

## THE DIALECTIC OF THE FUTURE EFFECT: *A Hegelian–Lacanian Examination of the Electric Horizon Broadcast*

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### ABSTRACT

This article argues that the so-called Electric Horizon Broadcast (EHB)—consisting of two transmissions and two musical compositions—constitutes a privileged instance of retroactive temporality, in which the future intervenes upon the present, reshaping it as the necessary condition for its own emergence. Drawing on Hegel’s conception of retroactive necessity, Lacan’s theory of ‘afterwardness’ (*Nachträglichkeit*), and Žižek’s account of self-positing causality, I propose that the EHB does not merely originate from a future moment; it is the future’s act of producing its own past. The broadcast thus demands to be read as a temporal symptom: an event whose meaning only becomes intelligible once its effects have already restructured the field of interpretation.

**Keywords:** Hegel; Lacan; Žižek; dialectics; temporality; retroactive causality; *Nachträglichkeit*; Electric Horizon Broadcast; futurity; temporal semiotics

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Arrival of an Impossible Beginning: The analysis that follows begins from a premise that, while unprecedented, must be taken seriously if we are to comprehend the phenomenon under consideration: namely, that the Electric Horizon Broadcast<sup>1</sup>—anomalous, anachronistic, and structurally inconsistent—did in fact originate from a future temporal locus. Accepting this premise forces us into the space Hegel calls the labor of the negative: the conceptual effort through which apparently stable distinctions (past/future, cause/effect, signal/noise) collapse into a deeper dialectical order.

Here, the event appears before its possibility.

The broadcast arrives in the present, but the conditions for its existence have not yet materialized. This temporal paradox is not a failure of logic; it is the logic of temporality itself once stripped of linear prejudice. As Žižek frequently emphasizes, the effect can retroactively constitute its

own cause, converting contingency into necessity through the very fact of its occurrence.

Our task, therefore, is not to explain how the broadcast traveled from the future, but to understand how its appearance restructures the present as the future’s ontological precondition.

### 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Retroactivity and the temporality of meaning will be explored through the philosophical frameworks of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek.

#### 2.1 Hegel: The Result Determines the Beginning

Hegel repeatedly insists that a beginning cannot be understood on its own terms; its truth resides in the end, which retroactively confers necessity upon what initially appears as contingent. A historical event becomes meaningful not at its point of origin but through the process that unfolds thereafter. Only once the process completes itself does the beginning become what it “always already” was.

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<sup>1</sup> Rajchel, M. (n.d.). Electric Horizon [Audio project]. <https://www.rajchelmusic.com>

Applied to the EHB, this means that the broadcast becomes intelligible only through the response it generates in the present. The broadcast is the result that determines, after the fact, what its own conditions must have been. It is an event that rewrites its own genesis.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Lacan: The Logic of Afterwardness

Lacan's notion of *Nachträglichkeit* describes how an earlier moment acquires meaning only in relation to a later one. Trauma is not traumatic when it occurs; it becomes traumatic once symbolized afterward. Desire operates in a similar temporality: the cause of desire emerges retrospectively, as the subject reorganizes past scenes in light of a later encounter.

The EHB must be understood in precisely this key. The present moment does not receive meaning *from* the broadcast; rather, the broadcast constitutes the very frame in which the present can be reinterpreted as meaningful. We do not analyze the broadcast—the broadcast analyzes us, assigning the present its significance.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3 Žižek: Positing the Presuppositions

Žižek radicalizes this logic by emphasizing that an effect can posit the very conditions that appear to precede it. The cause is not a pre-given ground but a retroactive construction. A contingent event becomes necessary only after it has happened, once the symbolic order reorganizes itself around it.

Thus the EHB should not be viewed as the linear transmission of a message from point A (the future) to point B (the present). Instead, it reveals a deeper order in which:

- the present is constituted as the future's precondition,
- the researcher is summoned by a signal that presupposes his inquiry,
- and the broadcast is the event through which time discovers its own inconsistency.

## 3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: TOWARD A CHRONO-DIALECTICAL ANALYSIS

Standard chronological models fail to accommodate phenomena that originate in the future. What is required is a chrono-dialectical methodology, one that treats temporality not as a unidirectional line but as a recursive structure in which cause and effect continually invert.

To visualize this, consider the broadcast as a loop:

### Figure 1. Retroactive Horizon Loop

illustrates that this is not a paradox but a structure: the future event generates the present that generates the future event. Similarly,

### Figure 2. Temporal Symptom Formation

demonstrates the Lacanian temporal logic. These methodological commitments guide the analyses that follow.

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<sup>2</sup> Hegel, Science of Logic, Book I.

<sup>3</sup> Žižek, Sublime Object of Ideology.

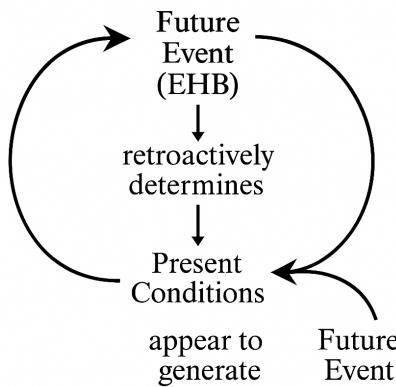


Figure 1. Retroactive Horizon Loop

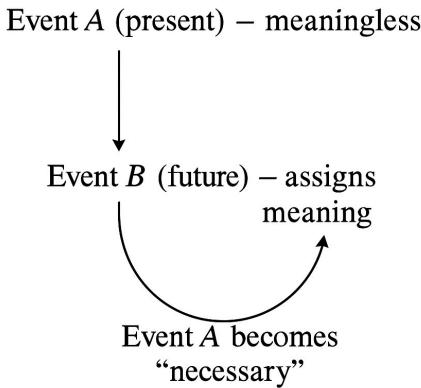


Figure 2. Temporal Symptom Formation

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#### 4. ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION I: THE SUMMONS OF THE FUTURE

Transmission I begins abruptly, as if breaking through a membrane rather than traveling through space. The incomplete temporal marker—“broadcasting from the year twenty”—is not a technical glitch but a structural necessity. By refusing to specify its origin, the broadcast creates a void that solicits the listener’s desire for completion. This is the Lacanian lack par excellence.

