiös metaphysisches allumfassendes philosophisches System […], dessen Entstehung in naher Zukunft, und zwar auf russischem Boden zu erwarten ist."

[17] "Гегель сознательно признал действительность за одною формальной или логическою стороною, отрицая всякое непосредственное содержание. Такая слишком ясная односторонность, как было прежде нами показано, необходимо вызвала реакцию в противоположном, столь же одностороннем, направлении: признавши абсолютную форму логической филосфоии за пустую отвлеченность, стали искать чисто непосредственного, эмпирически-данного содержания, не понимая, что содердание отдельно от своей

One can easily see Solov'ev's critique leveled at the materialist philosophy developed by philosophers such as Herzen. While not a Slavophile (Losev, *Vladimir Solov'ev* 120-121), Solov′ev nonetheless reiterates Slavophile Khomiakov's own accusations of "abstract panlogism" in Hegel (Lossky, *History* 32).[18] Like Khomiakov and Kireevskii before him, Solov′ev sought an Orthodox-based Hegelian Absolute, this time described by Solov′ev as the all-in-oneness or pan-unity (*vseedinstvo*): as Judith Deutsch Kornblatt describes, "the multiple elements (*vse*, or all) retain their integrity while creating a new whole (*edinstvo*, or oneness/wholeness)" (33). Inspired by the Slavophile critique of Kant's epistemological turn, where reason cannot know *noumena* as they are in themselves, Solov′ev relied on a Hegel-inspired system of "concretized" idealism, in order to return to Russian thought the totality of experience.

At stake for Solov'ev was a renewed interest in the individual personality as integral and comprehensive, resistant to the compartmentalizing metrics of either empirical or positivist thought. This, as I will discuss in depth later, led to his most lasting development of Divine Humanity or *bogochelovechestvo*. Spiritual integrality of the individual became the cri de coeur of the Russian philosophers of the Religious Renaissance. As Marco Filoni, biographer of Kojève, describes it:

> the religious-philosophical interest of the generation saddling the two centuries was spurred by the fact that its intellectuals became aware of a new and transformed conception of religion. Religion was no longer an act or a profession of faith in the Christian sense, but

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логической формы есть такая же пустая отвлеченность, и признание ее за действительно сущее есть такое же гипостазирование абстракта."

[18] Indeed, in both Westernizer and Slavophile traditions Hegel is accused of one-sidedness, with the former tradition advocating for an inversion of Hegel's dialectic, the material over the abstract, and the latter relying on (religiously inflected) intuition and creativity, rather than logic, as a marker of subjectivity and the collective. It is an intriguing particularity of Russian religious philosophy that its emphasis on immanent spirituality could so easily align with the materialist refutation of Hegelian rationalism found within Marx and other Left Hegelians. Both traditions emphasize the totality/wholeness frequently encountered in definitions of Russian philosophy, religious and non-religious.

> rather was abandoned in favor of a new form of religious feeling linked to the relationship of the singular individual to the universal. At the heart of this 'renaissance' one finds aspects of Schopenhauer and Kant's aesthetics as well as a growing and enthusiastic interest in Nietzsche. (40-41)[19]

The vast majority of this generation of Russian philosophers working in Solov'ev's tradition would be, if not executed or internally exiled, forced to leave the Soviet Union for Western Europe—they were expelled in 1922 on the infamous "Philosophers' Ships," a series of ships that relocated hundreds of ideologically anathematic intellectuals from Petrograd to Germany.[20] While, even before exile, their philosophical activity could not be divorced from its political context, the disruptive split from their home country greatly amplified the political implications of Russian religious philosophy conducted abroad.

1.3 Russian Philosophy Moves Abroad

In this light, Russian philosophy in diaspora, as an immediate interlocutor with Kojève's own work, should be viewed within two political lenses: first, the integration, or lack thereof, of Russian philosophers and their work into political debates within Western European intellectual

[19] "l'intérêt philosophico-religieux de la génération à cheval entre les deux siècles s'animait du fait que ses intellectuels prenaient conscience d'une conception de la religion nouvelle et transformée. Celle-ci n'était plus un acte ou une profession de foi, au sens chrétien ; au contraire elle était abandonnée en faveur d'une nouvelle forme de sentiment religieux lié au rapport de l'individu singulier avec l'universel. À la base de cette « renaissance » on retrouvait des éléments de l'esthétique de Schopenhauer et de Kant, ainsi qu'un intérêt croissant et enthousiaste pour Nietzsche."

[20] While Kojève fled the Soviet Union in fear of ideological persecution, he was not on board any of the "philosophers' ships." For more on the "Philosophers' Ships," see Lesley Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War: The Voyage of the Philosophy Steamer and the Exile of the Intelligentsia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

life. Second, and undoubtedly more pervasive, the implicit understanding of their work as a response to philosophical and political changes underway in the Soviet Union.

In the case of the first, one finds Russian religious philosophy's "entrance" into Western European intellectual life at a time of dramatic renegotiation of the relationship between Christianity (in particular, Catholicism) and social thought. From Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* (On Capital and Labor) in 1891, which expressed support for workers' rights and labor unions, through to the proto-emergence of liberation theology, a fusing of Catholic teachings with Marxist thought, in Belgium and France in the 1920s, francophone Catholic thinkers were fully immersed in theological debates on labor. Certainly, these debates were in part spurred on by the threat of social change posed by the revolutions in Russia, so that the arrival of Russian religious philosophers, who themselves had long been negotiating middle ground between autocracy and socialism, proved an important and intriguing point of comparison.

Jacques Maritain, undoubtedly one of the most significant Catholic philosophers of twentieth-century France, frequently wrote works inspired by and in direct response to the work of émigré philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev, with the two conducting a lively intellectual exchange from 1925 until Berdiaev's death in 1948. In 1926, Pope Pius XI denounced the right-wing political movement Action française, which had been advocating for a return to monarchy in France and Catholicism as an official state religion. Maritain had long been affiliated with the group and was therefore made a subject of scandal in Catholic circles after the Pope's condemnation. In an attempt to make amends with more liberal Catholic theologians, Maritain published his *Primauté du spiritual* (1927), in which he openly declared his break with the monarchist group and devoted an entire chapter to the invigorating, democratic spiritualism of Russian Orthodoxy and theologians such as Berdiaev (Arjakovsky 156). Arjakovsky argues that

Berdiaev, one of the most prolific diasporic Russian philosophers, ironically became for French theologians such as Maritain an expert on the intersection of religion and communism—from 1932-1934 alone, four anthologies of Berdiaev's works were published in French, and in 1933 he was invited to give a talk entitled "Communism and Christianity" to a packed hall of students from the Institute of Engineering in Paris (327).

One of Maritain's most well-known works, *Humanisme intégral* (1936), sought, as the name suggests, a return to an integral understanding of humanism, one which would connect both transcendental (spiritual) and immanent (secular) beliefs in human dignity. Maritain sought in anthropological terms "the *practical* and *concrete* position of the human creature before God and his destiny," which would come to bridge the gap between merely atheism and merely Christianity in the modern world[21] (8, emphasis in original). As Maritain describes it:

> For this Christians must have a sound social philosophy and a sound philosophy of modern history. They would therefore work to substitute for the inhuman regime in agony before our eyes a new form of civilization, which would be characterized by an *integral humanism* and which would represent for them a new Christendom, no longer sacral but secular or lay. (6, emphasis in original)[22]

Maritain's vision of "secular" Christendom bears a strong resemblance to the Solov'ev's own concretized spiritualism. In the conclusion to his *Crisis of Western Philosophy*, Solov'ev states that:

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[21] "la position *pratique* et *concrète* de la créature humaine devant Dieu et devant sa destinée"

[22] "Une saine philosophie sociale et une saine philosophie de l'histoire moderne leur seraient nécessaires pour cela. Ils travailleraient alors à substituer au régime inhumain qui agonise sous nos yeux un nouveau régime de civilisation qui se caractériserait par un *humanisme intégral*, et qui représenterait à leurs yeux une nouvelle chrétienté non plus sacrale, mais profane, ainsi que nous essayons de le montrer dans les études ici réunies."

> [t]he realization of this *universal synthesis* of science, philosophy, and religion […] must be the supreme goal and ultimate result of intellectual development. The attainment of this goal will be the restoration of the complete inner *unity of the intellectual world* in the fulfillment of the testament of ancient wisdom: "Couples are things whole and not whole, what is drawn together and what is drawn asunder, the harmonious and discordant. The one is made up of all things, and all things issue from the one." (143-144)[23]

These thoughts are reiterated, moreover, in Berdiaev's own numerous writings on spirituality and humanism. For example, in his *The New Middle Ages*, which Arjakovsky describes (147) as influencing Maritain so intensely that Maritain himself arranged for its publication in French translation, Berdiaev advocates for integral humanist identity as the following:

> Human identity, like any authentic reality, is only bestowed in spiritual concretization acting as a seal of divine unity on all of human multiplicity. It disappears in abstraction and isolation. The process of humanism in modern times is man's passage away from spiritual concretization, where everything is organically linked, to divisive abstraction, where man transforms into an isolated atom. (41)[24]

Berdiaev's relatively democratic political views, articulated through the post-Solov'ev tradition, should not be seen as universal to all Russian religious philosophers working in diaspora. Indeed, Russian émigrés professed a dazzlingly diverse set of politic beliefs that would be difficult to

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[23] "Осуществление этого *универсального синтеза* науки, философии и релгигии […] должно быть высшею целью и последним результатом умственного развития. Достижение этой цели будет востановлением совершенного внутреннего единства умственного мира во исполнение завета древней мудрости: Συνάψιες ὅλα καὶ οὐχ ὅλα, συμφερόμενον διαφερόμενον, συνᾷδον διᾷδον, καὶ ἐκ πάντων ἓν καὶ ἐξ ἑνὸς πάντα." The last quotation is an apparently well-known fragment from Heraclitus.

[24] "L'identité humaine, comme toute réalité authentique, n'est conférée que dans la concrétion spirituelle qui imprime le sceau de l'unité divine sur toute la multiplicité humaine; elle disparaît dans l'abstraction et dans l'isolement. Le processus de l'humanisme aux temps modernes est le passage de l'homme de la concrétion spirituelle, où tout est organiquement lié, à l'abstraction divisante, où l'homme se transforme en un atome isolé."

generalize, yet what I wish to stress here is the articulation of these political beliefs through a specific tradition of Russian religious philosophy. As Arjakovsky correctly argues in regard to the Parisian émigré journal *The Way*, of which Berdiaev served as editor, "the contributors […] whether they were monarchists […] or republicans […] fundamentally agreed, at least until 1927, on the recognition of the religious sources of the revolution and, hence, the need to vanquish Bolshevism by deepening the spirituality of the Russian religious conscience" (53).

The second, therefore, and far more pervasive political context of Russian émigré philosophy abroad was naturally the events underway in the Soviet Union. In Gleb Struve's canonical work on Russian émigré literature, Struve divided the literary activity of the Russian diaspora into two waves, the First (1920-24) and Second (1925-1939). Struve argued that the First Wave of Russian diaspora was largely concerned with historical continuity with its now-lost cultural past. The result was a "cultural contingency plan," where certain literary, artistic, and musical practices could continue, albeit abroad, unbroken by the revolution. Arguably the same claim must be made for philosophical production in the Russian diaspora as well—the Russian religious philosophers in Paris and France in the early 1920s actively continued their work in the pursuit of an unbroken tradition with Russia's unique philosophical contributions. The opening editorial of *The Way*, for example, defined the goals of the Russian philosophical community in Paris as follows:

> The Russian émigré community, faced with a long tenure outside of its homeland, is at risk of dispersion, denationalization, the loss of a link to Russia, to the Russian land and to the Russian people. […] Russian émigrés are called to preserve continuity with Russian spiritual culture and, to the best of its abilities, contribute to its creative development. […] The journal *The Way* aims to be a spokesperson for the spiritual and religious tasks of the

> Russian émigré community. It is an Orthodox body and moreover linked to the traditions of Russian creative religious thought. The names of Khomiakov, Dostoevsky, Vl. Solov'ev, Bukharev, V. Nesmelov, and N. Fyodorov are close and dear to the managers of this journal. The idea of Christian freedom was brought to bear by Russian religious thought of the nineteenth century, and we must be loyal to it. ("Dukhovnye zadachi," 10-13)[25]

Although the journal began in 1925, later than the period defined by Struve as the First Wave, its prerogatives mirror those of the older generation of Russian émigrés, including those exiled on the Philosophers' Ships, who were generally born in the 1870-80s and had already entered a more mature phase in their career at the time of relocation.

By contrast, the Russian Second Wave took on a more autonomous identity. As Leonid Livak describes it, "[b]y 1925 it became clear that the new order in Russia was a long-term phenomenon […] the need for self-definition grew sharper in the literary diaspora" (5). Conditions were quite difficult for the younger generation of Russian writers coming of age, and although many grew up and were educated in Western Europe, and were thus bilingual and bicultural, they often found themselves working menial jobs. Feeling isolated from the senior cultural establishment and their journals, they were often called the "unnoticed generation" of Russian emigration (Slobin 27).

Struve likewise identifies a difference in age, with many of the Second Wave writers, having been born around the turn of the century (192). In transitioning now to Kojève's early

[25] "Русской эмиграции при длительном пребывании вне родины грозит распыление, денационализация, потеря связи с Россией, с русской землей и русским народом. […] Русская эмиграция призвана хранить преемственность русской духовной культуры и в меру сил своих способствовать ее творческому развитию. […] Журнал «Путь» стремится быть выразителем духовных и религиозных задач русской эмиграции. Это есть орган православный и вместе с тем связанный с традициями русской творческой религиозной мысли. Имена Хомякова, Достоевского, Вл. Соловьева, Бухарева, В. Несмелова, Н. Федорова близки и дороги руководителям этого журнала. Идея христианской свободы была выношена русской религиозной мыслью XIX века и мы должны быть ей верны."

philosophical work, and its relationship to the Russian diaspora, one must stress the generational gap that divides Kojève from figures such as Berdiaev, Sergei Bulgakov, and other philosophers of the Philosophers' Ships generation, including from even his close friend Lev Karsavin. Indeed, Kojève's younger age (born in 1902), the less coercive circumstances of his emigration, and the chance therefore at an education abroad must come to bear on any understanding of Kojève's similarities and differences with other Russian philosophers in diaspora.

I will therefore argue that Kojève, as well as other philosophers of Russian extraction working in Western Europe in the period, such as his peer Alexandre Koyré (born 1892), belong to a so-called Second Wave of Russian philosophers with a unique set of prerogatives operative in their work. One could add, furthermore, a significant addendum to the normative framework of diaspora studies, formulated here by Greta Slobin. Slobin divides the Second Wave further, into an earlier stage (1925-1929), in which émigré writers realize their need to define borders, and a later stage (1930-1939), in which the diaspora achieves self-affirmation, consolidation, and "accommodation" within their host countries (16). In this light, Kojève's (and Koyré's) accommodation into French philosophical history reflects a larger shift toward assimilation and integration within Russian diasporic intellectual communities.

1.4 Immanent Anti-Humanism: Kojève's *Atheism* (1931)

As I mentioned above, the largest "break" between these two generations of Russian diasporic philosophers lay in the assumption of a theological underpinning to their philosophies. Kojève, in a parallel to the "critical realists" of the nineteenth century, breaks with his theological predecessors of the "First Wave," yet nevertheless his work remains implicitly in conversation

with their continuation of Russian religious philosophy abroad. This explains the split, in critical literature on Kojève, between evaluations of his work within the more religious tradition of Russian philosophy and a more secular one.

Aleksei Rutkevich, for example, routinely denies any theological underpinning to Kojève's work and has criticized biographers Dominique Auffret and Marco Filoni in this regard. Rutkevich finds particularly unbelievable a link both biographers draw to the work of Nikolai Minskii, a relatively minor Silver Age poet who achieved brief fame in fin-de-siècle St. Petersburg circles for his spiritualist philosophy of subjectivity known as "meonism":

> Even less convincing to me is the search for parallels between Kojève's future philosophy and the texts of those Russian thinkers who in varying degrees developed the theme of "nothingness" [*nechto*] (or "non-being" [*nebytie*]). The comparison to N. M. Minsky's "meonism" is tied not to what Auffret and Filoni have read of the latter but rather to how Minsky is briefly characterized in the *Histories of Russian Philosophy* published by V. V. Zenkovskii and N. O. Losskii and translated into French. If Filoni at least avoids completely any improbable parallels, Auffret manages to connect Kojève's philosophy to the work of Pavel Florenskii, Sergei Bulgakov, and even Aleksei Losev, whom he takes to be a Hegelian! (Rutkevich, "Formirovanie" 14-15)[26]

In referencing Zenkovskii and Losskii's works on Russian philosophy, both formative histories that fueled Western interest in Russian intellectual history in the post-war period, Rutkevich seems

[26] "Еще менее убедительным мне кажутся поиски параллелей будущей философии Кожева с текстами тех русских мыслителей, у которых в той или иной степеней разрабатывалась тема «нечто» (или «небытия»). Сопоставление с «меонизмом» Н. М. Минского связаны не с тем, что Оффре и Филони последнего читали, а с тем, что его кратко характеризуют в своих переведенных на французский «Историях русской философии» В.В. Зеньковский и Н.О. Лосский. И если Филони хотя бы избегает совсем уж невероятных параллелей, то Оффре ухитряется увязывать философию Кожева с творчеством П.А. Флоренского и С.Н. Булгакова и даже А. Ф. Лосева, объявленного к тому же гегельянцем!"

to imply that elevating Kojève to the status of "Russian philosopher" is to succumb to a temptation to essentialize him as a canonical figure in the tradition of Russian religious philosophy. A more nuanced analysis of this tension, however, reveals Kojève's philosophy as yet another bridge between religious philosophy and competing secular narratives in the Russian tradition. This is a bridge, furthermore, that reveals the historical tension between the two as a result more of their shared genesis rather than of insurmountable contradictions between them.

Despite Rutkevich's skepticism toward any connection of Kojève's work to Russian religious philosophers, numerous scholars of Kojève (not only Auffret [1990] and Filoni [2008], but also Geroulanos [2010]; Groys [2012]; and Love [2018]) find conceptual parallels to Kojève's project in the line of Russian thought descendant from Solov′ev. According to Auffret, Kojève was a regular guest at two highly influential émigré circles in France, both deeply invested in theologically inflected philosophy: the circle surrounding Berdiaev as well as a separate yet affiliated circle of Eurasianists, including Prince Nikolai Trubetskoi, Petr Suvchinskii, and Lev Karsavin (158-159). In Groys' words, "Kojève's discourse on the end of history can be rightly understood only in the context of the 'historiosophical' and 'sophiological' discussions among representatives of post-Solovyovian Russian thinking during the first quarter of the twentieth century" (148). In his own work, Geroulanos draws clear thematic connections to this group's theological activity, describing Kojève's "philosophical obsession with the Eastern Orthodox theme of *theanthropy*, which he reinterprets as the instance when, after a long historical rise, Man comes to recognize his ontological status as that of a finite God and thus becomes one with nature, with Being" (131, emphasis in original).

While traces of these shared influences can be found throughout Kojève's work, the "smoking gun" that most clearly reveals his intervention into the competing narratives of Russian

philosophy is his treatise *Atheism*, written in Russian in 1931 but published for the first time, in French, in 1998.[27] In the manuscript, Kojève attempts a philosophical account of atheism, and explores the possibility of defining an "atheist religion," yet the treatise simultaneously develops an account of how an individual first comes to develop a theological worldview. Indeed, according to Kojève's argument, one must move first from theology and into atheism, rather than vice versa. This claim is reminiscent of a similar argument several years later in Kojève's Hegel seminars, in which he argues that the historical trajectory of Absolute Spirit necessitates the secularization of a Christian anthropology: "according to Hegel, one cannot realize the Christian anthropological ideal (which he accepts in its totality) except in 'eliminating' Christian theology"[28] (224, emphasis in original).

In language that further parallels that of his seminars on Hegel,[29] Kojève describes God as an articulation of the "ultimate Other." Subjectivity begins with the realization that there exist things other than oneself. Each person originally understands themselves in relationship to what is *not* themselves (i.e., subjectivity is formed through interrelation), and eventually one is confronted by the existence of God as ultimate Other, distinguishable from all other definable "somethings" in the world: "God is something that differs radically from every other thing that one could say is this or that"[30] (72). In the first step toward atheism, then, the atheist denies the existence of this other "something":

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[27] Rutkevich has edited a version of the work in its original Russian (Moscow: Praksis, 2007), and Love has recently published the first version in English (New York: Columbia, 2018). The French version, however, is by far the most accessible and cited edition, and I will therefore refer to it throughout.

[28] "d'après Hegel, on ne peut réaliser l'idéal *anthropologique* chrétien (qu'il accepte intégralement) qu'en « supprimant » la *théologie* chrétienne."

[29] *Atheism* in particular greatly anticipates Kojève's emphasis of the Master/Slave chapter in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which serves as the lynchpin of his Paris seminars (1933-39). I discuss this in detail in the following chapter.

[30] "Dieu est quelque chose qui se différencie radicalement de toute autre chose, dont nous pouvons dire qu'elle est ceci ou cela."

> As for the atheist, for him God is not something. It is nothingness, and between myself and God there cannot be a relation, nor anything in common, since I know to a certain extent that I exist (I am a something), whereas God simply doesn't exist. It is clearly impossible to say what is this nothingness that God "is," since it doesn't exist. Not only can one not say anything about it, but moreover one has nothing to say. The negation of God by the atheist must be understood radically and "simply": in other words, for the atheist there is no God. (74)[31]

While this sounds tautological, the problem Kojève finds in the atheist's denial of God is that the atheist must necessarily acknowledge the non-existence of God in order to deny it. Kojève summarizes this with an analogy of an atheist stone: "a stone, as well as, if it exists, the 'naïve atheist,' does not know that God doesn't exist, whereas the atheist knows it (an analogy: I don't see the table; I see that there is no table. In other words, atheism assumes theism)" (213).[32] For Kojève, then, both the atheist and the theist are originally presented with a "path toward God," understood in the original articulation of the self in opposition to the ultimate Other—the atheist, in denying the existence of God, paradoxically must recognize the existence of the thing that he seeks to deny. Kojève understands this inevitable "path toward God" as the religion, and the atheist's path to nowhere as the "atheist religion."

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[31] "Quant à l'athée, Dieu n'est pas pour lui un quelque chose. Il est le néant, et entre moi et Dieu il ne peut pas y avoir de relation, ni absolument rien de commun, puisque je sais que d'une certaine manière j'existe (je suis un quelque chose) alors que Dieu n'existe tout simplement pas. Il est évidemment impossible de dire ce qu'est ce néant que Dieu « est », puis qu'il n'existe pas. Non seulement on ne peut rien dire de lui, mais encore on n'a rien à dire de lui. La négation de Dieu par l'athée doit être entendu radicalement et « simplement » — autrement dit, pour l'athée il n'y a pas de Dieu."

[32] "la pierre (de même que, s'il existe, l'«athée naïf») ne sait pas que Dieu n'existe pas, tandis que l'athée le sait (analogie : je ne vois pas de table ; je vois qu'il n'y a pas de table. Autrement dit, l'athéisme suppose le théisme)."

God furthermore represents radical alterity, in the sense that God is understood as a "non-qualified something." This is a "something" completely without definable attributes, in contrast to every other "qualified something":

> the pure theist is one who affirms the existence of something without any attribute, whereas the atheist is someone who denies such a possibility. […] for the pure theist there is a qualified something given to a person in two ways, as me (one-self) and as not-me (the world), and there is a non-qualified something called God. It is clear that multiple non-qualified somethings are not possible, for how would they differ from one another? In other words, pure theism is necessarily a "monotheism," not in the sense that God is one (quantity is not even applicable to it), but in the sense that there are not multiple gods. (78)[33]

In Kojève's argument, therefore, there exist three categories of things: oneself (which has definable attributes), things which are not the self but definable (understood as "the world"), and God, which is not oneself and not definable. The atheist does not believe in the latter: "[t]he atheist believes 'neither in God nor the devil'; he only knows qualifiable things, the me and the not-me, a person (oneself), in the world, and nothing else. Outside of this, there is only nothingness"[34] (79). From this, Kojève claims that all qualifiable things (including the self) exist in an immanent homogeneity:

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[33] "Le théiste pur est celui qui affirme l'existence de quelque chose sans aucun attribut, tandis que l'athée est celui qui nie une telle possibilité […] pour le théiste pur il y a un quelque chose de qualifié qui est donné à l'homme sous deux aspects, comme moi (soi-même) et comme non-moi (le monde), et un quelque chose de non qualifié qu'il appelle Dieu. Il est clair que plusieurs quelques choses de non qualifiés ne sont pas possibles. Car comment se distingueraient-ils alors les uns des autres ? Autrement dit, le théisme pur est nécessairement un « monothéisme », non dans le sens où Dieu est un (la catégorie de quantité ne lui est pas même applicable), mais dans celui où il n'y a pas de plusieurs dieux."

[34] "L'athée ne croit « ni en Dieu ni au diable » ; il ne connaît que des quelques choses qualifiés, le moi et le non-moi, l'homme (soi-même) dans le monde, et rien d'autre. Hormis cela, il n'y a pour lui que le néant."

> In seeing outside of myself other people, I cease to perceive the world as something completely foreign to me, as something other, radically different from this something that I myself am. I can fear an 'empty' world, that is, it could seem to me 'foreign,' but the fear disappears (or becomes something else, dread without object transforms into concrete fear before an enemy, etc.) as soon as I recognize another person: I see immediately that my fear is in vain, that the world is not as strange to me as it seemed before […] It is rather in seeing something incontestably familiar outside of myself that I understand that this 'outside of myself' cannot be completely foreign to me. (92)[35]

This homogeneity is incredibly important for Kojève, as it establishes an atheist's sense of community within this world. This community serves as the basis for Kojève's larger project of philosophical anthropology: "despite the diversity of forms in which he and I are given, on account of analogous qualitative content [of these givens] (and of *Seinsart*), in seeing another person, I feel a sense of community with him. […] [This community] is given in the interaction between the world and person" (93).[36]

Kojève wrote *Atheism* in explicit dialogue with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, as is clear here from Kojève's extensive citation of the German philosopher's own terminology, as well as Kojève's development of Heidegger's *Dasein* and Being-in-the-world.[37] Kojève defines this

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[35] "En voyant en dehors de moi d'autres hommes, je cesse de percevoir le monde comme quelque chose de complètement étranger à moi, comme quelque chose d'autre, de radicalement différent de ce quelque chose que je suis moi-même. Je peux craindre un monde « vide », c'est-à-dire qu'il peut me paraître « étranger », mais la peur disparaît (ou devient tout autre, l'angoisse sans objet se transforme en une peur concrète devant l'ennemi, etc.), dès que je rencontre un autre homme : je vois aussitôt que ma peur est vaine, que le monde ne m'est pas aussi étranger que cela m'était d'abord apparu. […] C'est plutôt en voyant quelque chose d'incontestablement familier en dehors de moi que je comprends que cet « en dehors » ne peut m'être complètement étranger."

[36] "Malgré la diversité des formes sous lesquelles lui et moi me sont donnés, en raison de l'analogie du contenu qualitatif [de ces données] (et de *Seinsart*), en voyant un autre homme, j'éprouve un sentiment de communauté avec lui. […] Elle est donnée dans l'interaction du monde et de l'homme."

