History Restarts: Index of Terms

Companion to “History Restarts: MAGA, Recognition, and the Failure of the End of History”

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Abstract

This index defines the philosophical, political-science, and systems-theory terms used in the article, from Hegel’s dialectic and Kojève’s struggle for recognition to Fukuyama’s isothymia and megalothymia and Capra’s systems thinking. Each entry names the thinker or tradition the term comes from and the article sections where it appears. A table of the thinkers and works cited and a key to the article’s section numbers follow.

1. TERMS

Terms are listed alphabetically. The bracketed attribution gives the thinker or tradition the term comes from; "Article" marks terms defined for this essay. Section numbers refer to the article.

Cartesian (mechanistic) paradigm [Capra] — The worldview Capra traces to Descartes and Newton: understand a whole by reducing it to its parts, and treat nature and society as machines. *The Turning Point* argues it is giving way to a systems view. *§ 11*

Contradiction [Hegel] — A tension inside a form of social life that the form cannot permanently reconcile. In Hegel it is the engine of change: the contradiction produces opposition, and the opposition transforms the order. *§ 2, 9, 12, 13*

Dialectic [Hegel] — Development through contradiction, negation, and reconciliation, in which each stage is overcome but partly preserved in the next. The popular formula "thesis–antithesis–synthesis" is a later gloss, not Hegel's own terminology. *§ 3, 12*

Emergence (emergent behavior) [Systems theory; Capra] — Behavior of a system as a whole that arises from interactions among its parts and cannot be attributed to any single part. The article uses it to argue MAGA has no single cause. *§ 11*

End of History [Kojève; Fukuyama] — Kojève's thesis that history ended in principle with Napoleon's victory at Jena in 1806, which established the universal and homogeneous state of mutual recognition; and Fukuyama's later version, that liberal democracy may be the endpoint of humanity's ideological evolution. Neither claims that events, wars, or conflict stop; both claim the struggle over the basic form of government is settled. *§ 3, 4, 5, 12, 13*

Feedback loop [Systems theory; Capra] — A causal chain in which an effect feeds back to amplify (positive feedback) or dampen (negative feedback) its own cause. The article's example: polarization produces separate information environments, which produce more distrust. The article distinguishes this loop from the one-way causal chains that feed it. *§ 11*

First men [Fukuyama] — Fukuyama's counterpart to the Last Man: people who, bored or diminished by a comfortable post-historical order, would overturn it in order to have something worth struggling for. *§ 4, 5*

Historical agency [Article] — The sense of being a participant who shapes history rather than a resident administered by institutions. The article argues restoration movements supply it where managerial systems usually do not. *§ 8, 13*

Interpretive frame [Article] — A lens for reading a movement's appeal, as distinct from a demographic diagnosis of why each supporter holds a view. The article applies the recognition thesis only in this sense. *§ 7*

Isothymia [Fukuyama] — The desire to be recognized as the equal of others. Liberal democracy is built to satisfy it through citizenship, rights, and equality before the law. *§ 4, 10*

Last Man [Nietzsche; Fukuyama] — The comfortable, risk-averse person who values security, consumption, and predictability but has no reason left to struggle, sacrifice, or overcome himself. Introduced in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*; Fukuyama asks whether the End of History produces him. *§ 4, 8*

Liberal order (post–Cold War settlement) [Article] — The consensus after 1989 that globalization, economic integration, technological progress, and expanding rights would yield growing prosperity and freedom. The article treats it as the "settled" order that generates its own negation. *§ 5, 9, 10, 13*

Master–slave dialectic [Hegel; Kojève] — Hegel's account ("lordship and bondage") of two self-conscious beings struggling for recognition, in which one submits to the other. Kojève made it the core of his reading of history. *§ 3*

Megalothymia [Fukuyama] — The desire to be recognized as superior to others. Liberal democracy has no comparable outlet for it, which Fukuyama identifies as the weak point of the End of History. *§ 4, 10*