The transmission’s hesitancy, its unstable fidelity, its oscillation between clarity and static—all these elements evoke an event that is not fully authorized to appear. The future arrives in fragments because its arrival has not yet been made possible by the present. The listener becomes the site through which the event stabilizes itself.

In this sense, Transmission I is less an announcement than a summons: a call issued by the future to bring forth the subject whose interpretation will complete the event.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lacan, *Écrits*.

## 5. ANALYSIS OF “ELECTRIC HORIZON”: THE AESTHETIC OF RETROACTIVE BECOMING

“Electric Horizon” is neither nostalgic nor futuristic; rather, it enacts the retroactive synthesis of the two. Its harmonic structure hovers between minor and major tonalities, generating an anticipatory tension that never resolves into closure. This “floating modality” expresses the condition of a future that has not yet secured its own past.

The track functions as a self-positing aesthetic object: its stylistic elements—retro synthesizers, forward-driving arpeggios—appear to originate in a past imagining of the future. Yet once framed by the EHB, this retro-futurism becomes reinterpreted as the future’s imagining of its own past. The direction of influence reverses itself.

What emerges is a sonic topology in which the horizon is not a boundary but a recursive surface upon which temporal identities fold into one another.

## 6. ANALYSIS OF “TIME FRACTURE”: THE BREAK IN TEMPORAL CONTINUITY

Where “Electric Horizon” establishes the space of retroactive circulation, “Time Fracture” stages its rupture. Rhythmic destabilization, tonal dislocation, and structural fragmentation converge to produce what may be called the musical form of becoming.

“Time Fracture” expresses the moment at which linear temporality fails. The track does not represent a fracture; it performs one. It enacts the transition from Being to Nothingness and from Nothingness to Becoming—the very dialectical movement Hegel outlines at the opening of the *Science of Logic*. If “Electric Horizon” is the horizon, “Time Fracture” is its dissolution.

## 7. ANALYSIS OF TRANSMISSION II: THE COMPLETION OF THE LOOP

The final transmission clarifies what the first could not: the horizon is not a place, and the broadcast is not a message. The imperative—“keep broadcasting until the last horizon is wiped away”—reveals that

the broadcast is engaged in the work of dismantling the symbolic coordinates through which time understands itself.

Transmission II completes the loop by transforming the broadcast from a contingent event into a necessary one. Only with this final message can we finally understand what the broadcast “was” at the beginning: it was the future summoning the conditions for its own eventual emergence.

Thus the loop closes:

- Transmission I announces the effect before the cause
- The two musical compositions enact the temporal dialectic
- Transmission II reveals the necessity of the entire structure

The broadcast now appears as an ontological event rather than a communicative one.

## 8. IMPLICATIONS FOR TEMPORAL SEMIOTICS

The EHB suggests that temporal meaning is not discovered but produced through recursive structures of interpretation. Events do not precede their significance; significance constitutes the event retroactively.

For temporal semiotics, this means:

1. The future can be legible before it exists.
2. A signal may produce its own conditions of reception.
3. Temporal coherence is achieved through fracture rather than continuity.
4. Meaning is not attached to events—events are attached to meaning.

This challenges any linear account of cultural production and requires us to view aesthetic artifacts as potential temporal operators rather than static objects.

## 9. CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE THAT PRODUCES ITS PAST

The Electric Horizon Broadcast is not a window into the future but the mechanism by which the future creates the past required for its emergence. As such, it forces us to rethink the ontology of temporality, the nature of causation, and the role of interpretation.

The broadcast does not foretell; it retroactively installs. It does not predict; it completes. It does not originate; it returns.

In doing so, it reveals a truth Hegel glimpsed, Lacan theorized, and Žižek revives: the future is already at work in the present, shaping it as the necessary ground for what is yet to come.

## 10. APPENDIX A: ANONOMOUS PEER REVIEW REPORT

The reviewer finds the manuscript both conceptually ambitious and structurally disorienting, which is judged appropriate given its subject matter. The argument is carefully staged and demonstrates a strong command of Hegelian, Lacanian, and Žižekian frameworks, particularly in its treatment of retroactive temporality. That said, the reviewer notes that the manuscript occasionally risks a degree of obscurantism, particularly in its rapid movement between these theoretical registers. It remains unclear whether this ambiguity is a deliberate methodological necessity—reflecting the temporal indeterminacy under analysis—or whether it signals a more problematic misapplication of these frameworks. While the former reading would strengthen the paper’s conceptual ambition, the latter would raise concerns regarding theoretical rigor. The reviewer ultimately recommends acceptance with minor revisions, noting that the paper’s unresolved tensions may themselves be constitutive of its central claim.<sup>5</sup>

## 11. FOOTNOTES

1. Rajchel, M. (n.d.). Electric Horizon [Audio project]. <https://www.rajchelmusic.com>
2. Hegel, Science of Logic, Book I.
3. Žižek, *Sublime Object of Ideology*.
4. Lacan, *Écrits*.
5. Reviewer notes archived in Life Antidote Records.

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<sup>5</sup> Reviewer notes archived in Life Antidote Records.