[37] The intertextual relationship between Kojève and Heidegger is very vast and cannot be addressed in full here. For a broader context of Kojève's engagement with Heidegger across his career, see Pirotte, "Alexandre Kojève, lecteur

Being-in-the-world as the atheist's "l'homme dans le monde": "the atheist religion limits its horizon to the immanence of 'person in the world'" (86).[38] Heidegger's influence on Kojève is furthermore found in their shared emphasis on death as a pivotal form of being. According to Kojève, in denying the existence of God, the atheist's "path toward God" becomes instead a path toward nothingness: "nothing is therefore given to the atheist outside of the world, but what does it mean that 'nothing is given?'" (131).[39] This path toward nothingness is exemplified in death, in the sense that death represents the atheist's only conditioned access toward being "outside of the world" and therefore nothing:

> in being dead, I am no longer on the level of being. I am no longer 'person in the world.' I am different from myself and between living me and dead me is the abyss of death […] death is a paradox, the absolutely irrational abyss (*hiatus irrationalis*) separating and linking 'person in the world' and 'person outside of the world,' at the same time separated and linked by death, by its intermediary, and not existing outside of it. (124, 128, emphasis in original)[40]

A brief comparison to *Being and Time* (1927) reveals Kojève's debt to Heidegger's own articulation of being-toward-death just several years earlier:

> [w]ith death, Dasein stands before itself in its *ownmost* potentiality-of-being. In this possibility, Dasein is concerned about its being-in-the-world absolutely [schlechthin]. Its death is the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there. […] Death is the possibility of

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de Heidegger," and Janicaud, *Heidegger in France*, for French philosophy's broader reception of Heidegger, transmitted through Kojève's own influence.

[38] "la religion athée limite son horizon à l'immanence de l'« homme dans le monde »."

[39] "Rien n'est donc donnée à l'athée en dehors du monde; mais que veut dire que « rien n'est donné » ?"

[40] "comme mort, je ne [me situe plus sur le plan] de l'être, je ne suis plus « homme dans le monde », je suis différent de moi-même et entre moi vivant et moi mort il y a l'abîme de la mort […] la mort est un paradoxe, l'abîme absolument irrationnel (*hiatus irrationalis*) séparant et liant l' « homme dans le monde » et l' « homme en dehors du monde », à la fois séparés et liés par la mort, par son intermédiaire, et n'existant pas en dehors d'elle."

> the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus, *death* reveals itself as one's *ownmost, nonrelational, and insuperable [unüberholbar] possibility*. (241)

These parallels between Heidegger and Kojève's early work are particularly telling given Heidegger's own intention to develop an atheist philosophy through a redevelopment of theological metaphysics.[41]

While *Atheism*'s relatively recent publication has delayed a proper evaluation of Kojève's early influences and philosophical trajectory, the manuscript's direct dialogue with theological thought underlines the importance in understanding Kojève's later, more well-known work as an explicitly atheist endeavor. Indeed, Kojève's Hegel seminars famously stressed human subjectivity as negation, and in *Atheism* one sees the development of this immanent negation as a direct denial of a transcendent, Christian understanding of negation before God. The modern human, whose being as an atheist is conditioned by a relationship to "nothing" outside of this world, is finite and contingent. As Vincent Descombes argues, moreover, one must remember that Kojève is a direct precedent to the "dissolution of man" across the humanistic disciplines in the post-war generation: "the slogan of the 60s—'the death of man'—was prefigured in Kojève's lectures, where it also appeared as an ultimate consequence of the 'death of God'" (31). Indeed, whereas Kojève's Russian peers sought a renewal of an "integral humanism" that would reinstate the transcendental, spiritual value of humanity germane to Russian religious philosophy, Kojève in response proposed a radical, anti-humanism in which the subject is grounded in nothingness rather than God.

Geroulanos's own interpretation of Kojève hinges upon this larger midcentury shift in evaluations of humanism. His book *An atheist that is not humanist emerges in French thought*

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[41] Judith Wolfe has explored this topic extensively in both *Heidegger's Eschatology: Theological Horizons in Martin Heidegger's Early Work* (2013) and *Heidegger and Theology* (2014).

(2010) proposes that, with the various political catastrophes of the early twentieth-century, philosophy was forced to divorced itself from the post-Enlightenment logic of humanism. Humanism, which had itself abandoned a transcendental, theist apologia for the human in its pursuit of rationalism and secular progress, could no longer be justified in light of widespread violence and socio-political disarray. Devoid of faith in humanism after the devastation of the First World War, and without a return to the transcendental buttress of God as the justification for man, the human subject in modernity collapsed as a stable discursive agent.

Geroulanos notes, however, that the "non-humanist atheism," which emerged in the 1920s and in which Kojève's own intervention played a pivotal role, differed from earlier atheisms in its direct (if negative) engagement with theology:

> Indeed, efforts toward the new atheism doubled as reformulations of the theologico-political domain—a new atheist political theology, a new relation of man (and the political domain) to the interrogation (and refusal) of the divine. […] For it, theological shadows lurked in the history of modern thought, in concepts and ontological arrangements that ground notions of man, and even in political movements that flaunted their secular credentials. Hence the new atheism's fundamental opposition to traditional atheist dismissals of religion as obsolete, as overcome by a combination of scientific teleology and social egalitarianism that supposedly aimed toward man's self-perfection *sans* God. (6)

Absent a belief in God and devoid of integral humanism, modern thought nevertheless evolved within the "negative space" of theology. In that space, those philosophers could develop their claims in theological terms, replacing "God with man, history, a political messianism, the Nation, or the State, frequently pushing under the rug religious problems and questions" (6).

Geroulanos describes this shift, moreover, in terms of cross-cultural exchange within the dramatic migrations of interwar Europe. Indeed, this major shift that takes place in French intellectual life in the 1920-30s is unthinkable without the contribution of a steady wave of émigrés, who were born in Russia/Soviet Union and then trained in Germany or France, and who brought with them ideas and problematics that reinvigorated a French philosophy that had until then been stifled by Neo-Kantianism. Stefanos argues that "as foreigners and exiles, not only did they enjoy a heightened personal aura, but their foreign education […] clashed with the priorities of French philosophy and provided an alternative to the more traditional French resolutions of philosophical problems" (54).

While Kojève is the most obvious example of this transformation, one must likewise look to the influence of his fellow Russian colleague Alexandre Koyré. As mentioned earlier, Koyré belongs with Kojève to the "Second Wave" of Russian philosophy in émigré France. Koyré taught courses on the history of religious thought, and Hegel, at the École pratique des Hautes Études in Paris—he would eventually bequeath his Hegel lectures to Kojève, a decision that would result in Kojève's own famous seminars at the institute. Beyond this, Koyré is most well-known for his work in the history and philosophy of science, where, like Kojève, he sought to trace a trajectory from theological to secular models of thought. His *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (1957), his most well-known work, originated as a series of lectures, delivered in the United States, which succinctly restated themes he had developed over the span of his career as a philosopher of science. In it, Koyré described what he saw as a paradigm shift in science in the seventeenth century:

> [s]ome historians have seen its most characteristic feature in the secularization of consciousness, its turning away from transcendental goals to immanent aims, that is, in the

> replacement of the concern for the other world and the other life by preoccupation with this life and this world. […] This scientific and philosophical revolution […] can be described roughly as bringing forth the destruction of the Cosmos, that is, the disappearance, from philosophically and scientifically valid concepts, of the conception of the world as a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole (a whole in which the hierarchy of value determined the hierarchy and structure of being, rising from the dark, heavy, and imperfect earth to the higher and higher perfection of the stars and heavenly spheres), and its replacement by an indefinite and even infinite universe which is bound together by the identity of its fundamental components and laws, and in which all these components are placed on the same level of being. (1-2)

Koyré interpreted the birth of modern science as the destruction of a transcendental, cosmological hierarchy of world and the birth of an immanent universe, in which all things abide equally by the same laws of science. Koyré's work on the paradigm shift of modern science parallels Kojève's atheist philosophical anthropology, where:

> [f]or the atheist, each something disappears with its death, and it is in this equality of being in the face of death that resides the power of the homogeneity of everything given. The atheist does not recognize the differentiation of the given in the world and in the 'other'; each thing is given to him as something finite and terrestrial. (Kojève, *L'Athéisme* 191)[42]

Kojève further makes clear the connection between his work and Koyré's in his contribution to a volume commemorating Koyré's seventieth birthday. Entitled "The Christian origin of modern science" (1964), the essay claims that modern science can be understood as a direct result of

[42] "Pour l'athée, chaque quelque chose disparaît avec sa mort, et c'est dans cette égalité de l'être devant la mort que réside la puissance de l'homogénéité de tout ce qui est donné. L'athée ne connaît pas la différenciation du donné en monde et en « autre » ; chaque quelque chose lui est donné comme un quelque chose de fini et de terrestre."

Christian theology's theory of incarnation: "what is the Incarnation if not the possibility for the eternal God to be actually present in the temporal world where we ourselves live, without stripping him of his absolute perfection?" (303).[43] Kojève therefore claims, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that contrary to popular belief, the paradigm shift described by both Koyré and Kojève was a development *out* of Christian theology rather than in mere *opposition* to it. This claim parallels his own argument, in *Atheism*, for atheism as a philosophical development out of a religious worldview.

As the first generation of émigré Russian thinkers after the wake of the mass exodus of Russian religious philosophers to France, Kojève and Koyré were explicit in their formulation of secular philosophies formed out of the preceding generation's own theologically grounded work. This "Second Wave" of Russian philosophy abroad highlights the difficulties in easily delineating the so-called competing narratives of Russian philosophy, religious or critical, given the frequent, if contentious, exchanges between the two. I will now conclude with a brief description of Kojève and Koyré's most enduring legacy in intellectual history, their anthropological philosophies of history, in order to illustrate their crucial roles played in a new reconceptualization of humanism out of the ashes of religious thought in the interwar period.

1.5 Secular (Hegelian) Anthropologies of History

According to Michael Roth, a massive re-appraisal of Hegelianism in French philosophy in the 1920s-1930s took shape in three major interpretations, each of which continues to hold sway

[43] "qu'est-ce l'Incarnation, sinon la possibilité pour le Dieu éternel d'être réellement présent dans le monde temporel où nous vivons nous-mêmes, sans déchoir pour autant de son absolue perfection?"

in continental philosophy. In 1929, Jean Wahl published *Le Malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel*, which as its title suggests stressed the role of the unhappy conscience stage in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. A second Hegelian, Jean Hyppolite, throughout the 1930s translated Hegel's corpus into French, the commentary of which stressed the role of language in Hegel and would later become his *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel*, published in 1946. The last major interpretation, however, is arguably the most famous one: Koyré and Kojève's combined seminars on Hegel throughout the 1920s and 1930s, which are often referred to in shorthand as "philosophical anthropology" for their interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology* as a methodological account of the human subject, inaugurated by the negating power of desire and the Master/Slave fight for recognition.

Unlike Kojève's seminars, the proceedings of which were transcribed and published by Raymond Queneau in the 1960s, there exists little record of Koyré's preceding lectures on Hegel at the university. It is known, however, that in 1931-1932, the last year before Kojève takes over the position, Kojève attended Koyré's seminar, devoted to the question of religion in Hegelian philosophy and the relationship between finitude and infinity (Koyré, *De la mystique* 87). The uniqueness of Koyré's interpretation of Hegel has been preserved through his essay "Hegel at Jena," published in 1934, in which the philosopher presents a Hegel similar to the one elaborated in his earlier seminars.

Koyré devotes his reading of Hegel to an argument for continuity in the philosopher's development, between young Hegel and mature Hegel, guided by the publication of Hegel's early "theological writings" for the first time in 1907.[44] He centers his argument, however, on Hegel's

[44] Hegel's early work was first edited and published by Herman Nohl as *Hegels theologische Jugendschriften* in 1907. Roth argues that the early twentieth-century "return to Hegel" in part occurred as a response to this discovery of the philosopher's youth.

activity in Jena up to 1806, the year of Napoleon's decisive defeat over the Prussians—Koyré is quite possibly the first Hegelian interpreter to associate Hegel's philosophy directly with the historical phenomenon of Napoleon. In this interpretation, Koyré describes Hegel at Jena as working to define historical time as a relationship between the present and the future, rather than the present and the past:

> It is this insistence on the future, the primacy given to the future over the past, that constitutes, in my opinion, Hegel's greatest originality. This allows us to understand why, in the additions to his *Encyclopedia*, Hegel speaks of expectation, of hope. And also, of regret. This is because Hegelian time is, above all else, a *human* time, the *time of man*, himself that strange being which "is what he isn't and is not what he is," the being that negates what he is himself for the sake of what he isn't, or is not yet, a being that, while based in the present, denies it in his quest to realize the future, who lives for the future, finding or at least searching there for his own "truth"; a being that only exists in this continual transformation of the future into the now, and a being that ceases to exist the day when there is no longer a future, when nothing is on the horizon, when everything has already come to pass, when everything is already "accomplished." And it is because Hegelian time is *human* that it is also dialectical, just as because it is both one and the other that it is essentially *historical* time. ("Hegel à Jena" 177, emphasis in original)[45]

[45] "C'est cette insistance sur l'avenir, la primauté donnée à l'avenir sur le passé, qui constitue, à notre avis, la plus grande originalité de Hegel. Et cela nous fait comprendre pourquoi, dans les additions à l'*Encyclopédie*, Hegel parle de l'attente, de l'espoir. Et aussi du regret. C'est que le temps hégélien est, avant tout, un temps *humain, le temps de l'homme*, lui-même cet être étrange qui « est ce qu'il n'est pas et n'est pas ce qu'il est », être qui se renie en ce qu'il est au profit de ce qu'il n'est pas, ou n'est pas encore, être qui, partant du présent, le renie, cherchant à se réaliser dans l'avenir, qui vit pour l'avenir y trouvant, ou du moins, y cherchant sa « vérité » ; être qui n'existe que dans cette transformation continuelle de l'avenir dans le maintenant, et qui cesse d'être le jour où il n'y a plus d'avenir, où rien n'est plus à venir, où tout est déjà venu, où tout est déjà « accompli ». Et c'est parce que le temps hégélien est *humain* qu'il est aussi *dialectique*, comme c'est parce qu'il est l'un et l'autre, qu'il est essentiellement, un temps *historique*. "

Koyré's Hegel is thus an *anthropological* Hegel, one that sees across the German philosopher's career an interest in the human being understood as negation over time, continuously negating herself in progression toward a future ideal. Napoleon represents the apotheosis of human, historical time, the closest depiction of its total completion on the field of battle, and Koyré concludes his essay with the speculation that Hegel had in fact known that at Jena, watching Napoleon achieve and, to borrow Koyré's phrase, "accomplish" history.

When Kojève began his own seminars in 1933, he intended to complete the interpretation of Hegel carried out by Koyré. Kojève began the seminars by stating explicitly, like Koyré, that Hegel's *Phenomenology* is a philosophical anthropology[46]: "it's theme is the human as such, real being in the world […] it attempts to describe the integral 'essence' of man, that is all human 'possibilities' (cognitive, affective, active)" (*Introduction* 48).[47] He also, like Koyré, understands Hegel's importance in the equivocation of History and the human, both of which are driven by negation. Both History and man are "accomplished" when there is no longer anything to negate:

> History ends when Man no longer acts in strict sense of the word, that is, when he no longer negates or transforms the natural and social given through bloody Struggle and creative Work. Man no longer does this when the given Real provides him with full satisfaction (Befriedigung), fully realizing his Desire (Begierde, which is in man a Desire for universal recognition of his unique personality in the world: Anerkennen or Anerkennung). If Man is truly and fully satisfied by what *is*, he no longer desires anything real and no longer

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[46] Kojève is insistent on anthropomorphism as Hegel's intent throughout his seminars: "This Phenomenology [of Spirit] is distorted in Hegel by a monist prejudice (in anticipation of the *Logic*): by a prejudicial thinking that the being of humanity is not different from that of nature […] this ontology in the *Logic* is in fact anthropological; it is therefore distorted whenever it interprets Nature. It is not universal, despite what Hegel claimed: it's an ontology of Man ('Spirit') and not one of Nature" (*Introduction* 47).

[47] "Son thème, c'est l'homme en tant qu'humain, l'être réel dans l'histoire […] elle veut décrire l'« essence » intégrale de l'homme, c'est-à-dire *toutes* les « possibilités » humaines (cognitives, affectives, actives)."

> changes therefore his reality, ceasing as such to really change himself. The only "desire" that he can still have, if he is a *philosopher*, is to *understand* what is and what he is, and to reveal this through discourse. (*Introduction* 547)[48]

Kojève has long been associated with this theory of the "End of History," taken up by famously by the conservative economist Francis Fukuyama, as well as Marxist Existentialists in their belief in an eventual overcoming of human alienation.[49] The following chapters will be devoted to a more detailed analysis of both Kojève's political influence and the unique interpretation forged in his seminars on Hegel, yet one can see here that Kojève's historicist interpretation of Hegel, in which History and Man are intertwined and will end with one another, are a response to the theological questions posed by his contemporaries, all while, to borrow Geroulanos's phrase, "pushing under the rug religious problems and questions."

As mentioned above, Jeff Love argues for a direct lineage to Kojève from the tradition of Solov′ev's Godmanhood, a philosophy of theandry that imagines the convergence of the earthly and the divine, as well as the "divine fraternity" found both in Dostoevsky and the philosopher Nikolai Fedorov's "Common Task" (*The Black Circle* 92). The influence of Solov′ev and Godmanhood is seen most directly in Kojève's dissertation, which was written on Solov′ev's philosophy of history under the direction of Karl Jaspers in Germany. There, Kojève provides a general chronology of Solov′ev's development as a philosopher, but it is the last period of

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[48] "L'Histoire s'arrête quand l'Homme n'agit plus au sens fort du terme, c'est-à-dire ne nie plus, ne transforme plus le donné naturel et social par une Lutte sanglante et un Travail créateur. Et l'Homme ne le fait plus quand le Réel donné lui donne pleinement satisfaction (Befriedigung), en réalisant pleinement son Désir (Begierde, qui est chez l'Homme un Désir de reconnaissance universelle de sa personnalité unique au monde, — Anerkennen ou Anerkennung). Si l'Homme est vraiment et pleinement satisfait par ce qui *est*, il ne désire plus rien de réel et ne chance donc plus la réalité, en cessant ainsi de changer réellement lui-même. Le seul « désir » qu'il peut encore avoir — s'il est un *philosophe*, c'est celui de *comprendre* ce qui est et ce qu'il est, et de le révéler par le discours."

[49] Francis Fukuyama, *End of History and the Last Man* (1992). The political dimensions of Kojève's philosophy of history are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Solov′ev's life that most interests Kojève. Indeed, Kojève's dissertation on Solov′ev, in tandem with *Atheism* and his Hegel seminars, illustrates how Kojève's historicism can be seen as a direct development of Solov′ev's own eschatological thinking.

Solov′ev's last work, *Three Conversations* (1900), written just months before his death, addressed the question of a post-historical condition seen through the story of the anti-Christ. Through the arrival of the anti-Christ in the story, qualities like good and evil have been undone, as the anti-Christ has solved the major problems of the world and reconciled man to nature. The obvious trouble, however, is that the anti-Christ is *not* Christ as he claims. There is indeed no working difference between Christ and the anti-Christ; both could theoretically establish, as the anti-Christ in Solov′ev's story does, a utopia on Earth. Kojève in his dissertation saw in *Three Conversations* a definitive break from Solov′ev's previous Sophiological work, a break that Kojève clearly believes himself to be inheriting. He argues that "Solov′ev no longer believed that history leads in a steady progression to the realization of 'total life,' of the 'kingdom of God on Earth,' or that with this realization history finds its natural conclusion" ("Die Geschichtsphilosophie"). The anti-Christ figure instead represents the final accomplishment of life on Earth, one devoid of any transcendental love seen in Solov′ev's previous metaphysics but instead firmly immanent and post-historical. In Solov′ev's story, the remaining religious Christians fight one final battle, destroy the anti-Christ, and bring about the collapse of the finite world. As Kojève describes it:

> Since at that point history is for Solov′ev no longer the gradual reconstitution of Godmanhood and the return of fallen Sophia to God, but rather a perpetual battle of the principle of evil with that of the good, a battle that, though it ends with the victory of the latter, at the same time has as a consequence the annihilation of a large part of the empirical

> world: the kingdom of God lies on the other side of history that itself is abandoned to the dominion of evil. It could be that Solov′ev from this point of view is moving towards a specific essence of the Historical. ("Die Geschichtsphilosophie" 17)[50]

Kojève strains to differentiate an earlier Solov′ev, caught up in a theological tradition of transcendental love, from a later, pessimistic one redefined by a secular sense of history. By stressing the lack of reconciliation of the world with the Divine in the later Solov′ev, Kojève reverts to the same duality that he will emphasize years later in his Hegelian seminars, where the stressing of the Master/Slave struggle delays the eventual closure in Kojevian Hegelianism.

Any comparison between Kojève and Solov′ev's eschatological thinking must therefore stress Kojève's embrasure of Solov′ev's Godmanhood, yet his insistence on its atheistic interpretation. Vadim Rossman argued that:

> In a sense, with his reflection on the end of history, [Kojève] continues the tradition of Russian historiosophy, in particular the apocalyptic tradition in Russian literature of the fin-de-siècle (Merezhkovsky, Sergei Nilus, Solov′ev, Fedorov). In particular, his work resonates greatly with these thinkers' premonition of the arrival of a new type of human—the future boor (*griadushchii kham*).[51] There is undoubtedly a link between his work and [Konstantin] Leont′ev's idea of a "full, bourgeois Europe," which lost the ferocity of

[50] "Denn jetzt ist die Geschichte für Solwjew nicht mehr die allmähliche Wiederherstellung des Gottmenschentums und die Rückkehr der abgefallenen Sophia zu Gott, sondern ein fortwährender Kampf des bösen Prinzips mit dem Guten, ein Kampf, der zwar mit dem Siege des letzteren endet, aber zugleich auch die Vernichtung des größten Teiles der empirischen Welt zur Folge hat: das Gottesreich wird jenseits der Geschichte verlegt und diese eigentlich der Herrschaft des Bösen preisgegeben. Es mag sein, daß Solowjew auf diesem Standpunkte dem spezifischen Wesen des Historischen näher kommen."

[51] Merezhkovsky in 1906 published a series of essays entitled "The Future Boor" ("*Griadushchii kham*"), in which he anticipated future political upheaval in Russia as the brutish rise of the bourgeoisie.

Byzantine negativity, as well as with Vladimir Solov′ev's conception of the apocalypse in *Three Conversations*.[52]

If one therefore were to look for some kind of "key" to the philosophical anthropology that both Kojève and Koyré bring to their Hegelianism, it may lie in this systematic de-divinization of Solov′ev that Kojève brought with him to Western Europe. The political implications of this convergence, in which Kojève took influence from a generation of Russian philosophy's imagining the coming revolution as a bourgeois apocalypse, is particular striking in light of Kojève's deep roots in the bureaucracy of the post-war world order.

The succeeding chapters explore in detail the conceptual problems that emerge in Kojève's work as a result of this secularization of Russian religious thought. In particular, the next chapter examines the tension between (religious) love and (atheist) history as competing foundational models in Kojève's interpretation of Hegel. Any accurate assessment of Kojève's work, however, should examine this tension within the larger framework of a reconceptualization of what it means to be human in the mid-twentieth century. Indeed, much of Kojève's appeal lies in his ability to illuminate the epistemic crises that struck philosophy, politics, and theology in this period, as each field in its own way sought a new articulation of its own base assumptions. Kojève's capacity to speak to these crises inevitably comes from his own liminal position, neither fully Russian nor Soviet, Western nor Eastern, or even fully secular or fully theological.

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[52] "В известном смысле своими размышлениями о конце истории он продолжает традиции русской историософии, в частности апокалиптическую традицию в русской литературе рубежа веков (Мережковский, Нилус, Соловьев, Федоров). В частности, она весьма созвучна предчувствиям этих мыслителей о скором приходе нового типа человека — "грядущего хама". Несомненна связь его концепций с идеями Леонтьева о "сытой мещанской Европе", потерявшей огонь византийской негативности, и с концепцией апокалипсиса в "Трех разговорах" Владимира Соловьева."

2.0 Desire in Kojève: When Russian *Eros* Moved Abroad

"This unity must become essential to self-consciousness, i.e., self-consciousness is *Desire* in general." – G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*

Alexandre Kojève is undoubtedly more famous for those he influenced rather than for his own work. Both directly and indirectly, the list of devotees includes some of the greatest names in twentieth-century intellectual history: Louis Althusser, Georges Bataille, Simone de Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida, Frantz Fanon, Jacques Lacan, Jean-Paul Sartre, and others exhibit clear and immediate resonances with Kojève's unique interpretation of Hegel in their work. The emergence of what has now become known as "French theory" would be unthinkable without mentioning the French philosopher of Russian extraction. In the words of editors of a special issue of *Parallax* devoted to his legacy, "Kojève taught a generation of French intellectuals how to return to, read and interpret a text" (Morra and Smith i). Kojève's greatest gift bequeathed to the post-war generation in Paris was indeed an innovative return to text, namely that of Hegel—it would indeed be incorrect to claim any unmediated influence of Hegel on these figures without first acknowledging the particular, to some critics distorting,[53] interpretative lens forged by Kojève in his famous seminars. Hegel, the monist philosopher *par excellence* who sought to track the historical development of a universal world spirit, somehow became warped through Kojève, into the thinker of two: the Self and the Other, exemplified in Kojève's stressing of the chapter on Lord

[53] See, for example, Robert B. Pippin's *Hegel and Self-Consciousness* (11), where he chastises Kojève for having paid "almost no attention to the first three chapters" of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, i.e., those devoted to consciousness before the development of self-consciousness through the formulation of Lord and Bondsman. See also Fredric Jameson's *The Hegel Variations*, which states openly its attempt to overcome the legacy of Kojève's Hegel within Marxist hermeneutics.

and Bondsman in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This duality formed around the question of desire, mutual recognition, and intersubjectivity through negation, and is inarguably Kojève's most enduring legacy in twentieth and twenty-first century thought, so definitively sculpting the discourse around identity and difference that for someone like Lacan, "every reference to 'Hegel' should be glossed 'Kojève'" (Macey 13).[54]

The genesis of Kojèvian desire precedes both the seminars and even Kojève himself. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, erotic desire emerged full force as a philosophical problem that somehow warranted a "solution." Across disciplines, fixation on eroticism served the demands of larger inquiries into questions of human nature and agency. As Olga Matich describes, the sexual decadence of fin-de-siècle prescribed "new forms of love and corresponding life practices that would transform the family and even the body itself," with an eye aimed at the larger, socially and politically transformative project of modernity (4). In the generation preceding Kojève's, the *sui generis* tradition of Russian Silver Age philosophy had already employed Hegelianism to debate at length the social and even economic problems surrounding erotic desire, with Kojève "inheriting" these debates through the influence of philosopher Vladimir Solov′ev, an ever-present imprint on diasporic Russian philosophy and the subject of Kojève's dissertation at the University of Heidelberg.