Negation [Hegel; Kojève] — The rejection of an existing order as inadequate, which sets historical change in motion. In Kojève the historical human being is defined by the capacity to negate what is given. *§ 1, 6, 9*

Politics of negation (restoration) [Article] — A political program structured as: something valuable existed, it has been lost, the present order failed to preserve it, and it must be restored. The article reads the 2024 Republican platform this way. *§ 6*

Post-historical [Kojève; Fukuyama] — Describing the world after the End of History: prosperous, managerial, and administered, with no remaining struggle over the basic form of society. *§ 4, 8*

Recognition (Anerkennung) [Hegel; Kojève] — Acknowledgment by other people of one's dignity, status, identity, and significance. Kojève argues the struggle for recognition, not material desire, is what drives history. *§ 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13*

Reorganization [Capra; Article] — The systems-theory alternative to final resolution: a stressed system moves into a new configuration, which is stable only temporarily and creates the conditions for its next contradiction. *§ 12*

Status threat [Mutz] — Perceived loss of a group's dominant social position, including anxiety about the nation's global standing. Mutz (2018) argues it, rather than personal economic hardship, explains the 2016 vote shift; Morgan (2018) disputes that the data can separate the two. *§ 7*

Systems thinking [Capra] — Understanding phenomena through relationships, feedback loops, interdependence, and emergent behavior rather than by isolating single causes. *§ 11, 12*

Teleology (soft endpoint) [Article] — The assumption that a process is heading toward a defined end state. The article notes Capra's predicted shift to a systems worldview carries a soft teleology of its own, and uses only his account of how systems behave. *§ 11*

Temporary stability [Capra; Article] — An equilibrium that holds for a period but changes the conditions of the system, eventually producing new tensions. The article's reinterpretation of what looked like the End of History. *§ 12*

Thymos [Plato; Fukuyama] — From Plato's *Republic*: the "spirited" part of the soul that demands recognition of one's worth, alongside reason and desire. Fukuyama divides it into isothymia and megalothymia. *§ 4, 5, 10*

Universal and homogeneous state [Kojève] — Kojève's name for the post-historical political order, in which every citizen is recognized as free and equal. He held that its principle was established at Jena in 1806. *§ 3*

2. THINKERS

Table 1. Thinkers and works cited in the article

Thinker	Key work	Role in the article	§
G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831)	*Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807); *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837)	History as development through contradiction; closing vs. open-ended readings	2, 12
Alexandre Kojève (1902–1968)	*Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (1947; Eng. trans. 1969)	Recognition as the engine of history; master–slave dialectic; End of History dated to Jena (1806)	3, 12
Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883)	The Last Man	4, 8
Plato (c. 428–348 BCE)	*Republic*	Source of thymos	4
Francis Fukuyama (b. 1952)	*The End of History and the Last Man* (1992); *Identity* (2018)	Liberal democracy as endpoint; isothymia and megalothymia; thymos applied to populism	4, 5
Fritjof Capra (b. 1939)	*The Turning Point* (1982)	Systems thinking; no single cause and no final state	5, 11, 12
Diana C. Mutz	"Status Threat, Not Economic Hardship…" *PNAS* (2018)	Empirical case for status threat over economic hardship	7
Stephen L. Morgan	"Status Threat, Material Interests…" *Socius* (2018)	Methodological rebuttal of Mutz	7
Theodor W. Adorno (1903–1969)	*Negative Dialectics* (1966)	Dialectic without final reconciliation	12
Terry Pinkard (b. 1947)	*Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (1994)	Open-ended reading of Hegel	12

3. ARTICLE SECTION KEY

1. Introduction
2. Hegel: History as Contradiction
3. Kojève: The Struggle for Recognition
4. Fukuyama and the Last Man
5. Fukuyama Saw Part of This Coming
6. MAGA as a Crisis of Recognition
7. Recognition, Not Only Material Interest
8. The Rebellion of the Last Man
9. The Contradiction Inside the Liberal Order
10. Why MAGA, and Not Only MAGA
11. Capra: No Single Cause
12. More Hegelian Than Kojève
13. Conclusion