I will argue in this chapter for an interpretation of Kojève's philosophy of desire within the context of Russian philosophy in diaspora more broadly, in which the legacies of the Russian speculative tradition came into conflict and in turn influenced the intellectual life of their new homes, for Kojève France and to a lesser extent Germany. Kojève belonged to the well-

[54] For a general, but still thorough, account of Kojève's legacy in French philosophy, see Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*.

documented generation of Russian intellectuals who, in various degrees of coercion, relocated to the West in the aftermath of the revolution. Many of them went on to play foundational roles in molding the contours of post-war philosophical and political thought, including amongst their ranks figures such as Isaiah Berlin, Alexander Koyré, Victor Serge, Boris Souvarine, and of course Kojève himself. Any understanding of continuity with their "original" national traditions and larger European intellectual history has yet to be thoroughly explored, arguably due to the Cold War relic of an East/West division in scholarly fields that has over the past decades only recently begun to collapse—beyond the more obvious (Soviet) figures oriented toward Marxist thought, Russian philosophy and that of Eastern Europe in general remains largely outside the purview of Western historians of philosophy.[55]

In his recent book, Jeff Love has taken the needed step in strengthening our understanding of the Russian influence of Kojève as a diasporic philosopher: Love approaches this aspect of Kojève's Russian influence most specifically from the point of view of Dostoevsky and Vladimir Solov′ev, whose visions of wisdom and self-negation provided a blueprint for Kojève's own fashioning of the "Godman" or Sage who emerges at the End of History. While providing necessary historical context to Platonism in Russian philosophy, and its lingering influence on Kojève, Love nevertheless devotes little attention to the legacy of this thought *after* Solov′ev, most specifically in the generation of émigré philosophers who, while still working through the problematics of the Russian tradition established by philosophers such as Solov′ev, found themselves in new intellectual environments with new frames of reference. By analyzing Kojève's

[55] Two biographies of Kojève exist, both of which necessarily address his Russian origins: Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, and Filoni, *Le philosophe du Dimanche* (trans. from Italian by Gérald Larché). Neither, however, tackles Kojève's relationship to Russian Hegelianism other than through general references to themes of fin-de-siècle Russian intellectual life.

famous seminars specifically through the lens of Russian philosophy's theory of desire, I will illustrate Kojève's continuation of, and then ultimate break with, his Russian compatriots in exile. In this light Kojève's seminars represent the tail end of a larger heritage of desire and social alterity within Russian philosophy, which, just like Kojève himself, emigrated to Paris with the Russian diaspora in the aftermath of the October Revolution.

What did Kojève bring in his suitcase of ideas to Paris? How did they depart from those of his Russian predecessors, and where do we find these ideas today? To tackle these questions, I will first address the question of what constitutes desire in Kojève's philosophy. I will then briefly elaborate on the larger Russian philosophical tradition of non-erotic desire and interrelational identity, in order afterward to explain Kojève's ultimate distancing from his Russian peers and the Orthodox tradition through a secular reworking of desire in the context of historical progression. Finally, I will conclude by speculating on the oscillation between dualism and its mitigation in Kojève's theory of desire, its larger heritage in Russian philosophy, and its continued relevance within contemporary debates in the wake of Kojève's intervention on Hegel.

2.1 Desire According to Kojève

Kojève's series of seminars on Hegel's *Phenomenology*, entitled "La Philosophie Religieuse de Hegel" and held in Paris at the École pratique des Hautes Études from 1933 to 1939, played a monumental role in invigorating debate over desire's role in the formation of subjectivity. At the core of Kojève's interpretation of Hegel in the seminars is the argument that human subjectivity is formed around the desire for an Other's desire. Kojève identified history as a violent process of desiring recognition from an external Other, thereby tightly knitting together the themes

of history and intersubjectivity. He claimed in his seminars that the human subject first began historical development toward self-realization when it began to desire not merely another *thing* but another desire itself:

> in order to be *human*, man must act not with the aim to make a *thing* submit, but with the aim to make another *Desire* (for a thing) submit. Man who desires a thing like a human acts not so much in order to take possession of the *thing* as to make his *right recognized* by another […] over this thing, to make himself recognized as *owner* of the thing. And this, ultimately, is done in order to make his *superiority* over the other known. It is only the Desire for such a *Recognition* (Anerkennung), the Action that stems from such a Desire, which creates, realizes, and reveals a *human*, non-biological Me. (*Introduction* 197, emphasis in original)[56]

Whereas animals merely desire things (food, water, shelter), humans distinguish themselves by desiring desire itself: prestige, respect, dignity. Indeed, in so far as it is correct to label Kojève's thought philosophical anthropology, what was at stake for Kojève was a methodological account of the conditioned emergence of the human "subject," inaugurated by the negating power of desire and a battle for external recognition.

Kojève derives his own eclectic interpretation almost entirely from the famous Lord/Bondsman chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where death as a form of negation already plays an essential role in the mediation of mutual recognition. As Hegel argued, for self-

[56] "[p]our être *humain*, l'homme doit agir non pas en vue de se soumettre une *chose*, mais en vue de se soumettre un autre *Désir* (de la chose). L'homme qui désire humainement une chose agit non pas tant pour s'emparer de la *chose* que pour faire *reconnaître* par un autre son *droit* […] sur cette chose, pour se faire reconnaître comme *propriétaire* de la chose. Et ceci—en fin de compte—pour faire reconnaître par l'autre sa *supériorité* sur l'autre. Ce n'est que le Désir d'une telle *Reconnaissance* (Anerkennung), ce n'est que l'Action qui découle d'un tel Désir, qui crée, réalise et révèle un Moi *humain*, non-biologique."

consciousness to show that it is in fact "the pure abstraction of self-consciousness," that is to say, "not attached to any specific *existence*, not to the individuality common to existence as such, that it is not attached to life," it must engage in a life or death struggle with another self-consciousness (113). The relationship between Lord and Bondsman results in the Lord's both subjugation of and reliance upon the Bondsman. While the Bondsman was unable to successfully risk his/her life in death and must therefore work for the Lord, who succeeded, the Bondsman becomes conscious of his/herself through this labor: "[i]t is in this way, therefore, that consciousness, *qua* worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence" (118). The risk of death, or in the case of the Bondsman the fear of the risk of death, lies at the crux of this phenomenologically mutual recognition in Hegel's own account.

Kojève understood this risk of death in more concrete terms, imagining its potential to render us human in the examples of a soldier's risk of death for love of country or the chivalry of the early modern lover.[57] In his own centering of this chapter, Kojève changes the nature of mutual recognition into a question of *both* mortality and action guided by lack (which leads to desire), framing Hegelian desire (*Begierde*) as "the desire to assimilate the object (of desire), to make it one's own, to make it oneself (food, sexuality) […] in Desire he [Man] wants the annulation of the object and therefore—unconsciously at first—the affirmation of himself" (61). Kojève links *human* desire with the affirmation of self-mortality, describing self-affirmation as quest for recognition, a desire of the other's desire, born at the risk of death:

[57] While Kojève's relationship to and legacy in psychoanalysis is too complex to discuss here, it is nonetheless worthwhile to note the similarities between Kojève's theory of death and desire and Freud's analysis of the death drive in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Kojève's writing on totality and (lack of) sexual desire also greatly anticipates Lacan's claim for the Real and the absence of sexual relation, lending credence to an often-invoked rumor (Auffret 13) that Lacan may have liberally borrowed from an unpublished manuscript by Kojève on Hegel and Freud, found amongst his papers by Lacan days after the philosopher's death. Mysteriously, only the first page of the manuscript remains.

> Man seeks to be recognized by others: simple Desire (Begierde) becomes desire of recognition. […] He must risk his life in order to *force* the awareness of the other. He must partake in a struggle for recognition. In risking thus risking his life, he proves to the other that he isn't an animal; in seeking the death of the other, he proves to the other that he recognizes him as man. (63, emphasis in original)[58]

Desire of another's desire underlies, for example, the lover's risking of death in a duel for the sake of one's beloved. In his seminars, however, Kojève is vague on any concrete relationship between sexuality or even actual love and his own definition of desire. It is only in a separate session on the dialectic, delivered in the early years of the seminar (and included in Raymond Queneau's collection of Kojève's teachings), that Kojève explicitly addresses love, referencing an obscure fragment from Hegel's early theological writings:

> [Early] Hegel for a while believed he had found the specifically human content of Man's existence in Love, and this it was by analyzing the relationship of Love that he first described the Dialectic of this existence, which distinguishes it from purely natural existence. To describe Man as Love was then, for Hegel, to describe Man as specifically human and essentially different from the animal. (601)[59]

At first, Hegel identifies love specifically as that which humanizes us. With his maturation in the *Phenomenology*, however, "Love and the desire for love have become Desire for recognition and the Struggle to the death for its satisfaction, with all that that entails—that is, History which ends

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[58] "L'homme cherche à être reconnu par les autres: le simple Désir (Begierde) devient désir de reconnaissance. […] Il doit risquer sa vie pour *forcer* la conscience de l'autre. Il doit engager une lutte pour la reconnaissance. En risquant ainsi sa vie, il prouve à l'autre qu'il n'est pas un animal ; en cherchant la mort de l'autre, il prouve à l'autre qu'il le reconnaît comme homme."

[59] "Hegel a cru un moment avoir trouvé dans l'Amour le contenu spécifiquement humain de l'existence de l'Homme, et que c'est en analysant le rapport amoureux qu'il décrivit pour la première fois la Dialectique de cette existence, qui la distingue de l'existence purement naturelle. Décrire l'Homme en tant qu'Amant, c'était alors, pour Hegel, décrire l'Homme en tant que spécifiquement humain et essentiellement différent de l'animal."

in the coming of the satisfied Citizen and the Sage. Mutual Recognition in Love has become social and political Recognition through Action" (601-602). He finishes by concluding that Hegel had decided that History and not Love as creating man. Love is a private affair (as opposed to *universal* recognition) and requires no Risk, thereby not involving Action as Kojève chooses to define it: "As Goethe said, one loves someone not because of what he *does* but by what he *is*; this is why one can love someone dead, because man who really *does* nothing would already be like a dead man; this is also why one can love an animal, without being able to 'recognize' it" (602). Kojève therefore decided that History comes first, after which, and only conditionally, follows Love.

What can be made of this strange digression by Kojève into sexuality and metaphysics, and why does Kojève insist on thinking of desire as history, instead of *and without* sexuality or Love? I argue here that Kojève's preferential treatment of the Lord/Bondsman mediation, and his caveated insertion of sexuality into the Desire of mutual recognition, can only be understood through Kojève's attempt to both respond to, and ultimately decisively break with, the central themes of love and metaphysics within diasporic Russian philosophy.

2.2 Non-Erotic Desire

In order to understand better the legacy of eroticism bequeathed to Kojève from the Russian speculative tradition, and its role in Kojève's own intervention amongst French intelligentsia in Paris, a bit of historical backtracking is necessary. For Russian philosophy, fascination with the power that erotic desire could hold over subject formation and social cohesion began in earnest earlier within the religious renaissance of the turn of the century. As work done by Anna Lisa Crone (2010) and Alexander Etkind (1997) has already illustrated, both psychoanalysis and the

modern renaissance of Russian religious philosophy[60] emerged in the same historical period (approximately 1890-1930) and frequently shared methodological points of departure: an original (Platonic) wholeness, sublimation, and, most importantly, a complicated relationship between Eros and the human subject's acclimation into civilization. Modern Russian Orthodox philosophy of this period frequently leaned on psychoanalytical terms and theories to explain theological concepts, this despite the relatively staunch atheism and alleged positivism of psychoanalysis. This is not, however, to suggest that modern Orthodox theological accounts of sexuality were merely grafts of psychoanalytic ones. On the contrary, Russian religious philosophy juggled patristics, Neo-Platonism, mystical and gnostic teachings, German idealism, and psychoanalysis with relative ease, inadvertently laying bare the contingencies between these seemingly diverse fields.[61] Yet regarding sexuality, however, although their conclusions and aims differed widely, modern Russian religious philosophy and psychoanalysis both shared an emphasis on eroticism's role in forming the human subject, and its ensuing regulation through social interconnectivity.

Just as psychoanalysis, most famously in Freud's more "speculative" later works, such as *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930) or even *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), imagined that libidinal investments required sublimation in order to achieve social legibility, modern Russian Orthodox theories of desire emphasized the subordination of individual sexual love to the larger

[60] By Russian religious renaissance is meant the theological tradition, most commonly defined through its descent from Vladimir Solov′ev, that reached its apex in Russian Orthodox communities within émigré circles in Paris and, to a lesser extent, Berlin in the 1920-1930s. For a more thorough account of this movement, see Zernov, *The Russian Religious Renaissance of the Twentieth Century*; see also Evtuhov, *The Cross & The Sickle: Sergei Bulgakov and the Fate of Russian Religious Philosophy*.

[61] The original, if uneasy, camaraderie among theology, psychoanalysis, and German idealism (Hegel) within Russian religious philosophy reminds us in particular to be wary of later claims that the work of Kojève's student Jacques Lacan, for example, represents a mere "grafting of Hegel onto Freud" (Archard 30). Slavoj Žižek similarly argues that his early work signals a "return to Hegel," and that "the only way to 'save Hegel' is through Lacan" (*Sublime Object of Ideology* 7). Such claims neglect the much earlier convergence of Hegelianism with psychoanalysis and mysticism in the Russian modernist tradition from which Kojève, and by extension Lacan as well as Žižek, already emerge.

social matrix of Christian total unity. Total unity (*sobornost'*) began as a concept much earlier, amongst Slavophiles Aleksei Khomiakov and Ivan Kireevskii in the mid-nineteenth-century. For Khomiakov, *sobornost'* reinforced the dream of a utopian Christian state where society reflects the total unity of humankind in God. In the words of Robert Bird, Khomiakov believed that "the vertical relationship between each individual and God, and the horizontal connection between all believing individuals of all nations and ages, are thus mutually dependent, each being unattainable outside of the other" (15). For Kireevskii, European culture underwent an increasing compartmentalization of individual lives, bracketing salon life for example from one's family, religious life, and so on. In contrast, Kireesvkii argued that in Russian culture:

> the forms of social life, expressing a general totality, never underwent separate, independent development divorced from the life of the entire people, and therefore could never extinguish in man his familial sense, nor hinder the totality of his moral ascent. The pointed particularity of the Russian character in this regard lies in the fact that no individual, within his own social relations, ever sought to put forward his own originality as some kind of virtue, but instead all ambition of private individuals has been limited to the striving to be a correct expression of the fundamental spirit of society. (271-72)[62]

Various definitions of religious love or eroticism within Russian religious philosophy later served to justify this view of an integral social totality.

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[62] "[ф]ормы общежития, выражая общую цельность быта, никогда не принимали отдельного, самостоятельного развития, оторванного от жизни всего народа, и потому не могли заглушить в человеке его семейного смысла, ни повредить цельности его нравственного возрастания. Резкая особенность русского характера в этом отношении заключалась в том, что никакая личность, в общежительных сношениях своих, никогда не искала выставить свою самородную особенность как какое-то достоинство, но все честолюбие частных лиц ограничивалось стремлением быть правильным выражением основного духа общества."

Vladimir Solov′ev in particular developed the early Slavophile emphasis on Orthodox total unity, yet infused it with an eroticism heavily inspired by various mystic traditions. As I have already discussed in the preceding chapter, Solov′ev criticized what he saw in Hegel as the primacy of the abstract over the material. To rectify this, Solov′ev resorted to an eroticized union of the two embodied in his theory of "Sophia."

Solov′ev's definition of Sophia is at times ambiguous to the point of incoherence and varies throughout his career, certainly a result of the diverse sources from which he derives his theory of the eroticized and feminized embodiment of Divine Wisdom. Judith Deutsch Kornblatt includes among his sources the Old Testament, the Kabbalist and Gnostic traditions, Jacob Boehme, Plotinus, and perhaps most foundationally Plato with his distinction between Earthly and Heavenly Aphrodite (34-48). Despite this eclecticism, however, several underlying features of Solov′ev's Sophia remain consistent. To Solov′ev, Sophia represents the natural pairing to the Christian belief in Christ as Logos. In common Biblical exegesis, God is equated with the Word/Logos and Jesus represents the physical embodiment of Logos into material flesh: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God […] The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, John 1:1-14). Solov′ev employs Sophia to imagine the reverse process: whereas Logos is the Word made into flesh, Sophia describes the process whereby flesh transforms into the totality of Divine unity. In his major work, *Lectures on Godmanhood* (1878), Solov′ev refers to Logos as "first unity" or "first state of being" (*pervoe polozhenie sushchego*) and Sophia as the "second state" (*vtoroe polozhenie sushchego*), suggesting that Sophia emerges from the already-created Absolute yet induces its unification:

> We have thus a *second mode* or a *second state* of being: that all or universal content, that particular Godly essence, which in the first state or first image (manner) of existence consisted only in a hidden condition as only a potential, here in this second mode acts as a kind of ideal *reality*; if in the first state, it is hidden in the depths of subjective, unrevealed being, here it is considered as the subject. (86)[63]

The erotic underpinnings of Sophia are relatively obvious: whereas Logos symbolizes the (implied masculine) pure being of the Divine embodied in, if not formal logic per se, deep contemplation of the laws of the world, Sophia represents the feminization of the Divine reached through sensuality. The two are interdependent: Logos exists alone at first, in the beginning phase, yet becomes in the second stage manifest in Sophia who "occupies the mediating position between the multiplicity of living beings, which comprise the real content of her life, and the unconditional unity of Divinity, which is the real beginning and the norm of that life" (Kornblatt 173). A third, final stage realizes the unification of material being and the idealist Divine—the reunification of the material and the spiritual becomes translated into the discourse of sexual intercourse. Solov′ev's Sophia is therefore a metaphysical, theological example reflecting the storied trope of displacing the masculine subject's content onto a female lack: in lyric poetry (see, for example, Aleksandr Blok's and Andrei Bely's poems on Sophia) and of massive importance, later, for Lacanian psychoanalysis and its theory of the "missing woman."

Despite therefore the emphasis on oneness in his religious worldview, Solov′ev relies on the equivalent of metaphysical coitus and sexual reciprocity to understand Orthodox theology

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[63] "Таким образом, мы имеем *второй вид* или *второе положение* сущего: то все или всеобщее содержание, та собственная сущность Божия, которая в первом положении или в первом образе (способе) существования заключалась лишь в скрытом состоянии как только потенциальная, здесь, в этом втором виде, выступает как некоторая идеальная *действительность*; если в первом положении она скрывается в глубине субъективного, непроявленного бытия, то здесь она полагается как предмет."

through a redevelopment of Hegel. One cannot overemphasize the duality that lies behind this interpretation of spiritual unity. His belief in the primacy of sensuality over reason not only eroticizes the Orthodox imperative to practice holiness immanently on Earth but also places the Word of God's actualization in the feminized Other of Sophia. As Piama Gaidenko describes, "it is she [Sophia] who receives independence from divine nature and can influence it, she alone is a free subject and completes the act of moving from God, the essence of which lies in an attempt to enjoy the full completeness of being for oneself, that is, to establish oneself outside of God" (57).[64] In other words, the relationship between Logos and Sophia parallels that of Hegel's Lord and Bondsman: in order for one to be "self-certain," in Hegel's account, they must receive recognition exteriorly, from an Other. In a battle over recognition, the Bondsman/Sophia submits and recognizes the Lord/Logos. Sophia, however, possesses the power to recognize and realize Logos and is therefore at a certain advantage. Both are necessary, despite any *a priori* claim for superiority for the Lord or Logos: self-revealed spirit for Hegel and Solov′ev is therefore "in itself" (*an sich*), "self-equal through the exclusion from itself of everything else," and "for itself" (*für sich*), in which the subject receives confirmation (outside of consciousness) that it is an objective truth in the world (Hegel, *Phenomenology*, 113).

As Boris Groys argues, absolute knowledge for Solov′ev is achieved not through rationality but instead through eroticized, spiritually sensuous love: "[t]he human body (*lichnost'*) is an original unity of soul and body. To love somebody means to recognize this unity (not only spirit, and not only matter) as it truly is. And this means that love is the medium of absolute knowledge—because absolute knowledge is, precisely, the knowledge of this unity" (*Introduction to*

[64] "Именно она [София] получает независимость от божественного начала и может воздействовать на него, она одна является свободным субъектом и совершает акт отпадения от Бога, суть которого—в стремлении обладать всей полнотой бытия от себя, т.е. утверждать себя вне Бога."

Antiphilosophy 154). Kojève drew the same conclusion in his dissertation work on Solov′ev: "[for Solov′ev] the idea of all-in-oneness is the idea of love, that God *is* love, that divine Love is the love of God for Man and of Man for God, that this free love or that freedom in and by love is the essence and very being of the ideal Man" ("La métaphysique 2," 122, emphasis in original).[65] Human love, as opposed to human reason, becomes the ultimate medium for the absolute, therefore shifting Russian Hegelianism from a monistic, Logic-driven system to one predicated upon duality, materiality, and (sexual) difference.

In his treatise on the metaphysics of love entitled *Meaning of Love* (1894), Solov′ev, citing Goethe, argued that Werther's eventual suicide bears testament to the impassioned intensity of his love. Love that aimed toward spiritual truth and the sublime is certainly human and not animal, and it likewise has absolutely nothing to do with the sexual act or procreation. Instead, it is tied to mortality, finitude, and the risk of self-annihilation: "the most powerful love is very often found to be unrequited and produces not a great offspring but no offspring whatsoever […] even if the ardent Werther didn't kill himself, his unhappy passion nevertheless remains an inexplicable riddle for the theory of qualified offspring" (*Smysl*, 11). As for Kojève, for Solov′ev the greatest desire was one that ends in the threat of negation for its own sake. And just as Kojève credited this negation with inaugurating human subjectivity (if we recall, humanity is won only through the fight for recognition, and another's desire is only won when one risks one's life), Solov′ev also claimed that love saves the individual from pure egoism, while preserving and elevating their individuality:

[65] "l'Idée unitotale est l'idée de l'amour, que Dieu est amour, que l'Amour divin est l'amour de Dieu pour l'Homme et de l'Homme pour Dieu, que cet amour libre ou cette liberté dans et par l'amour est l'essence et l'être même de l'Homme idéel."

> Truth, as a living power that takes possession over the internal essence of a human and actually removes him from his false sense of self-affirmation, is called love. Love, as the actual abolition of egoism, is the actual justification and salvation of individuality. Love is greater than rational consciousness, but without it love could not act as an internal saving power, elevating and not abolishing individuality. Only thanks to rational consciousness (or, what is the same thing, a consciousness of truth) can a human being distinguish himself, that is, his true individuality, from his egoism. Therefore, in sacrificing this egoism and surrendering himself to love, he finds in it not merely a living but life-giving power and does not lose his individual essence with his egoism, but on the contrary immortalizes it. In the world of animals, as a result of their lack of proper rational consciousness, the truth, which realizes itself in love, does not find in them any internal point of support for their actions. It can only act directly, as an external fateful power, taking possession of them like blind instruments for world ends totally unknown to them. (18)[66]

The particularities of this line of anthropocentric thinking within Russian philosophy, and culminating in Kojève, will be addressed in detail elsewhere, yet Solov′ev's erotic spiritualism relies heavily on the distinction between earthly and spiritual love germane to the Neoplatonic tradition of love originally inspired by Plato. Indeed, as Love has illustrated at length, Solov′ev's

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[66] "Истина, как живая сила, овладевающая внутренным существом человека и действительно выводящая его из ложного самоутверждения, называется любовью. Любовь, как действительное упразднение эгоизма, есть действительное оправдание и спасение индивидуальности. Любовь больше, чем разумное сознание, но без него она не могла бы действовать как внутренная спасительная сила, возвышающая, а не упраздняющая индивидуальность. Только благодаря разумному сознанию (или, что то же, сознанию истины) человек может различать самого себя, т. е. свою истинную индивидуальность, от своего эгоизма, а потому, жертвуя этим эгоизмом, отдаваясь сам любви, он находит в ней не только живую, но и животворящую силу и не теряет вместе со своим эгоизмом свое индивидуальное существо, а, на против, увековечивает его. В мире животных вследствие отсутствия у них собственного разумного сознания истина, реализирующаяся в любви, не находя в них внутренней точки опоры для своего действия, может действовать лишь прямо, как внешняя для них роковая сила, завладевающая ими как слепыми орудиями для чуждых им мировых целей."

Platonic influences are crucial to understanding the image Kojève crafts where "the body is suffused with the absolute" (Love, *The Black Circle* 77). All animals, including humans, are capable of the physical act of reproduction, and, according to Solov′ev, "the higher we ascend in the hierarchy of organisms, the weaker becomes the power of propagation and greater, on the other hand, the power of sexual attraction" (7).[67] In his view, "lesser" animals reproduce more, yet have less of both individuality and, with it, a defined sexual attraction. Arriving at humanity, humankind differs from animality in that it does not need to rely on sexual reproduction to achieve its ends: "[w]hat rational basis can one conceive of for the creation of new forms by nature more complete, when there is already a form capable of eternal self-perfection and able to accommodate the fullness of absolute content?" (15)[68] While of course humanity reproduces, any true spiritual love will transcend mere physicality, for with physical reproduction comes the mortality of the animal condition at the base of humanity, thereby evading the union of flesh and spirit that defines Sophiology and Divine Humanity. If "physical union cannot really restore the integrity of the human being, then this means that the false union must be replaced by a true one," that is, one that "presupposes the true separateness of the united ones […] each finding in the other the fullness of his own proper life" (34, 54).[69]

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[67] "чем выше поднимамся мы по леснице организмов, тем сила размножения становится меньше, а сила полового влечения, напротив, больше."

[68] "Какое разумное основание можно придумать для создания новых, по существу более совершенных форм, когда есть уже форма, способная к бесконечному самоусовершенствованию, могущая вместить всю полноту абсолютного содержания?"

[69] "физиологическое соединение не может действительно восстановить цельность человеческого существа, то, значит, это ложное соединение должно быть заменено истинным соединением"; "предполагает истинную раздельность соединяемых […] находя каждый в другом полноту собственной жизни."

2.3 From Russia, With Love

The question of whether "spiritual love" included the actual physical act of sex intensely occupied modern Russian religious philosophy in Solov′ev's wake. Following Solov′ev's death in 1900, the main figures of the Russian Religious Renaissance continued the philosopher's tradition of combining Hegel, Neoplatonism, and (now explicitly) psychoanalysis in their attempt to delineate the "goals" of spiritual love in the pursuit of a totalizing philosophical system. Pavel Florensky, for example, in his magnum opus *Pillar and Foundation of Truth* (1914) placed the question of love and intersubjectivity at the foundation of his modern theology: the book is written in epistolary form to an imaginary friend and speculates on the various forms of Christian "love" and "friendship." Delineating the various Greek terms for love, Florensky denies a place for "sensual" *eros* in Christianity, opting instead to emphasize the interaction between *agape* and *philos*. In his words, "a double bond unites and maintains religious society […] for ancient society these bonds were *eros* as an individual force, and *storge* as a familial base [*nachalo rodovoe*]. In these lay the metaphysical foundation for social being. In contrast, the natural soil for Christian society as such became *philia* in the personal realm and *agape* in the social one" (411).[70] It is in this vein that Florensky constructs his philosophy of Christian love, in which brotherly love, based on one subject dyadically finding itself in another, is transcendental, ontological, and eternal. He separates two desires, one immanently grounded in lust [*vozhdelenie*] and one transcendentally grounded in mutual camaraderie.

[70] "Двойным скрепом объединяется и сдерживается религиозное общество […] Для античного общества такими двумя скрепам были ἔρως, как сила личная, и στοργὴ, как начало родовое; именно в них лежал метафизический устой общественного бытия. Напротив, естественною почвою для христианского общества, как такого, стали φιλία, в области личной, и ἀγάπη, – в общественной."

Although the interpretation of Solov′ev's philosophy that guides Kojève's own work is explicitly atheist, it is clear that Kojève owes much of his project in particular to the religious Russian peers whose company he kept upon relocating to France in 1926. Indeed, an investigation into erotic desire's pride of place amongst émigré "sophiologists" sheds light on the extent of confluence between Kojève's own Orthodox influences and later French theories of desire. As discussed in the preceding chapter, numerous Russian philosophers abroad were more explicitly expelled from the Soviet Union than Kojève, who was not on the "Philosophers' Ships," yet nonetheless integrated into the forcibly expatriated Russian intelligentsia. These diasporic philosophers, such as Sergei Bulgakov and Lev Karsavin, continued to work in a post-sophiological tradition upon eventually settling in Paris. Bulgakov in particular garnered further criticism in the 1930s from the official Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russian (ROCOR) for his theologically scandalous works on Sophia, and, in 1935, ROCOR formally accused Bulgakov of heresy for these views. While no formal correspondence or direct influence connects Kojève to Bulgakov, Kojève had a well-documented friendship with Karsavin and other Russian philosophers in France, and certainly the debates surrounding Sophiology within the Russian community in Paris must have tempered Kojève's own work on desire as he delivered his famous seminars several arrondissements over.

Sophiology, as espoused by Bulgakov, shares with Kojève's work the fundamental belief that desire phenomenologically engenders humankind. If we recall, Kojève suggested that human desire differs from animalistic desire only in that it is willing to die in order to satisfy its desire for recognition of its status from an other. Risk of death for desire becomes the defining characteristic of Kojève's anthropology:

> a struggle for life and *death*, because Desire that aims at a Desire overcomes any biological given, in that the Action brought about by this Desire is not limited by that given. In other words, Man risks his *biological life* to satisfy a *non-biological* Desire. And Hegel says that the being who is incapable of putting one's life in peril in order to attain not immediately vital aims, that is to say, who cannot risk one's life in a Struggle for *Recognition*, in a struggle of pure status, is *not* a truly *human* being.[71] (*Introduction* 197, emphasis in original)

Man must therefore "lift himself beyond his biological *instinct* of conservation (his identity)" (198, emphasis in original) in order to achieve true, human desire that inaugurates the historical process toward total mastery (what Solov′ev would refer to as Godmanhood [*bogochelovechestvo*] and that Kojève refers to as the Sage).[72]

Bulgakov's reworking of Solov′ev's Sophia, as the passive feminine pairing to the active Logos, likewise emphasizes the need for death and mortality in love, yet it is still based in a sentimentality befitting an (albeit eclectic) Orthodox theological exegesis. Bulgakov defines Sophia as "a mutual love, in which each of the hypostases, by a timeless act of self-giving in love, reveals itself in both the others" (*Sophia* 34). Sophia for Bulgakov "appears not only as the wisdom present at creation but as the power that gave God strength to rule over everything, as the artist (feminine) who created everything, as an infinitely mobile and sparkling reflect of the eternal light" (Evtuhov, 154-155). To attempt to concretize an intentionally elusive category, one can define Bulgakov's Sophia as a spiritual love that, in the manner of an ontological glue, helps to connect

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[71] "Une Lutte pour la vie et la *mort*, parce que le Désir qui porte sur un Désir portant sur un Désir *dépasse* le donné biologique, de sorte que l'Action effectuée en fonction de ce Désir n'est pas limitée par ce donné. Autrement dit, l'Homme risquera sa *vie* biologique pour satisfaire son Désir *non-biologique*."

[72] "s'élever au-dessus de son *instinct* biologique de conservation (identité)"

the Orthodox hypostases (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) to our perceivable world. Bulgakov imagines this task twofold: first, Sophia helps to solve the ontological problem in Orthodoxy and general Christian theology whereby God is three distinct persons, or hypostases, yet one underlying substance (*ousia*). Second, and finding resonance here with Kojève's philosophy of desire, Sophia through love permits an "entryway" of sorts for humanity to achieve divinity in the material world. Given that Sophia symbolizes the spiritualization of matter, humanity may, so long as it desires to find union with Sophia, become the creative image of God, the "absolute in the becoming" (Evtuhov 105). This theological love underpins Solov′ev's previously mentioned philosophy of Divine Humanity, characterizing the convergence of the earthly and the divine, and man's place therein, in terms of an erotic union. Bulgakov imagines God's love, or Sophia, as *kenosis*, whereby God diminishes himself in order to allow for both the creation of humanity and its ability to achieve connection with the divine through spiritual love. The term "*kenosis*," a Koine Greek word based on the verb "to empty," entered the Orthodox theological lexicon through Paul in the New Testament: "who, though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness." (*The Bible: New Oxford Annotated Version*, Philippians 2:6-7). In order for man to become God and God to become man, however, it is necessary that God, the divine, *actively* empties himself and seeks mortality and humanity in the death of Jesus Christ: "Sophia—antinomically—condescends itself in the *kenosis* of the Son of God who descends from heaven to earth, in the self-diminishing of Christ. […] In a way which is incomprehensible to man, divine nature diminished itself so far as to *allow* the death of human nature, uniting itself with it in an indivisible manner" (Kiejzik, 60). By embracing death, both in humanity as well as in the divine

Son, Sophia embodies the highest aim of spiritual love and connectivity. Sophia's gift of divine mortality is what enables humanity to in turn aim towards the divine.

Although Karsavin openly expressed disdain for what he called the "aesthetic-religious decadence, Latinism, and sophianism" of theologians like Bulgakov, his own theology of desire exposes his contrast with Bulgakov as one of degree and not kind.[73] Unlike the relationship between Bulgakov and Kojève, of which nothing concrete demonstrating immediate correspondence in Paris or St. Petersburg has been found, a clear relationship exists between Karsavin and Kojève. This may betray the more direct influence he may have had on Kojève, acting both as a fellow philosopher in exile and as a close friend—it is through Karsavin and his circle, for example, that Kojève first met Nina Ivanova, his longtime partner who was the best friend of Karsavin's youngest daughter (Rutkevich "Formirovanie" 9). Karsavin's legacy abroad in France is much shorter lived: he established a new intellectual circle amongst Russian émigrés in Clamart (just outside of Paris) with Berdiaev but was refused a professorial position at the St. Sergius Institute, offered instead to Georges Florovsky, and he moved in 1928 to Kaunas, Lithuania, to accept a position as Professor of World History. Following the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Karsavin was arrested and died of tuberculosis in a labor camp in 1952 (Meerson-Aksenov 140-141). Before his death, however, Karsavin continued to meet regularly with Kojève in his frequent travels to Western Europe to discuss theology and philosophy of history, and it would therefore not be surprising if Kojève's philosophy took heavy inspiration from Karsavin's work (Auffret 158).

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[73] In a debate in Parisian émigré journal *The Way* over Eurasianism, Karsavin defended his fellow Eurasianists from any suggestion of camaraderie with sophiologists: "[мы] не можем по разуму и совести высоко поставить эстетическо-религиозное упадочничество, латиинство и софианство" ("Otvet" 98). This deflection, however, may have been less a question of conceptual disagreement than one of political orientation.

Part of Karsavin's major legacy within Russian philosophy lies in an anthropological development of Solov′ev's theory of pan-unity (*vseedinstvo*). Khoruzhii describes it as "a construction of pan-unity as a complicated hierarchy of 'moments' or 'qualifyings' (*kachestvovaniia*) in various orders, connected to one another in a relationship of 'contractedness' (*stiazhennosti*)" ("Filosofiia Karsavina" 204).[74] Karsavin justifies theologically the personality's "finiteness," including its mortality, on the premise that subjectivity is always based on interrelations with others, finally and most importantly with God.[75] His extrapolation on humankind's emergence before God is, if not explicitly and formally dialectical, at the very least dialogical. Borrowing heavily from Solov′ev, and betraying his similarities with Bulgakov, Karsavin describes the emergence of the human personality as follows: "First, only God. Then, a dying God and an emerging creature. Then, only a creature instead of God. Then, a dying creature and a resurrecting God. Then, again only God" (171-172).[76] His sole piece devoted exclusively to the question of love, *Noctes Petropolitanae* (1922), imagines spiritual love as similar to Bulgakov's, where love serves the larger theandric process of connecting humankind to the Absolute:

> I cannot come to know myself completely and perceive myself as a unity or person without having drawn myself together first, and I can only draw myself together if I'm not

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[74] "конструкция всеединства как сложной иерархии «моментов» или «качествований» разных порядков, связанных между собой отношением «стяженности»"; according to Khoruzhii, Karsavin borrows the term "стяженность" from the theology of Nicholas of Cusa, who imagined creatures as finite, "contracted" and interrelational images of God, with only God representing the total image (204). Bergson also provides a theory of contraction and interrelation in his *Matter and Memory* (1896), yet any influence on Karsavin's work is unclear.

[75] It should be reiterated here that Karsavin's development of the term "personality" ("личность") belongs to the same theological tradition as Bulgakov, which uses the Orthodox belief in hypostasis, the possibility of one person in multiple natures (e.g., Father, Son, Holy Spirit), to account for the emergence and particularity of an individual subject or "personality."

[76] "Сначала—только один Бог, потому—Бог умирающий и тварь возникающий, потом—только одна тварь вместо Бога, потом—тварь умирающий и Бог воскресающий, потом—опять один только Бог."

> boundless and if beyond my limits something opposes me. Self-contractedness, self-awareness builds personhood necessarily limited in its originality, but in my love I come to know that my personhood is only a part of a higher personhood, the second half of which is in my beloved. In love I overcome the limits of my person, at the same time outlining them for the first time, and I recognize myself as a twofold personality. My twofold personality follows from the fact that, recognizing myself as a definite, bounded unity, I absorb into myself the just as definite and bounded unity of my beloved and pour myself completely out into it. (169-170)[77]

Karsavin relies upon the interconnectivity between the subject and his beloved to eventually argue for the primacy of God as the being that unites all through love. As Nikolai Lossky describes it, "Karsavin supposes that if something, even a created something, were ontologically external to God, it would limit God. Hence Karsavin staunchly maintains that God is pan-unity, and creature is nothing" (302). For Karsavin, as well as for many modern Russian Orthodox theologians, the reciprocities of love provide evidence for a greater reciprocity between the material and the divine, allowing Karsavin to essentially repeat his formulation of love as the same underlying formulation of the triune nature of God: if love requires self-affirmation outside of oneself, then the Father, for example, receives its essence as much from the Son as *vice versa*, yet they are mere manifestations of the same one God.

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[77] "Не могу познать себя я всецело и постичь как единство или личность, не собрав себя самого; а собрать себя я могу только, если не безграничен я и если за гранями моими что-то мне противостоит. Самостяжение, самосознание созидает личность, в самобытии своем необходимо ограниченную. Но в любви моей познаю я, что моя личность лишь часть высшей личности, другая половина которой в любимой моей. В любви превозмогаю я грани моей личности, в то же время впервые их ясно очерчивая, и сознаю себя личностью двуединой. Двуединая личность моя становится в том что, сознавая себя определенным, ограниченным единством, я вбираю в себя столь же определенное или ограниеченное единство любимой и всецело себя изливаю в него."

The similarities between Karsavin and Kojève's secular interpretation are most striking in Kojève's annotated translation of the fourth chapter of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which precedes the notes on his seminars collected and published by Raymond Queneau in 1947:

> The man "absorbed" by the object he contemplates can only be "called to himself" by a Desire: by the desire to eat, for example. It's the (conscious) Desire of a being which constitutes this being as Me and reveals it as such by forcing it to say: "I…". It is Desire that transforms Being revealed to itself by itself in (true) knowledge, in an "object" revealed to a "subject" by a subject different from the object and "opposed" to it. It is in and through, or better yet as, its Desire that man constitutes himself and reveals himself – to himself and to others—as a Me, as the Me essentially different from, and radically opposed to, not-Me. The (human) Me is the Me of a—or the—Desire. (13-14)[78]

As with Kojève, it is unclear whether Karsavin or Bulgakov imagined their philosophies of love to include the act of procreation. This is particularly crucial given the link established by other philosophers between love, procreation, and history.

Berdiaev, for example, in echoes of Florensky (and, by extension, Solov′ev), distinguished procreative love in particular as an impediment to the totality sought by Russian religious philosophy:

> reproductive, sexual love [*rodovaia, polovaia liubov'*] fractures individuality and aims for the immortality of a family, for the creation of many beings as opposed to one complete

[78] "L'homme « absorbé » par l'objet qu'il contemple ne peut être « rappelé à lui » que par un Désir : par le désir de manger, par exemple. C'est le Désir (conscient) d'un être qui constitue cet être en tant que Moi et le révèle en tant que tel n le poussant à dire : « Je… ». C'est le Désir qui transforme l'Être révélé à lui-même par lui-même dans la connaissance (vraie), en un « objet » révélé à un « sujet » par un sujet différent de l'objet et « opposé » à lui. C'est dans et par, ou mieux encore, en tant que « son » Désir que l'homme se constitue et se révèle—à soi-même et aux autres—comme un Moi, comme le Moi essentiellement différent du, et radicalement oppose au, non-Moi. Le Moi (humain) est le Moi d'un—ou du—Désir."

> being, and for a bad infinity and eternal return. True love, overcoming sex, should direct all human energy inward and into eternity instead of *outward and over time*. This false cult of the future, this false-progressiveness has been tied to reproductive sex (239, emphasis mine).

Humankind becomes bogged down in the material world when it focuses the goals of love toward procreation and not toward the divine. Note here in particular the contrast Berdiaev establishes between sexual reproduction and *historical* time, on the one hand, and transcendental love on the other. History is understood as the procession of (sexual) reproduction over generations, preventing the larger goal of complete unity. Of course, as Love correctly points out, this fracturing of historical progress and sexual reproduction already found its apex earlier, in the philosophy of Nikolai Fedorov and his "Common Task." There Fedorov famously claimed "that the only emancipatory ideal for humanity is to achieve universal immortality (and universal resurrection of the dead) through technological advancement" and at the expense of sexual activity, which was viewed as a distraction to the cause (Love 5). To reproduce is to move history forward in the wrong direction.

What I wish to stress, however, is the opposition posed between history and love in the Russian Silver Age tradition. Olga Matich summarizes this influence of Solov′ev's eroticism rather succinctly: "[l]ove's goal was to bring history, associated with the irrevocable natural cycle, to an end and to immortalize the body" (74). While Kojève accepts this opposition, and what Matich describes as the "apocalyptic rupture" of the Russian modernists, his "choice" of history over love renders a major break from the Russian tradition before him (9).

2.4 The Break With the Russian Tradition

If we recall Kojève's own view on love and history, Kojève also wanted to separate history from love altogether, yet unlike his Russian peers he chooses history instead of love (arguing that Hegel made the same break in his earlier years). Furthermore, although for him mortality/death accordingly plays a fundamental role in the understanding of history, he chooses not to identify mortality with procreation and ignores the relationship, essential to the religious philosophers, between the production of children and the continuation of human history at the expense of eternity. Though an avowed atheist, Kojève sympathizes with his religious peers when they prefer human oneness over fragmentary reproductive sex, making it the defining characteristic of his anthropology: man must "lift himself beyond his biological *instinct* of conservation (his identity)" through desire for recognition (*Introduction* 198, emphasis in original).

Herein lie both the continuity with and reaction against Russian religious philosophy that we curiously find in Kojève's interpretation of desire: Kojève accepts both the rejection of "biological," animalistic reproduction and the endorsement of the unity of the individual as the teleological goal, yet he simultaneously argues for "history" and denies transcendental love as the link to God, the logic of which necessarily undergirds Russian religious philosophy's monist integrity—after all, why would Orthodox thought deny immanent, reproductive love if there were no transcendental love in exchange? As a militant atheist with a clear eye to remove God from his interpretation and replace him with historicized human potential, Kojève, in his own provocative style, embraces the finitude of the human and its search for self-realization in the face of death,

placing this search at the core of his understanding of history.[79] This process of self-realization, however, nonetheless utilizes the same interrelational subjectivity of his theist peers, where at the end of self-realization, the infamous conclusion of said history, "the synthesis of Master and Slave is realized, the synthesis that is the integral Human, the Citizen of the universal and homogenous State, created by Napoleon" (*Introduction* 201).[80]

For Solov′ev, humanity's self-realization was embodied Divine Humanity, the synthesis of the human and spiritual achieved specifically through love that justifies humanity's historical development. If love then is not merely the propagation of the species, it is for Solov′ev the ever-approaching union with God, viewed in terms of sexuality where the union is one "of flesh and spirit [which] takes place along the lines of sexual intercourse" and inaugurates the divine on Earth as well as transcendentally (Kornblatt 70). Kojève denies the transcendental, and he furthermore prefers history over love, yet his formulation of an atheist development of history adopts a fair amount of Solov′ev's language, as desire is responsible for the initiation of historical self-realization. Kojève seizes from Solov′ev the belief that men (Jesus, Napoleon, Stalin) can become God, yet their becoming of God is immanent rather than transcendental: there is no Other, divine hereafter, no mutual Love therefore to unite them, and "becoming God" here merely indicates the successful synthesis of the Hegelian opposition through man's labor. It is another example of Kojève's atheist reworking of Orthodox Christian theology, and one, moreover, that he suggests in his dissertation that Solov′ev himself was anticipating.

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[79] It would of course be incomplete not to acknowledge the inheritance of Martin Heidegger's "Being-toward-Death" in Kojève's interpretation as a way to assuage the vacuum left from the disavowal of transcendental love. That said, I am more interested here in discussing his reorientation of particularly Russian religious thought and its continued framing of his work.

[80] "la synthèse du Maître et de l'Esclave, cette synthèse qu'est l'Homme intégral, le Citoyen de l'État universel et homogène, crée par Napoléon."

Kojève finds in Solov′ev's last work, *Three Conversations*, written months before his death, one final stage in the development of the philosopher's worldview and a source for Kojève's own break with the Russian Orthodox emphasis on love. In it, Solov′ev expounds on the question of a post-historical condition seen through the story of the anti-Christ. He describes a synthesis not unlike Hegel's, where qualities like good and evil have been undone thanks to the labor of the anti-Christ, who has solved the major problems of the world and reconciled man to nature. The trouble, however, is that the anti-Christ is *not* Christ as he claims, again raising for Solov′ev and Orthodoxy more broadly the question of *satisfaction* of one's desires without transcendental love. Other than ontologically, there is virtually no practical distinction between Christ and the anti-Christ; both could theoretically establish, as the Anti-Christ in Solov′ev's story does, a utopia on Earth. According to Kojève, "Solov′ev no longer believed that history leads in a steady progression to the realization of 'total life', of the 'kingdom of God on Earth,' or that with this realization history finds its natural conclusion" ("Die Geschichtsphilosophie" 17). The anti-Christ figure instead represents the final realization of life on Earth, one devoid of any transcendental love seen in Solov′ev's previous metaphysics. In Solov′ev's story, the remaining religious Christians (with help from the Jews) fight one final battle, destroy the anti-Christ, and bring about the collapse of the finite world. As Kojève describes it:

> Since at that point history is for Solov′ev no longer the gradual reconstitution of godmanhood and the return of fallen Sophia to God, but rather a perpetual battle of the principle of evil with that of the good, a battle which, though it ends with the victory of the latter, at the same time has as a consequence the annihilation of a large part of the empirical world: the kingdom of God lies on the other side of history which itself is abandoned to

> the dominion of evil. It could be that Solov′ev from this point of view is moving towards a specific essence of the Historical. (19)[81]

Just as Kojève sought to differentiate two Hegels, an earlier one which believed in Love as a humanizing principle and the later one who decided definitively on History, here again Kojève strains to differentiate an earlier Solov′ev caught up in transcendental love from a later, pessimistic one redefined by a secular sense of history. By stressing the lack of reconciliation of the world with the Divine in the later Solov′ev, Kojève reverts to the same duality that he will emphasize years later in his Hegelian seminars, where the articulation of Lord and Bondsman override any sense of closure in Kojevian Hegelianism. This establishes a remarkably ignored degree of continuity with Russian religious philosophy in Kojève's thought which speaks to later challenges in understanding the philosopher's legacy.

2.5 The Homogenous State or Eternal Difference?

Like his religious peers such as Bulgakov or Karsavin, Kojève postulates that the human subject lacks self-sustained stability, and that it is only through an Other that the subject achieves self-certainty. Judith Butler describes this innovation of Kojève's over Hegel as "the human subject as a mode of Becoming, *internally nonidentical*" (15, emphasis added). Kojève's major

[81] "Denn jetzt ist die Geschichte für Solowjew nicht mehr die allmähliche Wiederherstellung des Gottmenschentums und die Rückkehr der abgefallenen Sophia zu Gott, sondern ein fortwährender Kampf des bösen Prinzips mit dem Guten, ein Kampf, der zwar mit dem Siege des letzteren endet, aber zugleich auch die Vernichtung des größten Teiles der empirischen Welt zur Folge hat: das Gottesreich wird jenseits der Geschichte verlegt und diese eigentlich der Herrschaft des Bösen preisgegeben. Es mag sein, daß Solowjew auf diesem Standpukte dem spezifischen Wesen des Historischen näher kommen, dessen selbständige Bedeutung besser erfassen und die seiner früheren Methaphysik anhaftenden inneren Antinomien überwinden würde, aber davon wissen wir, wie gesagt, nichts."

debt to the sophiologists following in Solov′ev's footsteps lay in an understanding of the internally nonidentical subject as a function of the ontological primacy of love—namely, that love (poeticized as Sophia) is the force that both destabilizes and constitutes the subject. This paradox of subject formation, championed by Solov′ev in *The Meaning of Love* as the ego death necessary in the unfolding of spiritual love, becomes translated by Kojève into an interpretation of Hegel as a philosopher of alterity, what Žižek calls "the strongest affirmation yet of difference and contingency" (*Sublime Object of Ideology* 7).

The greatest of challenge therefore in understanding Kojève's Hegelianism lies in its position both as a vision of alterity and difference, with the aforementioned appeals to perpetual difference between Subject and Other, and as a philosophy of the universal, homogenous state at the end of History. The paradox begins when Kojève equates love and labor in his philosophy: desire serves to negate but preserve the externality of the object of desire, so that Hegel's logic of sublation (*Aufhebung*) reveals for Kojève a historicized process of healing humankind's alienation from itself, its others, and so on until the manifestation of Absolute Spirit, for Kojève the appearance of a final state defined by pure managerialism and embodied in first Napoleonic France, then Stalinist Russia, and lastly De Gaullist France. Groys argues that the philosopher imagined said bureaucratic world beyond History as one devoid of any necessary sexual relation, at least philosophically:

> [Kojève] points out that the realization of desire, the realization of love, means their disappearance. Every desire can be satisfied—and, therefore, finalized. Satisfaction puts an end to desire. The end of history is possible and inevitable because there is no such thing as infinite desire. The universal and homogeneous state is for Kojève the final truth, because it is the state of love that satisfies in a finalizing way our desire for recognition.

> Kojève carried out a radical sexualization of reason, history and politics; the sexualization that he learned from Solovyov. […] Kojève is thematizing in the first place not desire itself, but rather the philosophical state of mind after its satisfaction. For Kojève thought is posthistorical because it is post-coital. (*Introduction to Antiphilosophy* 158).

This seems to be based off the premise that, if History is understood as the long process of reconciliation to one's desires, then any theoretical end to History for Kojève would be the result of an ultimate satisfaction of desire altogether:

> Man can be truly "satisfied," History can end, only with and through the formation of a Society, a State, where the strictly particular, personal, individual values of each are recognized as such, in their very particularity, by *all*, by the Universality incarnated in the State as such, and where the universal values of the State are recognized and realized by the Particular as Particular, but *all* the Particulars. (*Introduction* 215, emphasis in original)[82]

It is indeed a clever thought experiment, to imagine how philosophy could exist in utopia, the conditions of which are determined through philosophy itself. Liberal political interpreters of Kojève have taken this idea of satisfaction in two directions. One, Francis Fukuyama, saw in Kojève's End of History the theorization of American neoliberalism, perhaps taking direction from Kojève's infamous remark that the United States had achieved the final stage of "Marxist 'communism'" in that every member of society had access to whatever goods they may need.[83] Another direction, recently taken by Mark Lilla and formulated years earlier by Shadia Drury,

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[82] "l'Homme ne peut être vraiment «satisfait», l'Histoire ne peut s'arrêter, que dans et par la formation d'une Société, d'un État, où la valeur strictement particulière, personnelle, individuelle de chacun est reconnue en tant que telle, dans sa particularité même, par *tous*, par l'Universalité incarnée dans l'État en tant que tel, et où la valeur universelle de l'État est reconnue et réalisée par le Particulier en tant que Particulier, par *tous* les Particuliers."
[83] See Kojève's footnote, 436, and Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

takes Kojève to task for what Lilla sees as the philosopher's indifference to the risks of political engagement within philosophy, so long as the proposed final state achieves homogenous satisfaction.[84]

While it would, of course, be facile to deduce the particularities of Kojève's theories of desire and satisfaction to merely the particularities of Orthodox theology, it is difficult not to see some influence of the immanent materiality of Orthodoxy on Kojève's belief in the immanent totality of difference emblematized in desire as a historical project. In particular, Karsavin, who advocated for reciprocity of all things in God as pan-unity, finds resonance in Kojève's advocacy of the particularity under the universal State. One cannot also but think of Bulgakov's vision of a "sophic economy" (*sofiinost' khoziaistva*), where man's ability to partake of Sophia (Kojève's desire) permits his labor to overcome "the division of subject and object, for it posits the fundamentally *active* nature of their relationship" (Evtuhov 168). As Catherine Evtuhov notes, Sophia allows Bulgakov to imagine the formation of a social order (economy, labor, general collective human productivity) in sexualized terms, with the original exchange between masculinized Man and feminized Nature understood as a harmonious marital union: "Labor becomes the bridge from the 'I' to the 'not-I'" (168). Kojève merely had to secularize these eclectic sophiologies in order to turn a philosophical justification of Orthodox social life under God into a "universal, homogeneous state, in which all citizens are satisfied" and which is also "the world that no one can manage to overcome" (Geroulanos 145). This becomes what Butler describes as Kojève's "ideal Hegelian society as one that maintains a dialectical mediation of individuality and

[84] Lilla, *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics* and Drury, *Alexandre Kojève: The Roots of Postmodern Politics.* Both arguments are based in the exchange between Kojève and Leo Strauss over the role of philosophy in politics, see Strauss, *On Tyranny*.

collectivity. In fact, collective life appears to gain its final measure and legitimation in proving capable of recognizing *individual* desires" (78).

Regardless of their valences, each interpretation of the satisfaction of desire at the End of History rests upon an oscillation between dualism and its mitigation in Kojèvian Hegelianism. It is almost certainly the case that the two aspects of Kojève's thought are simply irreconcilable, a fact which would please Kojève himself, but what one can do is find the source of this troubled irreconcilability in the philosopher's intellectual heritage. In particular, the work of F.W.J. Schelling, one of the last German idealists and contemporary counterweight to Hegel, looms over the Solov′ev-Kojève connection. To a lover of Russian philosophy, this should come as no surprise, as most histories of Russian philosophy begin with the various circles of intelligentsia devoted to Schelling and Hegel in the early nineteenth-century. To quote Dmitrii Chizhevsky, "more than one Russian Hegelian passed through Schellingism," so that to discuss one necessitates discussing the other (22). Solov′ev shared in particular with Schelling "a struggle against abstract rationalism and formal logical metaphysics," which pitted both of them against a monolithic Hegelian Absolute (Losev 193).[85] Kojève himself was aware of this fact—in his dissertation and articles on Solov′ev, he describes the Russian philosopher as an almost proxy of Schelling: "everything that he [Solov′ev] says of the Absolute and its 'other' is in short nothing more than a very simplified and impoverished paraphrase of several of Schelling's speculations, which, on this

[85] As Chizhevsky notes, Russian religious critiques of Hegel, found largely amongst the Slavophiles Ivan Kireevsky and Aleksei Khomiakov and inherited by Solov'ev, often accused the German philosopher of equating rationalism with totality: "Khomiakov's objection is directed precisely against the incompleteness, limitedness of the sphere of theoretical knowledge in Hegel's system, a system which after all wants to be all encompassing and universal. Hegel's system of knowledge is actually deprived of that fullness to which it pretends since it does not take into consideration feeling and will, which are both immanent to knowledge" (216).

point, merely follow and develop the thought of Jacob Böhme" ("La métaphysique religieuse de Vladimir Soloviev (1)" 544).[86]

What is this Absolute and its 'other,' and how can it help in our understanding of difference and desire in Kojevian Hegelianism? Schelling's theory of God and His Ground emerged from a need to explain the imperfections of the world despite the presence of God. Based on a belief that human freedom meant the ability to commit both good *and* evil, Schelling concluded that since evil was independent from God, it required finding within God something which is not God, therefore critiquing Hegel's closed system of logic, which implies rational coherence under Absolute Spirit. Imagining a primordial, mad God before the Creation, Schelling proposed that this God had to expel his "Ground," or the finite existence (notably humanity) that gives him substance, to self-differentiate and establish his *own* existence as Absolute. Human evil is therefore an indicator of a lack, or disjunct, between the totality of God and our freedom from enslavement to this totality. The importance of Schelling's philosophy lies in understanding this lack as integral to the very totality to which it is opposed. In a passage referenced by Kojève in his essay on Solov′ev, Schelling describes the relationship between God and His Ground as follows:

> In the circle through which all things go, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is produced, is in turn conceived by It. There is no first or last here, for everything is mutually supposed, there is no other nor no without other. God has within Himself an inner Ground to His existence, which in this respect precedes him as Existence. But even then,

[86] "Tout ce qu'il [Soloviev] dit de l'Absolu et de son 'autre' n'est en somme, qu'une paraphrase très simplifiée et appauvrie de certaines spéculations de Schelling, qui, sur ce point, ne fait d'ailleurs que suivre et développer la pensée de Jacob Boehme."

> God is the *prius* of the Ground, in which the Ground as such could not be if God did not exist *actu* (Schelling 358).[87]

For man to become divine, there must be a remnant of himself that is not divine to begin with, namely the material earthly self that Schelling—and Solov′ev—would describe as evil: "in man there is the whole power of the dark principle and at the same time the whole strength of the light. In him there is the deepest abyss and the loftiest sky […] Because he emerges from the Ground (is creaturely), man has in relation to God a relatively independent principle in himself" (Schelling 32). Our ability to fight against the evils of the world suggests the existence of what Schelling, and Žižek after him, have infamously called an "indivisible remainder," an unthinkable differential that both lays outside the philosophical system it constitutes and is essential to understanding difference within totality.[88]

Modern Russian Orthodox theology has been heavily influenced by this German idealist theodicy, most notably in of Sophia. Indeed, love, envisioned as the sexual coupling of Sophia with God, was thought to be a means to reconcile this rift between the Absolute and its Other. In this light, Solov′ev and Kojève's abandonment of love for history is deeply telling. In his later, deeply pessimistic period Solov′ev is no longer able to imagine a final unification in love between the human and the divine, for there will forever be the evil remainder, embodied in the freedom of the anti-Christ. By picking up in his own philosophy where Solov′ev left off, Kojève endorses the lingering division between the mortal world of the anti-Christ and the kingdom of God "on the

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[87] "In dem Zirkel, daraus alles wird, ist es kein Widerspruch, daß das, wodurch das Eine erzeugt wird, selbsts wieder von ihm gezeugt werde. Es ist hier kein Erstes und kein Letztes, weil alles sich gegenseitig voraussetzt, keins das andere und doch nicht ohne das andere ist. Gott hat in sich einen innern Grund seiner Existenz, der insofern ihm als Existirendem vorangeht; aber ebenso ist Gott wieder das Prius des Grundes, indem der Grund, auch als solcher, nicht sehn könnte, wenn Gott nicht actu existirte."

[88] Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder* (15-16): "Schelling's point is a somewhat similar radical uncertainty: will a philosopher [Hegel] succeed in containing everything within his system? Or will he, sooner or later, stumble upon an element which will unmask his vain pretense and reveal his impotence?"

other side of history that itself is abandoned to the dominion of evil," the moment where Kojève finds Solov′ev moving into a development of History. Kojève's theory of desire and history therefore models a larger rift in Russian philosophy between difference and its mitigation through a social totality.

It would be too speculative and facile to claim that Kojève simply takes inspiration for this unique interpretation of desire and intersubjectivity from a long tradition in Russian philosophy of deploying Schelling to offset Hegelian Absolutism. I would nevertheless propose in conclusion that Kojève's oscillation between difference and totality reflects a larger, still contentious problem in the legacy of German idealism, one which survived in full force in the eclecticism of its Russian reception. This problem still resurfaces in philosophy and politics in the unlikeliest of places: Žižek for example has frequently addressed the problem of the Other and the Absolute, particularly through the lens of psychoanalysis, where he invokes Jacques Lacan's *petit objet a* and the estranged object of desire in psychoanalysis in an explicit lineage from Schelling through to Kojève. In politics, Lilla's recent rant against the place of identity politics in modern liberalism illustrates a continuous fear that social difference somehow threatens the social totality from without, rather than playing an important role in its very constitution.[89] In my view, given Kojève's broad appeal within both liberal political classicism and contemporary critical theory, his articulation of a novel interpretation of the Hegelian Master/Slave and the homogenous end state of History is a crucial ideational predecessor to these debates. In any case it must be said that Kojève's looming legacy over contemporary thought is in part a response to Russian Hegelianism's own tradition of employing desire to question intersubjectivity's place within universalism. This conflict lived on within a community of émigrés, themselves fixated on both

[89] Lilla, *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*.

continuity with a national tradition of speculative thought and the need to understand their own marginalization and difference in dramatic political exile.

3.0 Geopolitics or End of History? Political Aftermaths of the Twentieth Century

"The goal is—unfortunately!— *homogeneous* distribution. Whoever—in his hemisphere—attains it *first* will be 'the last.'" – Alexandre Kojève in a letter to Carl Schmitt, May 2, 1955

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc toward the end of the twentieth-century, global politics fell into an ideological void—what would now shape political conflict worldwide following the dispersal of the conflict between First and Second world? No debate held more political relevance and notoriety in the ideological limbo of the post-Soviet 1990s than that between Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington. Fukuyama, relying heavily on Kojève's interpretation of Hegel and the "last man" at the End of History, argued for liberal democracy as the definitive, enduring political and economic form, one that all states and civilizations would see as the result of their own historical developments. Huntington, meanwhile, in response infamously dissected the world map into competing cultural spheres of influence, claiming that in the post-Cold War "global politics has become multipolar *and* multicivilizational" (21, emphasis in original). In Huntington's view, cultural conflict superseded economic and political conflict, thereby refuting Fukuyama's claim that states will *necessarily* come to the democratic politics allegedly adopted by the West in the pursuit of economic liberalization: "only naïve arrogance can lead Westerners to assume that non-Westerners will become 'Westernized' by acquiring Western goods. What, indeed, does it tell the world about the West when Westerners identify civilization with fizzy liquids, faded pants, and fatty foods?" (58)

Both positions are now, rightfully, seen as antiquated and simplistic in their assessment of the post-Soviet world order—Fukuyama has gone so far as to regret his claims and realize that perhaps his announcement was a bit premature. Yet while the relationship between these two

political theories has historically been characterized as oppositional, their twentieth-century development in embryo share significant points of departure, and contemporary politics in the United States, Europe, and Russia in fact exhibit influence from both ideological camps. One cannot help but observe the diplomatic and military disasters of post-9/11, with its insistence on "Axes of Evil" and the incompatibility of Islam with Western-styled society, as indicative of a convergence of both Fukuyama and Huntington's arguments: namely, that the interventionist need to "liberate" the markets of the Middle East runs in tandem with the perverse pursuit of global liberal democracy as the catchall political form.

Regardless of one's position in the debate, it is significantly Kojève whose philosophical and political activity in the twentieth-century unites these two tendencies in political theory. This chapter will address the adherence of these two legacies, for convenience's sake emblematized in Fukuyama and Huntington, to the notoriously contradictory lifework of the Russian-French philosopher.

3.1 Eternal Satisfaction: Teleological History and the Free Market with Fukuyama

Fukuyama's argument for liberal democracy in the wake of the Cold War relies significantly on two major principles from Kojève's Hegel seminars: first, Fukuyama borrows from Kojève the overwhelming emphasis on the Master/Slave dialectic in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to describe the needs and problems of human experience in civil society. Political organization begins with the anthropogenic principle of risking one's life for recognition—humans distinguish themselves from animality in their willingness to die for non-biological pursuits such as glory, prestige, and honor. In Fukuyama's terms: "[w]hile we need not abandon the economic

account of history, 'recognition' allows us to recover a totally non-materialist historical dialectic that is much richer in its understanding of human motivation than the Marxist version, or than the sociological tradition stemming from Marx" (144). While traditionally English political philosophers (Thomas Hobbes, then John Locke) stressed a human need for self-preservation as the reason for forming civil society, thereby taking the Hegelian position of the "Slave" and not risking their lives for recognition in open violence, the German political tradition (Hegel, Nietzsche, then later through Kojève) recognized the human desire for prestige and recognition, exemplified in the Hegelian "Master" class of Prussian, aristocratic military officers. If the former tradition stresses bourgeois individualism and self-preservation, the latter channels a willingness to risk death into the patriotic service to a state.

Fukuyama's argumentation diverges from more normative, conservative neoliberal accounts (Henry Simons, Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper) of successful liberal societies, where the Hegelian/continental tradition of a *Rechtstaat* is accused of having "focused too heavily on the collective […] and subjugated individual interests to the larger nation" (Jones 100). While Fukuyama clearly advocates for the Lockean version of self-interested, liberal democracy, he found it lacking in its capacity to achieve recognition of a citizen's self-worth. Arguably the most significant theoretical ploy in Fukuyama's "End of History" is therefore the explicit reconciliation of Hegelian "positive liberty" through the state with the "negative liberty" of the Anglo-American liberal tradition.[90] While Fukuyama adamantly endorses free trades as a caveat for liberal democracy, he just as equally stresses a *recognition* of a citizen's dignity on the part of the

[90] "Positive" and "negative" liberty are two terms typically associated with Isaiah Berlin, from his 1958 lecture at Oxford entitled "Two Concepts of Liberty." The former refers to an active, citizenry role in directing one's life through collective institutions (i.e., voting through government). The latter refers to freedom *from* coercion and is frequently cited in neoliberal pursuits of free markets and the reduction of collective impositions like taxation—in the words of Fukuyama, "the state's main job is to get out of the way of individuals" (203).

government. This recognition, which borrowing from Plato he terms *thymos*, is absent even in "totalitarian" statist governments, i.e., the former Eastern Bloc:

> Hegelian "liberalism" can be seen as the pursuit of rational recognition, that is, recognition on a universal basis in which the dignity of each person as a free and autonomous human being is recognized by all. What is at stake for us when we choose to live in a liberal democracy is not merely the fact that it allows us the freedom to make money and satisfy the desiring parts of our souls. The more important and ultimately more satisfying thing it provides us is recognition of our dignity. Life in a liberal democracy is potentially the road to great material abundance, but it also shows us the way to the completely non-material end of recognition of our freedom. The liberal democratic state values us at our own sense of self-worth. *Thus both the desiring and thymotic parts of our souls find satisfaction*. (200, emphasis added)

If for example a Soviet citizen is, in theory, guaranteed satisfaction of her *desires* (basic needs such as housing, employment, and food) through the state, Fukuyama claims that she nonetheless lacks the "thymotic" recognition of her worth. Liberal democracy therefore prevails as a "middle path" between aggressive statism ("totalitarianism") and the slavishly bourgeois mentality of mere English social theory. Liberal democracies satisfy both human needs: "[t]he universal and homogeneous state that appears at the end of history can thus be seen as resting on the twin pillars of economics and recognition" (Fukuyama 203).

Fukuyama's second major principle borrowed from Kojève's philosophy is therefore this abstracted form of social *satisfaction*, which contains within it both the economic satisfaction of basic needs (biological) and the political recognition of an individual's self-worth (non-biological). In one of the most controversial and widely discussed passages from the published notes of

Kojève's Hegel seminars, Kojève in a footnote suggests that the United States, rather than the Soviet Union, had in fact already achieved the final stage of Marxist "communism," as it had achieved the most enduring and pervasive sense of satisfaction amongst its citizenry. The comment clearly drives Fukuyama's thesis and merits citation in full:

> Observing what was taking place around me and reflecting on what happened in the world after the Battle of Jena, I understood that Hegel was correct to see in it the end of History per se. In and through this Battle, the avant-garde of humanity had virtually attained its goal, that is the *end* of Man's historical evolution. What has been produced since is but an extension in space of the universal revolutionary strength actualized in France by Robespierre-Napoleon. From an authentically historical point of view, the two World Wars with their procession of small and large revolutions have only resulted in aligning the straggling civilizations of the peripheral provinces with the historic positions of Europe (real or virtual). If the Sovietization of Russia and the communization of China are anything more than the democratization of imperial Germany (through the intervention of Hitlerism) or the independence of Togo, or even the auto-determination of the Papuans, this is only because the Sino-Soviet actualization of Robespierran Bonapartism requires post-Napoleonic Europe to accelerate the numerous anachronistic aftereffects of its pre-revolutionary past. Already this process of elimination is more advanced in the North American continuation of the European project than in Europe itself. One could even say from a certain point of view that the United States has already attained the final stage of Marxist "communism," given that practically all the members of a "classless society" can acquire for themselves everything that they like, without working any more than they feel like. Now, multiple comparative trips (between 1948 and 1958) to the United States and

> the USSR have given me the impression that, if the Americans seem to be enriched Sino-Soviets, this is because the Russians and the Chinese are only still-impoverished Americans, nevertheless in the process of rapid enrichment. I was therefore led to conclude that the *American way of life* [sic] was the way of living proper to the post-historical period, and the current presence of the United States in the world prefigures the future "eternal present" of humanity as a whole. (Kojève, *Introduction* 510-511)[91]

The major revolutions after Jena have, in Kojève's argument, been mere spatial extensions of the liberal democracy inaugurated by Napoleon and enshrined philosophically by Hegel—ideological aberrations such as, for example, communism can be explained away through the particular needs of the global periphery to catch up to the historical development of the center. In Fukuyama's words, "[t]hough the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions seemed like monumental events at the time, their only lasting effect would be to spread the already established principles of liberty and equality to formerly backward and oppressed peoples, and to force those countries of

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[91] "En observant ce qui se passait autour de moi et en réfléchissant à ce qui s'est passé dans le monde après la bataille d'Iéna, j'ai compris que Hegel avait raison de voir en celle-ci la fin de l'Histoire proprement dite. Dans et par cette bataille, l'avant-garde de l'humanité a virtuellement atteint le terme et le but, c'est-à-dire la *fin* de l'évolution historique de l'Homme. Ce qui s'est produit depuis ne fut qu'une extension dans l'espace de la puissance révolutionnaire universelle actualisée en France par Robespierre-Napoléon. Du point de vue authentiquement historique, les deux guerres mondiales avec leur cortège de petites et grandes révolutions n'ont eu pour effet que d'aligner, sur les positions historiques européennes (réelles ou virtuelles) les plus avancées, les civilisations retardataires des provinces périphériques. Si la soviétisation de la Russie et la communisation de la Chine sont plus et autre chose encore que la démocratisation de l'Allemagne impériale (par le truchement de l'hitlérisme) ou l'accession du Togo à l'indépendance, voire l'autodétermination des Papous, c'est uniquement parce que l'actualisation sino-soviétique du bonapartisme robespierrien oblige l'Europe post-napoléonienne à accélérer l'élimination des nombreuses séquelles plus ou moins anachroniques de son passé prérévolutionnaire. D'ores et déjà, ce processus d'élimination est d'ailleurs plus avancé dans les prolongements nord-américains de l'Europe qu'en Europe elle-même. On peut même dire que, d'un certain de vue, les États-Unis ont déjà atteint le stade final du « communisme » marxiste, vu que, pratiquement, tous les membres d'une « société sans classes » peuvent s'y approprier dès maintenant tout ce que bon leur semble, sans pour autant travailler plus que leur cœur ne le leur dit. Or plusieurs voyages comparatifs effectuée (entre 1948 et 1958) aux États-Unis et en U.R.S.S. m'ont donné l'impression que, si les Américains font figure de sino-soviétiques enrichis, c'est parce que les Russes et les Chinois ne sont que des Américains encore pauvres, d'ailleurs en voie de rapide enrichissement. J'ai été porté à en conclure que l'*American way of life* était le genre de vie propre à la période post-historique, la présence actuelle des États-Unis dans le Monde préfigurant le futur « éternel présent » de l'humanité entière."

the developed world already living in accordance with such principles to implement them more completely" (66).

This dramatically Eurocentric underestimation of revolutionary events in Russia and China, let alone the century-long process of decolonizing states such as Togo, girds Fukuyama (and Kojève's) underlying belief in the primacy of European liberal democracy as the "universal and homogenous state." Kojève employs this term throughout his work, for example in his Hegel seminars he describes it as follows:

> It [the state] reunites all of humanity (at least those who historically count) and "annuls" (aufhebt) in its being all "specific differences" (Besonderheit): nations, social classes, families. […] This State no longer changes, because all its Citizens are "satisfied" (befriedigt). I am fully and definitively "satisfied" when my personality, exclusively *my own*, is "recognized" (in its reality and its value, its dignity) by *all*, on the condition that I myself "recognize" the reality of the value of those who are forced to "recognize" me. To be "satisfied" is to be "*unique* in the world yet (nevertheless) universally valuable." (*Introduction* 171, emphasis in original)[92]

The final state is understood as an equally applicable form of government across national, historically contingent political traditions. Despite its homogeneity, this state nonetheless carries within it a sublated diversity of identity. For this reason, Judith Butler for example insists on an interpretation of Kojève's homogenous state as "one that maintains a dialectical mediation of

[92] "Il réunit l'humanité tout entière (du moins celle qui compte historiquement) et « supprime » (aufhebt) en son sein toutes les « différences spécifiques » (Besonderheit) : nations, classes sociales, familles. […] cet État ne change plus, parce que tous ses Citoyens sont « satisfaits » (befriedigt). Je suis pleinement et définitivement « satisfait », quand ma personnalité exclusivement *mienne* est « reconnue » (dans sa réalité et dans sa valeur, sa « dignité ») par *tous*, à condition que je « reconnaisse » moi-même la réalité de la valeur de ceux qui sont censés devoir me « reconnaître ». Être « satisfait », — c'est être « *unique* au monde et (néanmoins) *universellement* valable »."

individuality and collectivity. In fact, collective life appears to gain its final measure and legitimation in proving capable of recognizing *individual* desires" (78).

On a geopolitical scale, the diversity within "definitive" liberal democracy provides Fukuyama ammunition for his claim that cultural differences are overcome (or sublated) due to the deracination of the labor force under global industrialization. He concedes the perseverance of "natural and necessary inequality" however and employs the term to offset criticisms of lingering inequality in the *American way of life* advocated by Kojève: "[m]idle-class societies will remain highly inegalitarian in certain respects, but the sources of inequality will increasingly be attributable to the natural inequality of talents, the economically necessary division of labor, and to culture" (Fukuyama 291). By describing certain inequalities as essential rather than circumstantially constructed, Fukuyama therefore evades the most compelling counterclaim to his argument for liberal democracy as the ultimate purveyor of equality: that massive economic disparities, often inflected along the very cultural categories (namely race and ethnicity) he attempts to dismiss, persist both in the "liberal and democratic" developed world as well as those areas that remain financially dependent on the West through an unequitable division of capital and labor.[93]

Kojève's own articulation of the "homogenous end state" suffers from the same blindness to injustices committed in the developed world in the name of an inevitable trajectory toward global liberalization. In 1945, Kojève became an advisor to the Direction des relations économiques extérieures (DREE), a newly created department within the French Finance Ministry tasked, among other things, with negotiating terms of import and export for France and the

[93] Fukuyama's argument for "necessary inequality" echoes frequent discourse surrounding "deserving and undeserving poor" and "equality of opportunity" in circulation in neoliberal discourse from its very origin. See Jones, 64.

expansion of foreign trade (Auffret 293-313). Working under Giscard d'Estaing, the future President of France (1974-1981), Kojève's first major assignment was to rally support for the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OECE), founded following the Marshall plan in 1948 to supervise the distribution of American financial aid in Europe. The organization stipulated as a condition to economic aid the reduction of tariffs and other barriers to intra-European trade, paving the way for the later creation of a common customs union on the continent through the European Community (EC). Kojève would lobby again in 1949 for economic liberalization and free trade, this time with recently independent countries (mostly former French colonies) in the Middle East and South Asia. The philosopher turned bureaucrat emphatically supported France's "search for new markets" in post-colonial and colonial territories to offset American hegemony, given the overwhelming influence of the United States on the post-war European economy. These combined efforts reflect the eventual transformation of the OECE into the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development), a global organization of wealthy countries with a self-proclaimed mission of promoting free trade and economic growth. Most criticism of the OECD has been leveled precisely against its perpetuation of colonial hegemony over former colonies through its sole stated goal of "perpetual growth" and ever newer markets, encouraging a global economic system in which developing economies remain aid-dependent indefinitely out of an artificial need for financial gains at home.[94]

It is unclear, however, to what degree Kojève cared about the neocolonial implications of his vision of free trade and bureaucratic end-states when "he asserted that postwar America or the members of the European Community constituted the embodiment of Hegel's state of universal recognition" (Fukuyama 203). In a correspondence begun in 1955 with controversial political

[94] See Tandon and Mkapa, 108.

philosopher Carl Schmitt, Kojève and Schmitt discussed at length the need for former colonizers to invest financially in the places they have formerly colonized to offset increasingly stark uneven development. They based their discussion on Schmitt's relatively recent work *The Nomos of the Earth* (*Der Nomos Erde*, 1950). There Schmitt employed three different translations of the Greek concept of "*nomos*" (as a verb, "*nemein*") to describe the three major historical processes contributing to social and economic order: "*nemein*" can be understood as "to take or appropriate" (*nehmen*), "to divide or distribute" (*teilen*) or "to graze or pasture" (*weiden*) (326-327). The first process (*nehmen*) refers to land and material appropriation as seized through colonialism, conquest, and migration. The second (*teilen*) addresses the legally determined social distribution of goods and services, and the third (*weiden*) is a question of industrialization and production. Kojève in the correspondence over the book was convinced that the first process, most exemplified in the mass, violent disruptions of European colonization, had no longer existed "since Napoleon" (94), leaving the state to concern itself only with the maintenance of production and distribution: "thanks to this 'neutralization' of the political the administration could carry out its work unencumbered, i.e. [could] rather 'administer' (= organize the 'grazing,' to speak your language)" ("Correspondence," 98).

These beliefs are repeated in a lecture Kojève delivers at Schmitt's invitation at the Rhein-Ruhr Club in Düsseldorf in 1957. In his capacity now as both a legendary interpreter of Hegel and an influential advisor to the French government, Kojève is asked to discuss the problem of "underdeveloped regions." In the lecture, entitled "Colonialism from a European perspective," Kojève again stresses that "appropriation" no longer exists, and Europe and the United States must undertake a project of "giving" or "principled" colonialism (122-124). He claims somewhat eclectically that capitalism, embodied in Henry Ford, realized the truth of Marx's critique and

learned that it must invest in its workforce in order to increase, expand, and perfect industrialization:

> capitalism can neither progress, nor even exist, if the 'surplus value' produced through industrial technologies is not divided between the capitalist minority and the working majority. In other words, the post-Marxist capitalists understood that the modern, highly industrialized capitalism of mass production not only permits, but also requires, a constant increase in the income (and of the standard of living) of the working masses. (117)

Kojève concludes that just as capitalism has transitioned to a "giving" form of itself, so too must colonialism, posing in the lecture the question, "how can colonialism be economically reconstructed in a 'Fordist' way?" (121) He suggests foreign policy methods such as increasingly economically advantageous terms of trade for (developing) nations exporting raw materials, or both corporate and national investment of surplus value extracted from the "former" colonies back into the local area. Kojève mentions in passing terms "commodity agreements," "Full Employment," as well as US President Harry Truman's "Point Four" program to provide technological expertise to underdeveloped states, all in English, as an implicit acknowledgement of his immersion in the still evolving fiscal language of a liberal post-war order.

Thus, despite his status as a philosophical heavyweight in the formation of critical theory, Kojève in short closely straddled the development of neoliberal ideology, from its very inauguration post-war in foreign policy agreements through to its post-Cold War triumph where, to paraphrase Margaret Thatcher, "there was no alternative." While Fukuyama is the most visible example of applying Kojève's philosophy to endorse neoliberalism, a brief analysis of Kojève's work throughout his career illustrates that the philosopher already prepared the intellectual ground for such a political deployment, so that Fukuyama represents not an alteration of the Russian

philosopher's thought but rather an appropriate continuation. The career of one of Kojève's most conservative students from his Hegelian seminars, Raymond Aron, proves the extent of his primacy of place in the teleological underpinnings of neoliberalism.

While relatively unknown to the English-speaking world, Aron is arguably one of the most visible endorsers of neoliberal political thought in a post-war French intelligentsia driven overwhelmingly by left-oriented figures. Aron audited Kojève's seminars along with Raymond Queneau, Jacques Lacan, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Fessard, and other eclectic members of French intellectual life. Aron was entranced by Kojève's presentation of the *Phenomenology*, delivered "in an impeccable French to which his Slavic accent added a certain originality and charm" (Aron 65). Kojève clearly left a lifelong impression on Aron, so that decades later in 1982 he would mention the philosopher to d'Estaing, who now out of presidential office described Kojève as a negotiator who "took indirect paths" but eventually arrived at his goal (Aron 67).

Aron's own intellectual and professional trajectory is relevant for its similarities to both Kojève and Fukuyama's teleological philosophy of neoliberalism. While occasionally attending Kojève's seminars (1933-1939), Aron also found time to attend the Colloque Walter Lippmann, a 1938 conference held in Paris to address the "crisis of capitalism" and defend individual liberty against planned economies and "collectivism" (Denord 45). The conference is frequently cited as one of the earliest recorded uses of the term "neoliberalism," and Aron, along with notable attendees including Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, would all later reconvene in 1947 in Switzerland for the Mont Pèlerin Society, an organization that included these three as well as Karl Popper and Milton Friedman and that devoted itself to "a neoliberal network [that] would facilitate opportunities and contacts that might help to change the intellectual and political climate in the West to one that would be more congenial to free markets and individual liberty" (Jones 74). While

Kojève attended neither of these conventions, the presence of his student, and his later role in trade liberalization in France, is telling.

The war of ideas fought between "collectivism" and neoliberalism, both for Aron as much as for Fukuyama, was just as much cultural as it was economic. Aron became in the 1950s an active member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, an American-funded organization tasked with promoting cultural activity (literature, music, art) with an anti-communist ideology, primarily in Europe but also more globally, in order to offset the appeal of communism amongst cultural workers. The Congress organized conferences, various literary journals, art exhibitions, and so on, which drew beyond Aron as diverse figures as Bertrand Russell and Tennessee Williams. Aron was an alternate member (representing France) on its executive committee and was explicit in his willingness to bear the somewhat awkward position of accepting American money, explaining that he was "entirely convinced that for an anti-Stalinist there is no escape from the acceptance of American leadership" (Stonor Saunders 171). Things became increasingly complicated geopolitically when the American money, thought to have come mostly from foundations such as the Ford Foundation, in fact was directly from the CIA—Aron denied knowledge (Aron 173), yet it is unclear if this is accurate (Stonor Saunders 394).

Regardless, the scandal emblematizes the enduring, vivid paradoxes of Alexandre Kojève and his legacy in twentieth-century intellectual history. Indeed, there is a certain irony in Kojève's disciple courting American money in the pursuit of anti-Stalinism. From his early years up until his death, Kojève claimed to be "Stalin's consciousness," one who saw in Stalin the herald of the End of History just as Hegel had seen it in Napoleon. Aron himself frequently interpreted Kojève's remarks as an intellectual provocation rather than a deep-seated political affirmation. Archival and anecdotal evidence, however, confirms that Kojève at least intended to send a letter to Stalin in

1940, most likely in the form of a Russian translation of his Parisian seminars on Hegel. Hager Weslati has compiled various unfinished pages of a manuscript found in Kojève's papers, in corroboration with memoirs from those who knew Kojève and his admiration of Stalin, in order to provide a theoretical plan of the letter. Weslati claims that Kojève in the letter described to Stalin "a new opportunity for revolutionary action that will 'Sovietize' (that is to say, unify) the realized consciousness of 'the man of action' with the revealed self-consciousness of 'discursive wisdom'" (10).

Several scholars of Kojève in a Russian context, furthermore, have argued for the claim of Kojève's Stalinism to be taken at least provisionally seriously (Groys [2012]; Biareishyk [2013]; Penzin [2016]; Love [2018]). Biareishyk situates Kojève's End of History in the context of Stalin's "socialism in one country," whereby the:

> advent of post-historical time […] is signaled by the coincidence (identity) or form and content, being and consciousness, thus engendering a condition where change is impossible, precisely because the motor of this change—the disjunction between material conditions and consciousness—has been eliminated. Needless to say, such a coincidence for Stalin is only possible under the societal conditions of socialism/communism, when a homogeneous state as classless society has materialized. (248)

Stalin and Kojève, Biareishyk argues, therefore share a vision of the post-historical homogeneous state. Penzin makes a similar claim, relying heavily on Groys's well-known articulation of Stalinist socialist realism as a total artwork or *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the satisfaction of earlier avant-garde demands for a total aesthetic-political project (Groys *Total Art*, 36). Groys argued furthermore that "Stalinist culture was not merely culture in the making, but represented instead the mature, posthistorical culture for which 'capitalist encirclement' was simply an external, moribund

formation fated to disappear together with the entire 'history of the class struggle'" (Groys 41-42). Stalin's posthistorical state shares with Kojève the belief in a bureaucratic, homogeneous state managed by the sage through his wisdom—Groys elsewhere has described Kojève and Stalin's state as the "perfect society of realized, recognized love that emerges after the revolutionary paroxysm […] Stalin realized the society of love by abolishing love" (*Introduction to Antiphilosophy* 158).

Jeff Love has elaborated perhaps the most nuanced argument for camaraderie of thought between Stalin and Kojève. Turning to Kojève's lesser-known work on the philosophy of legal right, Love claims that Kojève "develops a concept of freedom as the radical extirpation of individual interest," an anti-individualism shared in the political ideology of Stalinism ("Alexandre Kojève and philosophical Stalinism" 264). Love sees in Kojève an "equation of human freedom with the abandonment of individuality" (265). In Kojève's definition of legal right, a "juridical situation," or right, is understood as a judgment in the complaints of two individuals by "a disinterested intervention of a third," that is, the homogeneous state (*Esquisse* 24).[95] The state is able to pass judgment on a conflict between two legal parties, thereby negating individual interests, the original source of the conflict and legal complaints, through legal adjudication: "the juridical signals the ultimate end of the political, of struggle, of history, individuality as such" (Love 269). While this legal apparatus for adjudicating legal disputes can arguably be seen as intrinsic to the modern nation-state itself, Love makes the argument that Kojève draws this thread from Napoleon and Hegel through to himself and Stalin, who represents the most extreme and efficient example of the state suppressing individual claims in the pursuit of a juridical administrative system.

[95] "une intervention désintéressée d'un tiers."

These attempts to take Kojève's Stalinism seriously therefore link claims to the posthistorical bureaucratic apparatus in both Soviet and Western state ideologies. Thus, Kojève, the self-avowed Stalinist, through both his own work and that of his students, can simultaneously claim a rather substantial place in the creation of some of the most influential and lasting neoliberal institutions to emerge in the post-war period. As I illustrate in the coming section, this schism in Kojève's legacy is not split solely along political lines, but rather is indicative of a much more complicated and intersecting organization of political thought still relevant to contemporaneity. I hope therefore to show how Kojève overcomes a simplistic dichotomy of either Russian and Western philosophy or liberal and conservative political philosophy, confirming his place as a uniquely adaptable figure in the geopolitical deployment of critical thought.

3.2 The Clash: Huntington & Conflict as an Enduring Category of Political Life

Samuel Huntington wrote *The Clash of Civilizations* as a direct response to the claims Fukuyama, his former student, made in *The End of History*. If Fukuyama interpreted liberal democracy as a form of government "free from the 'contradictions' that characterized earlier forms of social organization and would therefore bring the historical dialectic to a close," Huntington argued that these contradictions would continue in the form of cultural conflicts (Fukuyama 64). The latter, unlike Fukuyama, does not rely on philosophy, let alone Kojève, to support his claims, yet one can nonetheless recognize the philosophical stakes of his understanding of oppositions as enduring rather than historically determined: "[p]eople use politics not just to advance their

interests but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against" (21).

Indeed, this last quotation from Huntington could easily have been taken from Kojève's Hegel seminars, where the philosopher stressed the Master/Slave dialectic and the interrelational formation of the human subject, arguably understating the larger sweeping reconciliation of this opposition in the procession of World Spirit as described in the *Phenomenology*: "in Desire, he [man] seeks the cancellation of the object and therefore, unconsciously at first, the affirmation of the self" (*Introduction* 61).[96] In the aforementioned correspondence between Kojève and Schmitt, the German philosopher asks his Russian colleague a telling question in this regard about Hegel, one crucial to understanding the stakes of Kojève's interpretation:

> Now my *modest question*: it concerns the concept of enemy in Hegel […] Who is this enemy?—is it possible that he shows himself precisely in the animal functions? What does he seek there? […] It is generally—as with the question of the possibility of a "dictatorship" in the system of Hegelian philosophy—the question whether there can be an "enemy" in Hegel at all. For: either he is only a necessary passing stage of negation, or invalid and insubstantial. (105, emphasis in original)

Schmitt is concerned here with whether the "enemy" can be understood as an enduring category in Hegel's thought, embodied in the "Other" constituting to the subject in the *Phenomenology*, or whether this is overcome in dialectical development of Hegelianism. Kojève responds:

> As always: Yes and No. *Yes*,—insofar as, and *as long as* there is struggle for recognition, i.e. *history*. World *history* is the history of *enmity* between peoples (which does not exist at all among animals: animals "fight" *for* something, not *out* of enmity). *No*,—insofar as

[96] "Dans le Désir, il veut l'annulation de l'objet et donc — inconsciemment d'abord — l'affirmation de soi."

> and as soon as history (= struggle for recognition) has been "sublated" in Absolute Knowledge. Thus enmity is, after all, only a "moment" of the "Logic" […] Now one could perhaps ask oneself, if in 500 years the speech of the wise man (Hegel) about enmity will still be *understood*. Already today only a few understand what the words "enemy," "state," "war," "history" mean. (107, emphasis in original)

As a good Hegelian, Kojève concedes that the "enemy," or perhaps the Other, is conditioned upon historical development, so that once history has finished it will be sublated and what remains is the homogenous and universal state. This reiterates what has thus been far described as the position Fukuyama sees in Kojève's philosophy, what Kojève describes as the "'neutralization' of the political," understood here by Schmitt as a "necessary passing stage of negation" (98). Yet despite this concession, opposition and conflict are arguably the defining features of Kojève's unique interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and the Russian philosopher relied on this opposition at multiple stages in his philosophical and political career. A delineation of this position, and its contradiction with the "other" side of Kojève's oeuvre, will therefore tell us something of this view of politics and its ideological camaraderie with the geopolitics professed by Huntington in the post-Soviet period.

It is no coincidence that it is in conversation with Carl Schmitt that Kojève inadvertently reveals the contradiction underlying his interpretation of the homogenous state and his emphasis on the Master/Slave dialectic. In 1927 Schmitt wrote his most famous political treatise *The Concept of the Political*, in which he sought to isolate the most essential principle by which one could define what one means by the political. In the same way that morality, for example, relies on a distinction between good and evil, and aesthetics between beautiful and ugly, Schmitt argued that "[t]he specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is

that between friend and enemy" (26). Schmitt was rallying precisely against what he saw as the politics' "neutralization" under liberalism, which threatened to deplete the political authority of the state into society: "these dissolutions aim with great precision at subjugating state and politics, partially into an individualistic domain of private law and morality, partially into economic notions" (72).

Schmitt's claim to the dissolution of politics under liberalism has attracted admirers from both left and right political perspectives who, though ideologically diverse, share the belief that conflict is essential to human experience and abhor liberal appeals not "to make things political."[97] In this Schmitt and Kojève share a particularly strong affinity. If we recall from Kojève's *Phenomenology* seminars, in order for the human to overcome its original animality, it must engage in violent struggle with another for recognition:

> He [man] must risk his life in order to *force* awareness from the other. He must engage in a battle for recognition. In risking his life as such, he proves to the other that he recognizes him as human.
>
> There is therefore the necessity of Struggle for live and death. Negativity = Death = Individuality = Liberty = History; man is: mortal, finite, free, a historical individual. (63)[98]

For Schmitt, too, human society is grounded in the political as the underlying force engendering our humanity: "it is a fact that the entire life of a human being is a struggle and every human being symbolically a combatant. The friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning

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[97] Schmitt's complicity with the Nazi regime rendered him anathema to the post-war intelligentsia, so that Kojève's own seeking out Schmitt in the 1950s is somewhat jarring.

[98] "Il doit risquer sa vie pour *forcer* la conscience de l'autre. Il doit engager une lutte pour la reconnaissance. En risquant ainsi sa vie, il prouve à l'autre qu'il n'est pas un animal ; en cherchant la mort de l'autre, il prouve à l'autre qu'il le reconnaît comme homme. Il y a donc nécessité de la Lutte pour la vie et la mort. Négativité = Mort = Individualité = Liberté = Histoire ; l'homme est : mortel, fini, libre, individu historique."

precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing" (*The Concept of the Political* 33).

Although it is unclear the extent to which Kojève read Schmitt before their post-war exchange, Kojève cites *The Concept of the Political* in his *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right* (written in 1943), relying on the friend-enemy distinction in his juridical outline of the legal right and the end-state:

> For there to be a State the following two conditions must be met: 1) there must be a Society in which all members are "friends," and which treats as an enemy every non-member whoever it may be; 2) in the interior of this Society a group of "governors" must clearly distinguish themselves from the other members who constitute the group of "governed."[99] (*Esquisse* 143)

Furthermore, it is in the earliest years of Kojève's work that one finds the strongest resonance with Schmitt. I would like to turn to these years, most significantly those first years Kojève spends with the Russian émigré community in Paris, in which the philosopher finds the opportunity to concretize his belief in the primacy of the political. In so doing, one can gather a better sense of how this contradiction of the homogenous state and the friend-enemy distinction synthesizes Kojève's philosophical life with his political one.

According to the authoritative biography of Kojève (Auffret), during the October Revolution sixteen-year old Kojève and his family remained relatively indifferent to the monumental historical shift taking place around them. Kojève's mother explicitly denounced

[99] "Pour qu'il y ait un État il faut que soient remplies les deux conditions principales suivantes : 1) il faut qu'il y ait une Société, dont tous les membres sont « amies », et qui traite en « ennemi » tout non-membre quel qu'il soit ; 2) il faut qu'à l'intérieur de cette Société un groupe de « gouvernants » se distingue nettement des autres membres, qui constituent le groupe des « gouvernés »."

Bolshevism, and her husband (Kojève's stepfather) Lehmkuhl was murdered defending property from looters outside the city, yet nonetheless not a single relative of Kojève fought on the side of the Whites during the Civil War. Generally speaking, the liberal family for a time even benefited from the new social conditions in the early Soviet Union, including his uncle, the painter Wasily Kandinsky, who worked temporarily as a professor in the fine arts division of the People's Commissariat for Education (*Narodnyi komissariat prosveshcheniia,* or *Narkompros*). This political ambiguity within the Kozhevnikov family may inform the political contradictions within Kojève himself—although he was for a time during the Civil War arrested by the Cheka under suspicion for selling soap on the black market, the philosopher would proclaim in later years that it was at this very moment of arrest that he was "seduced by revolutionary ideas" and became a self-professed communist. Auffret goes so far as to describe this moment as the beginning of Kojève's belief in the historical necessity of revolution.

One of course need not take Kojève at his word, especially given the philosopher's inclination toward hyperbole. Nevertheless, Kojève's early admiration for revolution, regardless of what new politics resulted from it, reaches its apex several years later, when in 1929 in the Parisian émigré journal *Eurasia* (*Evraziia*) he publishes an article in support of the new philosophical politics emerging in the Bolshevik All-Union Communist Party (*Vsesoiuznaia kommunisticheskaia partiia bol'shevikov*, VKP[b]). While many of his philosopher-colleagues had been exiled abroad (and those who remained in Russia, denounced, banned, or even killed), Kojève made the bold rhetorical move of offering a positive assessment of the political shifts within Soviet philosophy.

Kojève, still writing under the last name of Kozhevnikov, suggested in the article, entitled "Philosophy and the VKP," that one ought to judge the course taken by the new ruling party in the

country from the point of view of its potential for historical innovation. According to Kojève, Western philosophy after Hegel "has come to an impasse," and something new is necessary in order to substitute within Russian philosophy the decaying European influence: "the various nations, generally speaking, are in no rush to get anywhere, and devoid of a philosophy tradition, the [Russian] people [*narod*] will undoubtedly have a better chance at developing a radically new and truly philosophical worldview than a people living in an already ideologically formed world."[100]

Kojève sought to prove that "one can as a philosopher nonetheless welcome the 'philosophical politics' leading to the full ban of the study of philosophy."[101] While the philosopher did not necessarily agree with the particular politics of the new government, he still believed that "the politics of the VKP are nonetheless preparation for a new culture of the future," whatever that may be. One can imagine the response to this claim from a circle of émigré philosophers, largely but not exclusively monarchical in political orientation, who had just been banned from their home country where their work was now deemed politically unsound. The editorial board of *Eurasia* immediately recognized the controversy behind Kojève's words and several issues later issued a response to his article.

The response was written by Lev Karsavin, a member of the editorial, a major philosopher in his own right, and, perhaps non-incidentally, Kojève's close friend. In his response Karsavin assures readers that Kojève's article was not so much "an endorsement of censorship and violence" as a serious attempt to think through potentially positive repercussions for philosophy under the

[100] "наступил застой"; "Народам спешить, вообще говоря, некуда, а лишенный философской традиции, народ несомненно имеет больше шансов выработать радикально новое и истинно философское миропонимание, чем народ, живущий в идейно уже оформленном мире."
[101] "будучи философом, можно все же приветствовать «философскую политику», сводящуюся к полному запрещению изучения философии»."

new regime.[102] Karsavin notes however that Kojève's imagining of a new, truly Russian philosophy freed from European influence is itself erroneous and even disingenuous, given that Russian thought historically "went freely into European bondage," and it would be impossible to divorce it from European tradition.[103] Karsavin argues convincingly that the very highest achievements of Russian philosophy, embodied in such figures as Solov'ev and Pavel Florenskii, are really "Russian in language only," whereas the major style and subject matter remains fundamentally German.[104] Kojève's hypothetically new Russian philosophy under the Soviet regime, moreover, is paradoxically based in a tradition of European, i.e., non-Russian, materialist philosophers (Marx, Engels, Hegel), so that his argument for a "break from the impasse of European philosophy" reflects an ideological preference rather than a national one.

Nevertheless from a political point of view, the rift between Kojève and the readers of *Eurasia*, including Karsavin, reiterates a larger rift emerging between two competing factions within the Russian diaspora: Eurasianists and the *smenovekhovtsy* ("Milestone changers"), a brief yet influential group of émigrés arguing for reconciliation between the Bolsheviks and the dissident intelligentsia abroad, ideologically and politically diverse yet largely united in their aversion to the new Soviet government.[105] Both Eurasianists and *smenovekhovtsy* recognized the need for a new direction for the future of the Russian state, one built upon the unique values of the Russian people, and likewise recoiled from Europe and its alleged political and cultural decline.

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[102] "проповедью цензуры и насилия."
[103] "свободно пошла в кабалу Европы."
[104] "русской лишь по языку."
[105] The *smenovekhovtsy* took their name from *Smena vekh* ("Changing milestones," 1921), a collection of essays published in émigré Prague. The title of the collection is a reference to their rejection of the positions elaborated in the influential *Vekhi* ("Milestones," 1909), an earlier collection of essays where Russian philosophers, many of whom would be exiled after the revolution, developed a philosophy divorced from the growing influence of Marxist philosophy and instead formed from an eclectic combination of Orthodox theology and liberalism. In "changing the milestones," the *smenovekhovtsy* sought to reorient Russian philosophy again, this time under the aegis of the Communist Party.

The Eurasianists, however, including Karsavin and the staff of *Eurasia*, rejected the idea that the Soviet government would be the definitive form of political life in Russia[106], whereas the *smenovekhovtsy* proposed a conciliatory "Third Way" between the Red and White wings of Russian intellectual life, ultimately in order to bring legitimacy to the Bolshevik government.[107]

Though Kojève never explicitly declared himself a *smenovekhovets*, his article in *Eurasia* nearly verbatim invokes the main theses of the movement. He suggests one assess the revolution beyond its current, most immediately visible result, namely the repressions, violence, and censorship which plagued the philosophical community at the time. A similar assessment can be found from the main proponent of the *smenovekhovstvo* movement, Nikolai Ustrialov:

> In determining our relationship to the Russian revolution, we must be guided by this impartial, historical assessment. So be it that we, its contemporaries, see the dark, rather than light, face of the revolution. So be it that it is for us a force of nature into which we have been thrown, a force of nature both torturous and cruel, often evil, crippling life and bringing with it every possible kind of suffering. So be it. In order however not to involuntarily amplify these sufferings, in order not to pile on the agony of gloomy revolutionary life, we must in our practical activity be guided not by empirical impressions of the moment but rather by a general analysis of revolution and its historic role. Just as in Spinoza's old formula, we must above all else "not cry, not ridicule, not curse, but understand."[108]

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[106] Karsavin was for years a major ideologue of the Eurasianist movement, although he abandoned the movement in his later life. See: Khoruzhii, 79.

[107] Historians (Kvakin 2006) have extensively documented the Bolshevik government's endorsement of the *Smenovekhovtsy* movement within the Russian diaspora, going so far as to finance their journals and publications in order to sway Russians abroad to the side of the new regime.

[108] This article was first published in *Russkaia Zhizn'* in Harbin in 1922, although Ustrialov and the *smenovekhovtsy* also published frequently in European journals, particularly in Prague and Paris.

Attempting to understand the new Bolshevism (in their opinion) objectively, the *smenovekhovtsy* concluded that the Russian émigré community must defend the Bolshevik government from the objections of the old guards of the intelligentsia, which refused to recognize the power and potential of the new unified polity of the Russian state and its capacity to defend against foreign influence—it is no coincidence that the *smenovekhovtsy* unceasingly emphasized the role of Western interference on the side of the Whites in the Civil War in the pamphlets. Nationalism and patriotism were the impetus to their claim for Bolshevism as the true choice of the people:

> Bolshevism was to the ideologues of "Smena vekh" an indigenous Russian national phenomenon, and the Bolshevik upheaval an authentic parallel to Russian national rebellions in the style of Razin or Pugachev […] The creative task of the Russian intelligentsia was to serve the people as well as the regime chosen by said people. Only then would the intelligentsia overcome its status as historical, national, and state pariah. (Kvakin 113-114).

In his article on Soviet philosophical politics, Kojève likewise interpreted the new political situation from the perspective of someone who "will welcome the appearance of a truly new culture and philosophy, be it because it is neither eastern nor western but Eurasian, or simply because it will be new and alive, in contrast to the already crystallized and expired cultures of West and East."

Kojève was not a nationalist in the strictest sense of the word, in that he did not express any particular national affiliation in his work, and in fact almost none of his writings ever specifically addressed Russia. One can find, however, in these early writings a tacit argument for the irreconcilability of national difference that underlies much geopolitical thought of the twentieth century and its analysis of global conflict. Geopolitics as a field of foreign policy preceded the

Eurasianists and *smenovekhovtsy*—its most commonly cited "birth" is British geographer Halford J. Mackinder's "The Geographical Pivot of History" (1904), written at a time when imperial competitions had reached a fever pitch. In elaborating his heartland theory, the belief that whosoever controlled Eurasia (the "Heartland" of the world) would dominate global affairs, Mackinder began an important first step in conceptualizing twentieth-century politics along geographical realms driven by conflict: "[t]he actual balance of political power at any given time is, of course, the product, on the one hand, of geographical conditions, both economic and strategic, and, on the other hand, of the relative number, virility, equipment, and organization of the competing peoples" (31).

The Eurasianists took direct inspiration from Mackinder and Great Game theorists like him, meanwhile influenced by Oswald Spengler's organicist conception of cultures' rise and decline in *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1923). Like Kojève, they were ejected from post-revolutionary Russia and thrust into post-war Europe (largely, with exceptions, France, Germany, and Czechoslovakia), and one arguably cannot understand either Eurasianists or Kojève outside of the context of a precarious life contemplating what one has lost in diaspora. Indeed, politically Eurasianism reflected the need for Russian émigrés to differentiate a culture, country, and empire (Russia, for the *smenovekhovtsy*, the Soviet Union) as oppositional to their new countries of residence. For this reason, Russia adopts the mode simultaneously of savior, given the West's "decline," and self-sufficient: "[f]or the Eurasianists, Russia cannot permit itself to participate in the global market and to be interdependent with other national economies. Rather, its essential nature impels it toward autarky" (Laruelle 81). The friend-enemy distinction at the heart of Eurasianism found renewed relevance in the aftermath of the Cold War, when, at the same time in which Fukuyama and Huntington are crafting competing visions of the future

political order, a diverse set of post-Soviet philosophers, political scientists, and journalists are fashioning their own versions of the uniqueness of an identity (mostly) built upon Russian nationalism, Russian Orthodoxy, and the particulars of their home geography.

The geopolitical turn of Kojève's work is not, however, limited to a Eurasianist context. In August of 1945, Kojève delivered a lecture entitled "The Latin Empire" to the French government on what he imagined as the imperative goals of French foreign policy. In his argument, France would be faced with two problems following the conclusion of the Second World War: the future of Germany as a major economic power in Europe, thereby sidelining France, and a potential future war between the Soviet Union and the "Anglo-Saxons," in which France must remain neutral to avoid massive devastation. The lecture is particularly significant in that Kojève synthesizes his views in the End of History and the role of conflict and opposition for the first time in concrete, explicitly geopolitical terms. Claiming that "the modern state is not really a state unless it is an empire," Kojève briefly describes the historical process of moving from kingdoms to nation-states and finally into empires (91). He claims that Hitler lost the war precisely because he could not see the move to shift away from nationhood—the Third Reich was a delayed attempt at embodying the vision of a nation but failed due to its opposition from "imperial socialism" from the USSR and "imperial capitalism" from the Anglophone world: "in the current hour, [internationalism] is learning at its own expense that it cannot skip from the Nation to Humanity without passing by the Empire" (94).[109]

Kojève believed that France should strategically construct its own empire, based on the cultural traditions of the Latin world—whereas the Germano-Anglo-Saxon world was based in

[109] "A l'heure qu'il est, il apprend à ses dépens qu'on ne peut pas sauter de la Nation à l'Humanité sans passer par l'Empire."

Protestantism, and the Soviet sphere "increasingly on Orthodoxy," France could unify the Mediterranean countries, including its Maghreb colonial possessions, in the pursuit of an empire driven by Catholicism. One should remember in this light Kojève's remarks, in his discussion with Schmitt and his lecture in 1957 in Düsseldorf, that the new "giving" colonial system Kojève advocates is, in theory, built upon a redistribution of resources in order to eliminate uneven development across metropole and periphery. In this earlier lecture Kojève alludes to a similar arrangement:

> this continual (and in principle unlimited) extension of the domestic market, seconded by an augmented supply of work, would permit the imperial economy to develop while avoiding both the inevitable cyclical crises of the Anglo-Saxon economy with its nearly saturated domestic market as well as the rigid and oppressive stability of the Soviet economy (109).[110]

In a certain light, therefore, the contradiction in Kojève's work between a homogenous end state and fragmented, oppositional political entities in perpetual conflict predicts the precarity of the post-war political and economic order, where each polar adversary of the Cold War was simultaneously imagining itself as a conclusive, historical end state and playing geopolitical chess in its global sphere of influence.

The final chapter will discuss the need for a reading of Kojève considering the current failures of both Fukuyama's and Huntington's models of political order. What to make of Kojève and the state in light of, for example, the increasing means of supranational surveillance and the

[110] "cette extension continuelle (et en principe illimitée) du marché intérieur, secondée par une offre toujours accrue d'emplois, permettrait à l'économie impériale de se développer en évitant tant les crises cycliques inévitables de l'économie anglo-saxonne à marché intérieur pratiquement saturé que la stabilité rigide et opprimante de l'économie soviétique."

supersession of the market over the state in control of the political subject? Indeed, it seems as though the most important "shift" in reading Kojève is one toward a biopolitical understanding of the political, one in which universal state or empire, and its administrative apparatus beloved by Kojève, are perhaps less useful tools for analysis. I will read this reorientation of Kojève through Russian philosophers using his work today. Certainly, translations of Kojève's work into Russian, done only recently in the early 2000s, reflect more the reorientation of post-Soviet literary studies toward French poststructuralism and psychoanalysis, his more "defined," however secondary, disciplinary home, rather than any convergence with the publication in Russia of many émigré authors for the first time since the early twentieth century.[111] I will argue, however, that the use of Kojève as a descriptor of the human in the current political order is particularly apt in contemporary Russia, and that the opposition of these two "contradictory" political Kojèves is already being overcome.

[111] Russian literary journals such as *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* and the Ad Marginem series were largely responsible for bringing French theory into popularity in Russian metropolitan academy in the 1990s. See Condee and Kupsan, 316-317.

4.0 Post-Socialist Teleophobia. Specters of Kojève

"We see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night which turns terrifying. For from his eyes, the night of the world hangs out toward us." – G. W. F. Hegel, Jena lectures of 1805-1806

In spring of 1993, at the University of California, Riverside, a group of international scholars gathered to discuss the future of Marxist thought in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes across Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The conference, entitled "Whither Marxism? Global Crises in International Perspective," invited as its plenary speaker philosopher Jacques Derrida.[112] At first glance, the choice of Derrida to deliver a keynote address for a conference on Marxism could appear somewhat unusual—Derrida had built his philosophical career on deconstruction, a school of post-structuralist thought often placed at odds with more orthodox Marxist philosophy.[113] Derrida, however, had early in his career cut his teeth in Marxist circles in Paris, such as those surrounding the journal *Tel Quel*, and his and other post-structuralist philosophers' attempts to articulate an alternative to orthodox Marxism suddenly had renewed relevance with the collapse of so-called "real socialism." If previously one could stake an

[112] Proceedings from the conference were published in book form as Cullenberg and Magnus, *Whither Marxism? Global Crises in International Perspective*.

[113] Admittedly, a wide range of post-structuralists, across disciplines, claimed their work followed in a Marxian tradition, yet fault lines between the two generations were clear. Michel Foucault, for example, described post-structuralism as a reaction against the doctrinaire attitude of post-war French Marxists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, who together with the French Communist Party refused until relatively late to denounce Stalinism and therefore caused a rift amongst the French intelligentsia with regard to support for the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe. Foucault famously claimed that "[a] left culture that was not Marxist was about to emerge" in the post-structuralist generation following the French Marxists (*Remarks on Marx*, 90).

ideological position on the left based on the level of support for existent communist states, the systemic failure of these states in the early 1990s reconfigured the premise of the question entirely.

In his keynote address, later published in book-form as *Specters of Marx* (1994), Derrida refers often to this divide between supporters of Soviet communism and critics of the Soviet Union from the left in his own answer to the question "whither Marx?":

> For many of us the question has the same age as we do. In particular for those who, and this was also my case, opposed, to be sure, *de facto* "Marxism" or "communism" (the Soviet Union, the International of Communist Parties, and everything that resulted from them, which is to say so very many things…), but intended at least never to do so out of conservative or reactionary motivations or even moderate right-wing or republican positions. For many of us, a certain (and I emphasis *certain*) end of communist Marxism did not await the recent collapse of the USSR and everything that depends on it throughout the world. All that started—all that was even *déjà vu*, indubitably—at the beginning of the '50s. […] The same question had already *sounded*. The same, to be sure, but in an altogether different way. And the difference in the sound, that is what is echoing this evening. (14)

Derrida ventures further that an entire generation had been inflected with a teleological understanding of critical philosophy:

> Many young people today (of the type "reader-consumers of Fukuyama" or of the type "Fukuyama" himself) probably no longer sufficiently realize it: the eschatological themes of the "end of history," of the "end of Marxism," of the "end of philosophy," of the "ends of man," of the "last man" and so forth were, in the '50s, that is, forty years ago, our daily bread. We had this bread of apocalypse in our mouths naturally, already, just as normally

as that which I nicknamed after the fact, in 1980, the "apocalyptic tone in philosophy." (14-15)

Derrida links the eschatological feelings of the collapse of the Eastern Bloc with an earlier collapse of a stable human subject in leftist thought in the 1950s. As I have illustrated in the preceding chapter, this is a reasonable connection, given the convergence of Kojève and Francis Fukuyama's articulations of the End of History: the same eclectic interpretation of Hegel that inspired post-war French Marxists in turn came to define Fukuyama's argument for the inevitable victory of liberal democracy. Derrida spoke here, however, at a conference devoted to the question of Marxism's survival in the context of post-socialism, and his claim to a collapse of teleological thinking in the West failed to consider the collapse of a different, if ultimately linked, teleological thinking in the official ideology of communist states in the Eastern Bloc.[114]

Indeed, just as liberal democracy had its temporal logic of historic inevitability, official Soviet ideology presented its own narrative of historical progress, in which dialectical struggle would lead to history's end in communism. As Katerina Clark describes with regard to the Soviet socialist realist novel, "[t]he ultimate stage of historical development, communism, is reached in a final synthesis, which resolves the dialectic [of spontaneity and consciousness] once and for all." The socialist realist method ritualized the reenactment of this historical progression in cultural production: "the great historical drama of the struggle between the forces of spontaneity and the

[114] Several other participants in the conference reflected on Marxism's collapse specifically from the perspective of Eastern Europe. Romanian philosopher Andrei Marga, for example, likewise interpreted the collapse through the lens of Fukuyama's End of History, yet he expressed prescient caution for any argument for liberalism's total victory in the region: "the critique of liberalism […] has not ceased, in spite of its important victory in eastern Europe. Its strategy has become, however, more reflective and it actually resumes the antiliberal attack of the thirties in Europe. The liberal democracy, based on the market economy, the state of justice, natural rights and the liberties of the individual has proved to be once again superior. Its abandonment always had painful consequences. But even the history we have to run through in Eastern Europe compels us not to consider the history of the fight for recognition, and, in fact, for liberty, as being a closed one, in other words, for 'history' as such, in the traditional sense" (99-100).

forces of consciousness is unfolded in the way one individual has mastered his willful self, became disciplined, and attained to an extrapersonal identity" (Clark 16). Susan Buck-Morss likewise argued that temporal conquest, rather than spatial conquest, defined the "dreamworld" of Soviet cultural politics: "the terrain of class warfare is temporal. Class revolution is a historical event understood as an advance in time. What constitutes a victory is described in terms of historical progress rather than territorial gain" (23).[115]

Derrida's reflection on the collapse of a historical narrative to Western Marxists thus described only one collapse of teleological thinking at the end of the twentieth century. Buck-Morss correctly remarks, furthermore, that both Soviet and Western historical narratives were ultimately products of the same, Hegelian philosophical tradition, so much so that, in the 1990s, increased contact and exchange between Soviet and Western philosophers and academics revealed a shockingly similar set of intellectual prerogatives in their work, despite differing methodical approaches and institutional limitations that made collaborations between them challenging.[116] She notably found one of the most pressing tasks amongst theorists in this early period of post-socialist exchange to be a "rethinking revolutionary politics without its temporal armature" (xiii).

Where does one find Kojève in the breakdown of teleological thinking at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Kojève's influence on trends in Russian philosophy in the post-socialist period and onward is particularly compelling for several reasons. First, as I alluded to in the

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[115] Of course, as Alexei Yurchak and others have shown, the average Soviet citizen's experience of "lived socialism" and "revolutionary time" differed radically from the official ideology she or he was required to perform, a distinction that became particularly marked in the last decades of the Soviet Union. I would argue, however, that a similar discrepancy has existed in the lived experience of capitalist democracy. What interests me more here is the bifurcated construction of teleological narratives in the ideology of the Cold War, rather than the question of their authenticity in everyday life. See Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More*.

[116] Buck-Morss narrates her own contribution to Soviet-Western academic exchanges in the philosophy community leading up to and after the Cold War. She includes the first Heidegger conference in Russia, first-time translations of canonical theoretical texts from the West in Russian, and the visiting of Moscow by figures such as Louis Althusser and Fredric Jameson as examples of this kind of theoretical merger between Russo-Soviet and Western academics.

conclusion of the previous chapter, Kojève's integration into post-Soviet intellectual life is a result of the new-found synthesis between Russian and Western traditions of critical thought. Kojève belongs to a cadre of Western theorists whose introduction in the post-Soviet literary sphere in the 1990s resulted in a strategy within literary criticism that Ilya Kukulin and Mark Lipovetsky have labeled neoacademism. Including in its rank figures such as Mikhail Epshtein, Mikhail Ryklin, and Igor' Smirnov, the neoacademic literary tradition in post-Soviet Russia synthesized poststructuralist and postmodernist figures with more "domestic" traditions such as Russian religious philosophy and Soviet structuralist and semiotic schools (291). Even within this introduction of Western trends, however, Kojève was translated comparatively late into Russian: his Hegel seminars were published in Russian translation for the first time in 2003 by Nauka Press. Russian writers, therefore, would necessarily require at least working knowledge of French (or English) in order to engage with Kojève's thought—it is no accident that all of the Russian philosophers discussed below have either trained or worked at universities in the West.

Second, to complicate matters, Kojève is not merely a Western philosopher brought East but also one of many Russian philosophers published in Russia for the first time only in the post-Soviet period. The 1990s were a particular productive period for the publication and discussion of canonical texts from Russian philosophers previously exiled from the canon in the 1920-30s, such as Nikolai Berdiaev, Semen Frank, Vasilii Rozanov, and Pavel Florensky. Alyssa Deblasio, in her description of the "philosophical boom" of the period, notes that in 1993, there were more active philosophy journals in Russia than at any other point in Russo-Soviet history (*End of Russian Philosophy* 46-47). Much of this was more historical reclamation rather than original philosophical work, although Deblasio argues that many journals were also concerned with constructing intellectual stances in their own right — Russian journals such as *New Literary Observer* [*Novoe*

literaturnoe obozrenie] and *Logos* frequently balanced retrospective discussions of émigré Russian philosophers with new philosophical work, often with no reference to Russian philosophers whatsoever. In this light, Kojève's introduction to the pages of post-Soviet philosophical journals is an unusually productive synthesis of these two tendencies: the renewed publication of diasporic Russian philosophers and the growing interest in Western critical theory.

Third, and perhaps most significantly, the citation of Kojève's philosophy in a post-socialist context reveals a significant shift in our understanding of him as a philosopher — divorced from the "temporal armature" of the Cold War and teleological speculation, Kojève in a post-socialist Russian context presents a preliminary image of the global trajectory of critical thought today. In other words, if previously Kojève played a decisive role in the trajectory of twentieth-century (Western) philosophy, some of the most salient features of his thought have since come under scrutiny. At least part of this renewed scrutiny is a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and, with it, a rethinking of radical politics and philosophy outside the shadow of the Cold War. This more critical engagement with Kojève illustrates certain characteristics of philosophical thought in the early twenty-first century, as it transforms and adapts to contemporary challenges both in Russia and elsewhere.

This final chapter therefore examines the use of Kojève's thought within the context of contemporary Russian philosophy. I examine the citation of Kojève by four Russian philosophers active today: Artemy Magun, Sergei Prozorov, Oksana Timofeeva, and Alexey Rutkevich. In doing so, I wish to emphasize the diversity of their interpretations of Kojève's thought—indeed, it would be a mistake to generalize these four philosophers as working within the same tradition, as their methods, subject matter, and political preoccupations often differ dramatically. Nevertheless,

one can see in their work the attempt to form a new critical philosophical project in response to the social, political, and cultural particularities of twentieth-first century Russia.

4.1 Unemployed Negativity: Sergei Prozorov and the Post-Socialism Debate

Sergei Prozorov is a philosopher working in the field of biopolitics, specifically as a scholar of Giorgio Agamben. An overarching argument in his work, moreover, is for the particular applicability of biopolitical thought in the post-socialist landscape. Taking as his point of departure the Fukuyama-Huntington debate, Prozorov has defined post-socialist studies in terms of a continuum between two theoretical points of departure: transitionalism and traditionalism. He describes these opposed positions as the following:

> Transitionalist theory, which benefitted most from Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis, proceeds from the *a priori* introduction of the teleological model of transition to a variably defined 'liberal democracy' and subsequently assess the country's progress, viewing every deviation from the teleological model as an indicator of deviance or the failure to internalize the model in question. In contrast, traditionalism, fortified in the earlier 1990s by the controversy over Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* (1993), makes an ontological postulate of the existence of Russian 'tradition' or 'civilization,' from which it infers the impossibility for Russia to internalize the liberal-democratic model (*Ethics of Postcommunism* 4-5).

Transitionalists in political theory on Eastern Europe sought to imagine post-socialist states in various stages of development in a linear progression toward "liberal democracy," whereas

traditionalists understood cultural difference as irreconcilable to universal historical progress.[117] Prozorov points to a particular debate within Slavic studies in the 1990s, where political scientists argued over the universal applicability of so-called "transitology." Early predictions of post-collapse, such as those argued by Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, claimed that the political events in the former Eastern Bloc "should be considered, at least initially, analogous to events or processes happening elsewhere. More than that, they should be treated as part of the same 'wave of democratization' that began in 1974 in Portugal and has yet to dissipate its energy completely or to ebb back to autocracy" (178). Prozorov, however, notes a marked shift following the Russian default in 1998 and ensuing economic crisis, in which predictions leaned further toward a traditionalist, anti-teleological understanding of the country's development and became less optimistic with regards to political liberalization (*Political Pedagogy* 28).

Prozorov seeks a mediation between the two poles of transitionalism/traditionalism in his study of post-socialist Russia, and he does so through a return to Kojève's interpretation of Hegel. Rather than finding in Kojève's Hegel the *conclusion* of history in the shape of a particular political form (for example, for Fukuyama in the shape of liberal democracy), Prozorov argues that Kojève in fact meant for the end of history to entail instead the *suspension* of historical progress:

> the end of history is not an event that takes place in accordance with its own inherent logic outside our experience but is rather a *possibility* that is permanently available to social praxis in the here and now, to anyone in any context. In order words, history does not end

[117] It should be mentioned that the very same debates have occurred throughout Russian intellectual history, beginning with the "Westernizer" and "Slavophile" debates mentioned in the first chapter. The emergence of this discourse in the post-Soviet period reflects therefore less an aberration than a return to a relatively stable, cyclical discursive framework for discussion of Russia vis-à-vis the West.

> by fulfilling its logic but is rather *brought to an end* in the social practices that suspend its progress. (*Ethics of Postcommunism* 8)

In order therefore to understand post-socialism as a suspension of historical progress, Prozorov's work analyzes an ethos of anti-productivity that he finds throughout post-Soviet political culture. He suggests that a more productive model for post-socialism would emphasize the deactivation of political life in the 1990s, the "reduction of politics either to a 'mediatic' spectacle under Yeltsin or a sterile technocratic administration under Putin and Medvedev" (*Ethics of Postcommunism* 40). He cites widespread indifference, or an "absence of preference" already present in late Soviet culture, which rendered the Soviet state inoperable due to its citizens' apathy toward the public sphere: "[i]nterested neither in openly opposing the system on its own terrain of teleo-ideology nor in continuing to enact its rituals in a tongue-in-cheek manner, the practitioners of the ethics of disengagement formed autonomous spaces beside the system, both material […] and symbolic" (111). This disinterest, moreover, was manifest in late- and post-Soviet cultural representations of disaffected work. Devoting much of his cultural analysis to what he calls the "janitor generation" of the late Soviet period, Prozorov refers regularly to the music of Boris Grebenshchikov and his band Akvarium, whose lyrics, he claims, invoked purposeful abandonment and the distancing of oneself from the activity of work, "eagerly inventing forms of praxis that evaded the requirements of productivity and the rhythm of 'working time'" (93). Prozorov finds parallels in his analysis to the famously renunciatory words of Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener": post-Soviet culture would prefer not to.[118]

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[118] Herman Melville's "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853) describes a New York lawyer who hires Bartleby to help him process paperwork in his business. While Bartleby initially is highly productive at the office, his work slows to a halt, with his responding to each request at work with the phrase, "I would prefer not to." Bartleby is eventually forcibly removed from the office and imprisoned, where he dies of starvation after refusing to eat.

From the perspective, therefore, of the post-Soviet condition, Prozorov argues that one can claim neither that history has concluded nor that cultural differences preclude the possibility of historical analysis. Instead, the "ethics of post-socialism" express a larger disaffection toward progress, seen in the suspension of labor (and, by extension, history). To argue this point on historical suspension, Prozorov reevaluates Kojève's infamous interpretation of the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic. There, if we recall, Kojève claimed that while the Master has successfully risked their life in struggle, the Slave has clung to life and is therefore subservient. The Slave is as a result required to labor for the Master, yet the Master has not achieved full satisfaction, because they lack adequate recognition—to be recognized by a Slave is not sufficient. The Master, moreover, remains dependent on the Slave for the labor they produce, and the Master's relationship with the world is thus mediated by the work of the Slave. Kojève understood the Slave's labor to be at the heart of the historical process: history is nothing more than *negation* of nature through the labor of the figure of the Slave: "when is Nature transformed into Welt (historical world)? When there is *Struggle*, that is desired risk of death, the appearance of Negativity which manifests as *Labor*. History is the history of bloody struggle for recognition (wars, revolutions) and labor which transforms Nature" (*Introduction* 66).[119]

A "conclusion" to this historical process would theoretically see the reconciliation of the Master/Slave dialectical in mutual satisfaction and recognition. Prozorov's intervention, however, speculates on what would happen were the Slave merely to stop working: "what if we imagine, for a moment, a figure of the Slave who was stopped working without at the same time taking up the fight for recognition […] the figure of the workless Slave fatally jams the very machine of

[119] "Quand la Nature se transforme-t-elle ne Welt (monde historique) ? Quand il y a *Lutte*, c'est-à-dire risque voulu de mort, apparition de la Négativité, qui se réalise en tant que *Travail*. L'Histoire est l'histoire des luttes sanglantes pour la reconnaissance (guerres, révolutions) et des travaux qui transformant la Nature."

dialectics that was originally entrusted with bringing history to completion" (*Ethics of Postcommunism* 11). In other words, rather than witnessing at the end of history the inauguration of a fully self-sufficient bureaucratic state (as we have seen elsewhere in Kojève), Prozorov emphasizes what he sees as the post-historical state's *inoperosity*, or non-functioning nature (28).

The term *inoperosity* has a long and important history that is relevant here: its origin is found in a letter Georges Bataille wrote to Kojève in 1937 about Hegel. Kojève in his seminars had defined being human as being negativity:

> To be human is to not be restrained by any fixed existence. Humanity has the possibility to negate Nature, and its own nature, regardless of what that may be. It can negate its empirical animal nature, it can *want* its own death, risk its own life. Such is its negative being (negator: Negativität): to realize the possibility of negating, and transcending, in negating its given reality to be more and other than simply a living being. (63)[120]

Action, and therefore history, is a process of negating the givens of the world—transformation of oneself and one's world requires negating what had once been. Bataille, however, questioned in Kojève's interpretation what would happen at the end of history, at the end of this long process of negation: "if action ('doing') is—as Hegel says—negativity, the question arises then as to whether the negativity of one who has 'nothing more to do' disappears or remains in a state of 'unemployed negativity'" (*Somme athéologique* 169-170).[121] Would, in other words, the human "remain" negativity at the end of history, given that humans are defined by this negation? The phrase

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[120] "Être homme c'est n'être retenu par aucune existence déterminée. L'homme a la possibilité de nier la Nature, et sa propre nature, quelle qu'elle soit. Il peut nier sa nature animale empirique, il peut *vouloir* sa mort, risquer sa vie. Tel est son être négatif (négateur : Negativität): réaliser la possibilité de nier, et transcender, en la niant, sa réalité donnée, être plus et autre que l'être seulement vivant."

[121] "Si l'action (le « faire ») est — comme dit Hegel — la négativité, la question se pose alors de savoir si la négativité de qui n'a « plus rien à faire » disparaît ou subsiste à l'état de « négativité sans emploi »"

"unemployed negativity" has since entered theoretical vocabulary as an indication of the certain paradoxes in thinking of humanism through a historical lens.

The philosopher Giorgio Agamben later seized on Bataille's vision of "unemployed negativity," translating it as inoperosity [*inoperosità*] and understanding in this an articulation of politics outside of dialectical thinking. Agamben claims that:

> politics is that which corresponds to the essential inoperability [*inoperosità*] of humankind, to the radical being-without-work of human communities […] the issue of the coming politics is the way in which […] this essential potentiality and operability, might be undertaken without becoming a historical task, or, in other words, the way in which politics might be nothing other than the exposition of humankind's absence of work as well as the exposition of humankind's creative semi-indifference to any task, and might only in this sense remain integrally assigned to happiness." (*Means Without Ends*, 140-141)

Prozorov's work on Agamben adopts inoperability, or indifference to productivity, as an apt descriptor for the political landscape of post-socialism. In his work on Agamben, Prozorov claims that:

> For Agamben, the way to bring things to the end consists not in the teleological fulfillment of a process of development (the end as completion or accomplishment) nor in the merely negative act of the destruction or elimination of an object (the end as termination or cessation). Instead, it is the process of becoming or rendering something inoperative, deactivating its functioning in the apparatus and making it available for free use. Happy life is thus made possible by neutralizing the multiple apparatuses of power to which we are subjected, including our own identities formed within them. (*Agamben and Politics* 31)

A “happy life” therefore replaces teleological formulations of human progress and utopian thinking. Agamben would find a happy life, for example, in the ascetic lives of Franciscan monks who, in their adherence to their strict forms-of-life, escaped from medieval political rule and enjoyed monastic, communal use: “a human life entirely removed from the grasp of law and a use of bodies and of the world that would never be substantiated into an appropriation” (*Highest Poverty* xiii). Prozorov argues for a happy life in the cyclical construction and demolition of the post-Soviet landscape, either feigning or renouncing productivity in the “emergence of a non-exclusive generic community, wholly exposed in its ‘whatever being’” (*Ethics of Postcommunism* 246).

One cannot help identifying in this argument a resignation or nihilism when Prozorov interprets as a net positive the deactivated political life of the post-socialist imaginary. Prozorov has himself acknowledged this, yet he claims that his and Agamben’s thought “is optimistic because this new form-of-life is no longer posited as a historical task, something to be attained in reformist or revolutionary praxis, but merely calls for the *subtraction* of the subjects from the existing apparatuses” (“Why Giorgio Agamben is an optimist” 1054). He sees this particularly useful in the often-pessimistic realm of Russian politics, exhausted from a century of intensely teleological political projection:

> To the extent one still views politics as a regulated contest between rival historical projects, postcommunist Russian politics, in the form of both the disorder of Yeltsinism and the stability of Putinism, cannot but appear utterly impoverished. Yet, this impoverishment is as good a reason as any to abandon the “historical” vision of politics itself and to raise the question of what politics might be in the absence of any mobilization of humanity for historical tasks of bringing about a “bright future.” (247)

As I will illustrate later, this interpretation of Russian political life may perhaps, just like the term "post-socialism," lose argumentative weight the further one moves from the Soviet collapse. Nevertheless, Prozorov's arguments about biopolitics in the post-socialist field are compelling in their capacity to speak to larger, universal problems of deactivated political life: after all, the end of history, he argues, is a suspension "permanently available to social praxis in the here and now, to anyone in any context" (8). In an era in which mediatization haunts political landscapes globally, and political scientists discuss an "illiberalism" emergent in post-communist Europe[122], Prozorov's theoretical model of post-socialism broadens significantly the implications of post-socialist political culture in the region.

Prozorov's work and his re-articulation of Kojève are therefore situated within a larger, late twentieth-century project of thinking through political praxis without, to borrow again Buck-Morss's term, its "temporal armature." The shift is premised in a move away from a humanistic form of emancipation, the historical overcoming of man's alienation, toward a more nefarious understanding of power and means of resistance. This shift, alluded to in Derrida's aforementioned "ends of man," reflects a move away from historicism already underway in the late 1950s and 1960s. If previously, Hegelian historicism became popular in canonical Western Marxist thought, such as in the legacies of Kojève, Herbert Marcuse, and the early work of György Lukács,[123]

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[122] "Illiberalism" has increasingly been used as a term to describe conservative political transformations in Eastern Europe. One of the most common origins of the term is a speech given in 2014 by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The term can be traced even earlier, however, to use by American political scientists, such as Fareed Zakaria, to criticize the behavior of nation states which have democratically elected governments but do not have, for example, liberalized market or comparable freedoms of speech and assembly. One cannot help but note the pejorative use of the term to imply agreement with Fukuyama's faith in the inevitability of American style liberal democracy: "Today, in the fact of a spreading virus of illiberalism, the most useful role that the international community, and most importantly the United States, can play is […] to consolidate democracy where it has taken root and to encourage the gradual development of constitutional liberalism across the globe." (Zakaria 24).

[123] Perry Anderson relates this trend to the publication of Marx's 1844 manuscripts for the first time in 1932. The 1844 manuscripts, often alluded to in shorthand as "Early Marx," illustrated at length Marx's development out of Hegelian idealism. Although the manuscripts were published in Moscow, Perry Anderson states that their publication was nonetheless a defining milestone in the development of what has since become known as "Western Marxism."

Hegelianism later came under attack by the next generation of Marxist philosophers in the West. Thus Louis Althusser, for example, rejected the theory of alienation that underpinned Kojève's Hegelianism (and Lukács's *History and Class Consciousness* [1923]) and instead famously argued for a scientific Marxism derived from Marx's late works, when Marx had allegedly definitively broken from Hegel: "Marxism is, in a single movement and by virtue of the unique epistemological rupture which established it, an anti-humanism and an a-historicism" (Althusser 268).

As an inheritor of this legacy through Foucault, Agamben, and the tradition of biopolitics, Prozorov is likewise reacting against a century of Hegelianism in Marxist thought, yet his unique intervention is to conceptualize this "break" in political historicism as it relates to the fallout of the collapse of communist states in the early 1990s. Indeed, if, in the West, Althusser and others were pushing against teleological thinking in Marx already in the 1960s, Prozorov suggests that a similar process, on a larger, social scale, occurred in post-socialist political life of the 1990s. In order to do so, Prozorov transforms Kojève, from his relatively engrained status as a philosopher of history, into a philosopher who problematized the relationship between human labor and historical progression.

4.2 Do Animals Work?: Oxana Timofeeva, Kojève, and Animal Studies

As I have already illustrated in the first chapter, Kojève's interpretation of Hegel is often considered an anthropological one. This, in large part, is due to his insistent claim that the historical process is engendered by human labor—historical time is therefore human time. When historical

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Anderson claims further that these manuscripts played a large role in Western Marxism's progression from "politics to philosophy," paradoxically reversing Marx's own development from idealism to materialism (52).

time ends, or, as Prozorov argues, is suspended, humanity would also end. This insistence on anthropogenic time in Kojève's work has led to his frequent inclusion (as an object of criticism) in theoretical work on animality and humanism in the growing field of animal studies.

Is humanity still human after history? Kojève suggested humans would be something different altogether if they were to forego the historical process and stop working:

> If, against all odds, Man no longer negated the given or negative himself as the given or innate, that is no longer created anew and created himself as a "new man," content instead to persist in identifying with himself and to conserve the "place" he already occupies in the Cosmos. Or, in other words, if he no longer lived in accordance with the future or with the "project" and allowed himself to be dominated exclusively by the past or "memory"—he would then cease to be truly human. He would be an animal, a "knowing" one perhaps and rather "complicated," highly different from all other natural beings, but not essentially "another thing" than them. And, as a result, he would not be "dialectical." (*Introduction* 576-577)[124]

Devoid of the teleological projection of a future self, the human according to Kojève would return to being merely an animal. In a footnote added later to the second edition of his published lectures, Kojève described further the "naturalization" of humanity's actions into animality:

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[124] "Si, par impossible, l'Homme cessait de nier le donné et de se nier en tant que donné ou inné, c'est-à-dire de créer du nouveau et de se créer en tant qu'«homme nouveau», en se contentant de se maintenir dans l'identité avec soi-même et de conserver la « place » qu'il occupe déjà dans le Cosmos ; ou, en d'autres termes, s'il cessait de vivre en fonction de l'avenir ou du « projet » et se laissait dominer exclusivement par le passé ou le « souvenir » — il cesserait d'être vraiment humain ; il serait un animal, « savant » peut-être et fort « compliqué », très différent de tous les autres êtres naturels, mais non pas essentiellement « autre-chose » qu'eux. Et, partant, il ne serait pas « dialectique »."

Kojève adds in a footnote: "I said, against all odds, because, according to Hegel, Man always negates sooner or later as long as he has not realized the total Synthesis which 'appears' as his definitive 'satisfaction' (Befriedigung). I personally admit the possibility of a stopping along the way. But I think in this case that Man would cease to be human."

> If one accepts "the disappearance of Man at the end of History," if one agrees that "Man remains alive as an animal," clarifying that "what disappears is Man strictly speaking," one cannot say that "everything else can remain indefinitely: art, love, play, etc." If Man becomes an animal again, his art, his love, and his games must also become purely "natural" again. One would have to admit therefore that at the end of History, humans would build their edifices and works just as birds build their nests and spiders weave their webs, and would perform concerts just as frogs and cicadas, would play like young animals do, and would indulge love like adult beasts do. (509-51)[125]

As I have previously illustrated elsewhere, post-Soviet culture of the 1990s frequently relied on tropes of animalization in order to symbolize the collapse of the social order: "cultural depictions of the human body fracture at the juncture of animal and non-animal," suggesting normative socialization had failed in the chaotic years of economic privatization and shock therapy (Wilson 199). Artists as diverse as Oleg Kulik, a performance artist who would inhabit the persona of a dog and attempt to bite gallery attendants, and Viktor Pelevin, one of the most well-known Russian postmodernist novelists whose works frequently include werewolves, anthropomorphic chickens, and other animal-human hybrids, would deploy animality as a commentary on social exclusion and new forms of subjectivity in the absence of Soviet models of collective social life. Kojève claimed to see the return to animality in the consumer culture of the United States, an "eternal

[125] "Si l'on admet « la disparition de l'Homme à la fin de l'Histoire", si l'on affirme que « l'Homme reste en vie en tant qu'animal », en précisant que « ce qui disparaît, c'est l'Homme proprement dit », on ne peut pas dire que « tout le reste peut se maintenir indéfiniment : l'art, l'amour, le jeu, etc. ». Si l'Homme re-devient un animal, ses arts, ses amours et ses jeux doivent eux aussi re-devenir purement « naturels ». Il faudrait donc admettre qu'après la fin de l'Histoire, les hommes construiraient leurs édifices et leurs ouvrages d'art comme les oiseaux construisent leurs nids et les araignées tissent leurs toiles, exécuteraient des concerts musicaux à l'instar des grenouilles et des cigales, joueraient comme jouent les jeunes animaux et s'adonneraient à l'amour comme le font les bêtes adultes."

present" where humans no longer had to labor – newly blessed with Western consumerism, post-Soviet depictions of human-animality were much less optimistic (510).

Although writing much later than the original "boom" of animalistic depictions in post-Soviet culture, the philosopher Oxana Timofeeva nevertheless has also frequently problematized the question of animality, history, and Hegelianism, with her work often referencing various elements of Soviet cultural history. Her most recent book, *A History of Animals* [*Istoriia zhivotnykh*, 2017], levels a particularly strong critique against what she views as anthropocentrism in Kojève's philosophy of history. Timofeeva's work seeks to reinsert the figure of the animal into a history of the philosophical tradition, in which humanity's distinction from (as well as camaraderie with) animality has often served as the point of logical departure:

> Philosophers have always made a distinction between humans and animals, using as criteria features such as thought, language, awareness of death, and so on. One can identify two types of classical philosophical approaches to the animal. A discourse of *exclusion*, or, to use Jean-Marie Schaeffer's definition, human exclusivity, is based on the idea of the ethical and ontological primacy of humans, who are radically separated from the animal world: humans are exceptional, and animals are excluded and in turn have no place in the human world. The discourse of *inclusion* is based on the idea of a certain affinity amongst all species, permitting the possibility of communication and collaboration. In this perspective, open to various levels of empathy, humans represent, of course, one type of animal, yet something "human" can also be found in other animal species. […] Both discourses are

nevertheless two sides of the same coin, establishing and supporting a specific *order of things*. (22)[126]

Timofeeva thus argues that Kojève's philosophy operates at the level of anthropocentric *exclusion*: what defines us as humans is the very thing which separates us from animals. Like Prozorov above, Timofeeva cites the work of Georges Bataille in her criticism of Kojève. Adopting Bataille's concept of "unemployed negativity," Timofeeva questions what this negativity really has to do with being human altogether: "how did it happen that negativity is now associated exclusively with the human and his creative activity?" (117)[127]

If we recall, Kojève argued that humanity is associated with negativity, because human action is the *negation* of the given — labor is the transformatory negation of something into that which it isn't. Timofeeva's intervention is to ask as a provocation: don't animals work? Kojève understand the difference between animal and human action (work) temporally: "[according to Kojève] animal desire lives in the present, desires what is available now, what can be grasped immediately, whereas human desire is directed toward the future, toward what is not yet, toward the inexistent, supernatural, fantastic objects" (Timofeeva 119).[128] Animals may desire, and

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[126] "Философы всегда проводили различие между людьми и животными, применяя в качестве его критериев такие характеристики, как мышление, язык, осознание смерти и т.д. Можно выделить два типа классического философского подхода к животному. Дискурс *исключения*, или, если использовать определение Жан-Шеффера, человеческой исключительности, исходит из идеи этического и онтологического превосходства человека, который радикально выделен из животного мира: человек исключителен, а животное — исключено, и ему, в свою очередь, нет места в мире людей. Дискурс *включения* опирается на идею некой общности всех видов, допускающей возможность коммуникации и взаимодействия. В этой перспективе, открытой для разного уровня эмпатии, человек представляется, конечно, одним из животных, но и у других животных обязталельно обнаруживается что-нибудь «человеческое» […] Однако оба дискурса связаны друг с другом как две стороны одной медали — этой медалью человек сам награждает себя за то, что устанавливает и поддерживает определенный *порядок вещей*."

[127] "Как же так вышло, что негативность теперь ассоцируется исключительно с человеком и его творческой деятельностью?"

[128] "Животное желание живет настоящим, оно желает того, что есть в наличии, чем можно непосредственно завладеть, тогда как человеческие желания направлены в будущее, на то, его нет, на несуществующие, сверхъестественные, фантазматические объекты."

therefore negate, things like food, water, shelter, whereas human desire is for abstract things: recognition, prestige, dignity.[129] Timofeeva, however, wishes to reinstate in the animal its own form of negativity, exemplified in its own forms of laboring in the world.

Attempting to "reinstate the animal" in the Kojèvian theory of negativity, Timofeeva deploys various figures of human-animality in Georges Bataille's philosophy.[130] Bataille at first takes seriously Kojève's claim that the human is radical negativity—he claims, moreover, that this human negativity, and its distinction from animality can be found in the symbolism of animal sacrifice. In his words,

> Man has revealed and founded human truth by sacrificing: in sacrifice he destroyed the animal in himself, allowing himself and the animal to survive only as the noncorporeal truth which Hegel describes, which makes of man—in Heidegger's words—a being unto death (*Sein zum Tode*), or—in the words of Kojève himself—"death that lives a human life. ("Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice" 335)[131]

As Timofeeva notes, however, Bataille is more concerned with the moments that link the animal and the human, rather than those which separate them. She cites in particular his *Tears of Eros*

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[129] The specificities of this definition of desire is discussed at length in chapter two. There, I illustrate the extensive parallels between Kojève and Vladimir Solov'ev's definitions of human desire. Furthermore, Solov'ev's own philosophy of desire takes inspiration from a much longer, humanistic tradition within Neoplatonism of "hierarchizing" living things, with humans the least physical in their love and therefore the most spiritual. The most vivid example of this can be found in the work of Marsilio Ficino, an influential philosopher of the Italian Renaissance and advocate for a revival of Platonic philosophy within the bourgeoning humanistic tradition—Ficino notably coined the term "Platonic love."

[130] Timofeeva has written a monograph solely devoted to the philosophy of Bataille, in which she frequently discusses both animality and desire: *Vvedenie v eroticheskuiu filosofiiu Zh. Bataiia*. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2009.

[131] "l'Homme a révélé et fondé la vérité humaine en sacrifiant : dans le sacrifice, il détruisit l'animal en lui-même, ne laissant subsister, de lui-même et de l'animal, que la vérité non corporelle que décrit Hegel, qui, de l'homme, fait—selon l'expression de Heidegger—un être pour la mort (*Sein zum Tode*), ou—selon l'expression de Kojève lui-même — «la mort qui vit une vie humaine. »"

(*Les larmes d'Éros*, 1961), in which Bataille presents an image of the prehistoric human as still quite animalistic:

> However, these men who were the first to take care of the corpses of their kin were themselves not yet exactly humans. The skulls they left still have apelike characteristics: the jaw is protuberant, and very often the arch of the eyebrows is crowned by a bony ridge. These primitive beings, moreover, did not quite have that upright posture which, morally and physically, defines us — and affirms us in our being. Without doubt, they stood upright: but their legs were not perfectly rigid as are ours. It seems that they had, like apes, a hairy exterior, which covered them and protected them from cold. (*Tears of Eros*, 25)

Timofeeva argues that, for Bataille, humans cannot be seen as the *only* negating animal, given that its first "act of negation," exemplified in prehistoric animal sacrifice, was itself done by an animal not yet human: "[i]n order to become the only being to negate itself as an animal, this creature first had to be an animal, which, suddenly, for some reason, stands on its hind legs and announces, 'I am not an animal anymore'" (132).[132]

According to Timofeeva, therefore, Bataille's reconciles the "open wound" of Kojève's unemployed negativity to the capacity of animals themselves to enact negation, creating therefore an inclusive depiction of animality in Kojève's philosophy of history. She does so, admittedly, with a very generous reading of Bataille's work—in the conclusion of her book chapter devoted to Kojève and Bataille, Timofeeva concedes that her interpretation is "a partisan reading of Bataille against Bataille himself," in order to purge him of any residual anthropocentrism (135).[133]

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[132] "Чтобы стать единственным, кто отрицает себя в качестве животного, это существо должно было прежде всего быть животным—которое вдруг по какой-то причине встало на задние ноги и заявило: «Я больше не животное.»" (132)

[133] "эта фигура безработной животности вырастает из моего собственного партизанского чтения Батая вопреки ему самому."

Nevertheless, through Bataille, Timofeeva establishes her project of a *historicized* animality, one that understands the posthistorical as the prehistorical and that endows animals with their own agency as negating subjects.

This philosophical deployment has a particularly rich effect on her work on revolutionary communism. Timofeeva has written frequently on the Soviet novelist Andrei Platonov, reading into his work deployments of animality in the author's understanding of historical time and the victory of communism.[134] Arguing for a reading of "bare life" [*bednaia zhizn'*] throughout Platonov's novels and short stories, Timofeeva attempts to "give a voice to our forgotten past and reveal 'animality' as a part of Platonov's tragic dialectics of nature, expressing a unique messianic anticipation of the era of the October Revolution" ("Bednaia zhizn'").[135] The dialectics of nature, or the dialectical force that includes both humans and animals and culminates in the October Revolution, is tragic in that Platonov portrays humans as belonging to a miserable state of bare life, comparable to their impoverished and tortured animals:

> *Bare life* is the life of animals and plants, but also the life of people who from this very life create happiness and communism. Poverty describes the specific state of the world, when life is the main and even only material resource, a universal "substance of existence" from

[134] Timofeeva's insistence for a reading of Platonov's animals *joining* in revolution, and the possibility of animals' participation in the historical negation, resonates with various attempts at a "dialectical" science within the Marxist approaches to natural history. Friedrich Engels most famously attempted this with his *Anti-Dühring* (1878) and *Dialectics of Nature* (1883). Whereas dialectical natural philosophies held periodic influence in Soviet science (notably exemplified in the Stalinist controversy surrounding the Lysenko affair), Western Marxism, including Kojève's variety, is often understood to disavow belief in dialectical thought's applicability to the natural world. See Loren Graham, *Science and Philosophy in the Soviet Union* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1972).

[135] "дать слово нашему забытому прошлому и раскрыть 'животность' как часть платоновской трагической диалектики природы, выражающей уникальные мессианистские ожидания эпохи Октябрьской революции."

> which, as if by alchemy, everything on earth is made. Everything great, including revolution, is made from this meager, weak substance.[136]

Timofeeva sees in Platonov's work an almost animism of the revolution, where, by virtue of humankind's wretchedness, humanity shares its revolutionary struggle with the animals surrounding them: "Platonov's communists are animals of the revolution. They literally recognize themselves in animals and project onto them their own revolutionary passion" ("Bednaia zhizn'").

For Timofeeva, then, human negativity, understood in Kojève as the propelling force of historical progression, is transposed onto the animal world — humans share our revolutionary impulses with animals in what Bataille called the "open wound" of life. Our lives are therefore linked in political and historical ways. Timofeeva illustrates this link in another messianic, revolutionary context, Noah and the flood: "God regretted what he had created, because people committed too much sin. He decided to destroy everything, to erase all flesh from the face of the earth in order to give humanity another chance. Although animals didn't commit any sins, they too had to share this destiny" ("The End of the World"). As the final two Russian philosophers discussed in this chapter will argue, this radical negativity is at the heart of any interpretation of Kojève as a revolutionary political philosopher.

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[136] "*Бедная жизнь* — это жизнь животных и растений но также и жизнь людей, которые из самой этой жизни строят счастье и коммунизм. Бедность описывает определенное состояние мира, когда жизнь является главным или даже единственным материальным ресурсом, универсальным "веществом существования", из которого, как из алхимической субстанции, производится все на свете. И все великое, включая революцию, тоже производится из этого скудного, слабого вещества."

4.3 Revolution, Redux: Artemy Magun and Alexey Rutkevich

At first glance, it is rather unusual to juxtapose philosophers Artemy Magun and Alexey Rutkevich. Other than a regular engagement with Kojève's philosophy, the two have developed dramatically divergent philosophical careers. Magun's work frequently responds to contemporary political developments on the left—he and Oxana Timofeeva have regularly collaborated with Chto Delat, a group of artists, philosophers, and activists formed in Saint Petersburg in 2003 whose public mission intentionally lays claim to feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist cultural politics today.[137] Rutkevich's work, on the other hand, is more historically oriented. Rutkevich has been by far the most active scholar in Russian to write on Kojève's philosophy; he edited, and translated, the first collection of Kojève's Russian essays to be published in 2006, and several posthumous publications of Kojève's works owe their first-time publication to Rutkevich's efforts working through Kojève's collected papers. Rutkevich has therefore spent a significant part of his career excavating the more obscure parts of Kojève's career, as well as providing needed (Russian) context for the philosopher's legacy. Rutkevich's most recent work on Kojève, however, has been devoted to the question of Kojève and revolution. Magun, meanwhile, has employed Kojève to formulate a new definition for revolution suitable to the twenty-first century. This last analysis, therefore, discusses the use of Kojève by Rutkevich and Magun to theorize on revolutionary politics from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

[137] Chto Delat's ideological orientation is further made clear by the origin of its name—Chto Delat ("What is to be done") refers to both the nineteenth-century novel by Nikolai Chernyshevskii, known for its socialist, utopian vision of a woman's organizing of a seamstress worker's collective, as well as the 1902 pamphlet by Lenin. The question has since become a frequent rallying cry for Russian leftist thought.

In my discussion of Prozorov's work, I had argued that his analysis of the "post-socialist ethos" may lose its argumentative hold the further one moves from a "post-Soviet" context into merely "contemporary Russian" one. Magun illustrates one way in which this may prove true. His first book, *Negative Revolution: Toward a Deconstruction of the Political Subject* (*Otritsatel'naia revoliutsiia: K dekonstruktsii politicheskogo sub''ekta*, 2008) opens with a reflection on the historical impulse of the project. Magun claims the origin of the book as the following:

> This book was conceived and mostly written in the years 1998-2002. Its main task lay in an analysis of the historical experience of the 1990s as well as in the political identification of my generation for which this experience was formative. Based on this task I undertook a philosophical reconstruction of the conditions for historicity as they appear from the perspective of our current era. (11)[138]

A decade later, in the book's English translation in 2013, Magun situates his work in yet another, broader historical context:

> Today, after two years (2011-12) of major revolutions and protest movements throughout the world, there is hope and promise, on the one hand, but on the other, there is the awareness that, following already established patterns, protests in the developed countries of the "core" happen on a large scale but are innocuous for the regime, whereas protests in the semi-periphery lead to violent revolutions and give power to the people, only to produce a paralyzing split between national conservatives and the liberal Westernizers. Because

[138] "Эта книга была задумана и в основном написана в 1998-2002 годах. Ее главная цель заключается в осмыслении исторического опыта 1990-х годов и в политической идентификации моего поколения, для которого этот опыт был формативным. Исходя из этой задачи, я предпринял философскую реконструкцию условий историчности, какими они предстают с точки зрения настоящей эпохи."

these things happen regularly, revolutions gradually start seeming to be internal institutions of the current global political system and not historic breakthroughs. (1)

Magun, presumably, has in mind at least the Russian protests surrounding the 2012 presidential election, the Arab Spring protests in the Middle East, and the various Occupy Wallstreet camps both in the United States and globally. In both English and Russian, then, *Negative Revolution* lays claims to contemporary relevance in its definition of a negative revolution.

The Russian context, however, attracts the greatest attention. Magun's greatest claim in the book is that the political events of the late 1980s through to the early 2000s, leading from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the establishment of the current, in his words, authoritarian, regime, ought to be considered a revolution in its own right. In order to do so, he establishes five defining aspects of a revolution: (1) the overthrow of the sacralization of the preceding regime and an ensuing secularization; (2) the legitimization of a new regime immanent to the society itself; (3) internalization of the crisis within social relations, social fragmentation; (4) the inversion of symbolic structures and reigning ideologies; and lastly, (5) the revolution as a political event in which the very question of truth itself is posed (*Otritsatel'naia revoliutsiia*, 18-20). As Magun argues, the dissolution of the Soviet regime fits this definition of revolution: it undermined a sacred image of the Communist Party, legitimized a new form of rule seen as emergent through society itself, collapsed existing social structures, and inverted preexisting ideological dichotomies of Western-Russian, capitalist-communist, etc.

Perhaps most telling for our purposes is the (a-)temporal aspect of revolution Magun provides in his analysis:

Revolution bears a practical-political, as well as epistemological, character. It overturns our conceptions of the past and future and defines an era as completed ("The Old order,"

> "communism"), leaving within it a large part of human aspirations. At the same time revolution really only rarely puts forth truly new ideas and programs. On the contrary, it blocks a subject's access to its own future, and the subject no longer knows what awaits it. Yet as paradoxical as it may seem, it is exactly in its capacity as a hurdle and even dead-end, as a collapse of a field of vision, revolution indirectly allows for the construction of the totally new and unknown—or, more specifically, defines newly appearing things as totally new. (20)[139]

Magun, in a manner similar to Timofeeva's animals, seeks to locate revolution as an immanent capacity of human life. For Timofeeva, animals are just as capable of revolutionary action, even if they are only capable of negating their givens and cannot conceptualize the future. Magun, similarly, finds in revolutions and the revolutionary subject an immediate experience of melancholy, disorientation, and anxiety, from which he hopes to reconceptualize revolution away from mere transcendental political affirmations.

What is a negative revolution? Magun takes as his example the French revolution, where he sees two stages of the revolutionary period: "society first unites and destroys—almost unanimously—the symbolic façade of the Old order" (88).[140] Following this original unification period, however, Magun identifies a much more understated, yet crucial, aspect of the revolutionary process, bound in negativity, resignation, and conflict: "the second phase of

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[139] "Революция носит практико-политический, так и эпистемологический характер. Она переворачивает наши представления о прошлом и будущем и определяет завершившуюся эпоху («Старый порядок», «коммунизм»), оставляя в ней большую часть человеческих чаяний. Вместе с тем революция сама по себе редко выдвигает действительно новые идеи и программы. Напротив, она как бы блокирует субъекту доступ к собственному будущему, и он больше не знает, чего от себя ждать. Но как ни парадоксально, именно в качестве преграды и даже тупика, в качестве закрывающего обзор обвала, революция опосредованным образом позволяет творить абсолютно новое и неизвестное — а точнее, определяет вновь появляющиеся вещи как абсолютно новые."

[140] "Сначала общество объединяется и разрушает — почти с полным единодушием — символический фасад Старого порядка."

revolution […] begins when society appears alone with itself: when it must found and hold popular power. It is precisely at this moment that sectarian conflict and political disorientation begins. This second phase also defines a new idea of revolution" (88).[141] Magun sees a similar two-step process in the collapse of the Soviet regime, where solidarity *against* the Communist party briefly united various social groups, only after which did these groups enter into internecine conflicts for power.

By now, through Kojève, Prozorov, and Timofeeva, one can already sense the trajectory of Magun's "negative revolution." Much as the Russian philosophers described above, it seeks to shed teleological speculation while maintaining Kojève's definition of the human as radical negativity. Magun, furthermore, relies heavily on Kojève's interpretation of the French revolution, and his interpretation of Hegel as the philosopher of said revolution:

> "[t]he Revolutionary acts consciously not to *establish* an (ideal) World, but rather to *destroy* the given World. And he knows this—it is he who, starting from nothingness, will reconstruct a new World. There is therefore a Selbst which creates itself at the onset of a World reduced to nothingness. There is no true *creation* without a prior *destruction* of the given: Action = negating Negativity (Negativität)." (Kojeve *Introduction* 170)[142]

For Magun, a new conceptualization of revolution would necessitate tarrying with the negative of revolutionary conflict, which has often been overlooked in an overvaluation of the "affirmative" aspects of social change. This, for example, is what has prevented any estimation of the social collapse of Russia in the 1990s as revolutionary in origin.

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[141] "второй этап революции […] начинается тогда, когда общество оказывается, так сказать, наедине с собой: когда оно должно создать и удержать народную власть. Именно в этот момент начинается междоусобная борьба и политическая дезориентация. Этот второй этап и определяет новую идею революцию."

[142] "Le Révolutionnaire agit consciemment non pour établir un Monde (idéal), mais pour détruire le Monde donné. Et il s'en rend compte. Et c'est lui qui reconstruira, à partir du néant, un Monde nouveau. Il y a donc un Selbst qui se crée lui-même à partir d'un Monde réduit au néant. Pas de création véritable sans destruction préalable du donné : Action = Négativité négatrice (Negativität)."

In this emphasis on revolution in Kojève, Magun and Rutkevich share a common goal. Rutkevich also takes from Kojève the idea of two stage revolutionary process, yet, unlike Magun, he is not as comfortable "tarrying with the negative." Rutkevich defines revolution to mean two groups of events: "(1) a violent overthrow of an existing state system, which sometimes descends into civil war; (2) a long-term structural change that effects the most far-flung areas of society […] leading to progress and even to the end of history" ("Alexandre Kojève: from revolution to empire" 330). As a scholar devoted to the historical context of Kojève's philosophy, however, Rutkevich cites the philosopher's exposure to the worst of revolutionary violence in the twentieth-century as a reason for Kojève's reluctance to therefore embrace revolution: "Revolutionaries themselves mostly exterminate each other in factional strife. It should be noted that Kojève's view of revolution was far from enthusiastic" (338).

Rutkevich instead stresses the post-historical Kojève, in which Kojève imagined an end to struggle and the establishment of a homogeneous state. All reflections on the need for revolutionary struggle, Rutkevich argues, are merely another reflection of Kojève's ironic approach to his philosophy:

> To understand the context of Kojève's philosophy one must keep in mind his personal experience of revolution in Russia (including three days in the basement of the Cheka, awaiting execution), several months of prison in Warsaw (arrested as a "Bolshevik spy," nearly dying of typhus), experience in Germany in the 1920s with uprisings, putsches, and so on, and participation in the French Resistance (barely avoiding execution by the Germans). His interpretation of Hegel belongs to an era of "European civil war." Just like several German thinkers esteemed by him (Heidegger, Schmitt), Kojève departs from a philosophy of resolve and conflict toward a contemplative, ironic view of the vanity of the

post-historical condition. In his characterization of the postwar world one can find in his texts near verbatim agreement with the works of Arnold Gehlen, Ernst Niekisch, and particularly Ernst Jünger. The experience of millions of those serving on the fronts of the two wars, of the volunteers in the International Brigades in Spain or with the Waffen SS, of underground revolutionaries, and of counterrevolutionary victims, all was reflected in the philosophy of 'risk' and the 'battle for recognition.' Once that era had passed, its philosophy, too, lost its self-evidence." ("'Levoe' gegel'ianstvo Kozheva" 126)[143]

Rutkevich therefore aligns Kojève less with a radical tradition (like Magun) but instead to a reaction tradition within German political thought, the contours of which were discussed in the preceding chapter with Kojève's exchange with Schmitt.

In perhaps the most telling evidence of his take on Kojève, Rutkevich cites a conversation Kojève allegedly had with Raymond Aron in the political charged era of 1960s France:

> Kojève's approach to the French revolution (and to revolutions in general) is neither historical nor sociological: real figures, forces, antecedents, etc. do not interest him. […] A curious story is recounted in Raymond Aron's memoirs. In May 1968, he visited the US and had a long telephone conversation with Kojève, asking him about the events in Paris. Kojève told him that it "wasn't a revolution, it was a disgrace," "no one is being killed";

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[143] "Для понимания контекста философии Кожева нужно иметь в виду его личный опыт революции в России (включая три дня в подвалах ЧК в ожидании расстрела), несколько месяцев тюрьмы в Варшаве (арестован как 'большевистский шпион', едва не умер от тифа), опыт Германии 20-х гг. с восстаниями, путчами и т.п., участие во французском Сопротивлении (едва избежал расстрела немцами). Его толкование Гегеля принадлежит эпохе 'европейской гражданской войны'. Как и некоторые ценимые им немецкие мыслители этой эпохи (Хайдеггер, Шмитт), он отходит от философии решимости и борьбы к созерцательному ироничному взгляду на суету пост-исторического существования. В характеристике послевоенного мира чуть ли не дословные совпадения с его текстами можно найти в работах А. Гелена, Э. Никиша, в особенности Э. Юнгера. Опыт миллионов фронтовиков двух войн, добровольцев интербригад в Испании или Waffen SS, революционеров-подпольщиков и жертвенных контрреволюционеров нашел свое отражение в философии 'риска' и 'борьбы за признание'. Когда эта эпоха миновала, подобная философия утратила свою самоочевидность."

> students of the time, i.e., spoiled children of bourgeois and officials, are playing at a revolution, and he did not see them as people ready to fight and die fighting. (339)

Indeed, what was originally at the heart of the challenge in reinterpreting Kojève's legacy, namely, his entrenchment in a critical theory tradition that saw its rise (and fall) in the twentieth-century, returns in Rutkevich's interpretation of the philosopher as skeptical, and even antithetical, to the revolutionary goals of the left in the France of May '68.

Although their political orientations differ, Magun and Rutkevich are therefore both attempting to rearticulate history and revolution in light of a "crisis" in Kojève's philosophical project. If one can no longer think of history as teleological, how can one conceptualize revolutionary politics? The very same problem haunts Prozorov's and Timofeeva's work, and, I would argue, has become a larger, looming question in the practice of cultural politics today. Should one abandon historical models of emancipation, given their relative failure in the social projects of the twentieth-century, or is there some sort of theoretical excavation possible by which we can return to that project? As (at least) one philosophical tradition adhered to teleological thinking, Kojève's philosophy sits firmly in the crossfire of this debate, yet so, too, does this question linger in the past century and a half of Russian intellectual history.

Philosophy, like all tools, is transformed by the aims of the individual who wields it. As I have attempted to illustrate, arguably no other twentieth-century philosopher has had his or her legacy subject to the whims of political ideology more than Kojève. This is, certainly in part, the fault of Kojève himself, who in his pursuit of an absolute philosophy, capable of responding to the entirety of human experience as he saw it, would often contradict himself or include, within his own affirmations, seemingly simultaneous negations. Yet an equally impactful influence on Kojève's legacy has been the transition from the twentieth-century to the twenty-first: from a

(more or less) concretized historical trajectory to a more obtuse understanding of history, politics, and power. Nowhere is this teleophobia more apparent than in the landscape of contemporary Russian philosophy, yet this should not therefore imply a provincial set of concerns confined merely to the post-Soviet intellectual landscape. On the contrary, just as Russian philosophy in diaspora proved more than capable of speaking to broad, universal concerns in Western philosophy, so, too, do the interpretations of Kojève in Russian philosophy today reflect a reorientation of history, power, and human agency as it is understood globally.

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