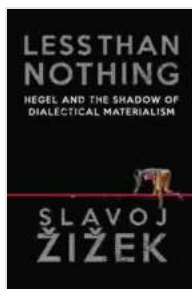


Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is widely regarded as one of the most influential philosophers of the Western world. His system of thought, known as Hegelianism, has had a profound impact on subsequent philosophical and political thought, including the development of Marxism.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were both deeply influenced by Hegel's work. They saw in Hegel's dialectics a powerful tool for understanding the historical development of human society. However, they also found Hegel's system to be overly idealistic and abstract. In their own work, Marx and Engels sought to develop a more concrete and materialist version of dialectics, which they called Dialectical Materialism.



Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism by Damion Hunter

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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File size : 3929 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 1049 pages



The Relationship Between Hegel and Dialectical Materialism

The relationship between Hegel and Dialectical Materialism is complex and multifaceted. On the one hand, Dialectical Materialism is indebted to Hegel for many of its key concepts, such as:

- The dialectic: The idea that all things are in a state of constant change and development, and that this change is driven by the conflict between opposing forces.
- Alienation: The idea that humans are estranged from their own nature and from each other under capitalism.
- Class struggle: The idea that history is driven by the conflict between different social classes.

On the other hand, Dialectical Materialism departs from Hegel's system in a number of important ways. First, Dialectical Materialism is a materialist philosophy, whereas Hegel's system is idealist. For Hegel, the fundamental reality is the Absolute Idea, while for Marx and Engels, the fundamental reality is matter. Second, Dialectical Materialism is a historical philosophy, whereas Hegel's system is ahistorical. For Hegel, history is merely the unfolding of the Absolute Idea, while for Marx and Engels, history is a real and concrete process that is shaped by human agency.

The Legacy of Hegel in Marxist Thought

The legacy of Hegel in Marxist thought is a complex and contested one. Some Marxists have argued that Dialectical Materialism is a faithful continuation of Hegel's system, while others have argued that it represents a fundamental break from Hegel's thought. Still others have argued that the relationship between Hegel and Dialectical Materialism is more complex and dialectical than either of these positions would suggest.

There is no doubt that Hegel's work had a profound impact on the development of Marxist thought. However, it is important to remember that Dialectical Materialism is not simply a copy of Hegel's system. It is a distinct and original philosophical system that has made its own unique contribution to the history of thought.

Implications for Contemporary Debates

The relationship between Hegel and Dialectical Materialism continues to be a source of debate and discussion in contemporary political theory and the study of Marxism. This debate has important implications for our understanding of the nature of reality, the historical process, and the possibility of social change.

Those who argue that Dialectical Materialism is a faithful continuation of Hegel's system tend to see the world as a rational and orderly place. They believe that history is moving towards a predetermined goal, and that human beings can play a role in shaping this process by understanding and acting in accordance with the laws of dialectics.

Those who argue that Dialectical Materialism represents a fundamental break from Hegel's thought tend to see the world as a more chaotic and unpredictable place. They believe that history is not moving towards a predetermined goal, and that human beings have more freedom to shape their own future. They also tend to be more critical of the idea that dialectics can be used to predict the future or to guide human action.

The debate between these two positions is likely to continue for many years to come. However, it is important to remember that both positions have something to offer our understanding of the world. By engaging with

the work of Hegel and Marx, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex forces that shape our lives and our world.

Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism is a complex and fascinating book that explores the relationship between one of the most influential philosophers of the Western world and the development of Marxist thought. By examining the key concepts of dialectics, alienation, and class struggle, the book argues that while Dialectical Materialism is indebted to Hegel, it ultimately represents a distinct and original philosophical system. The book concludes by considering the implications of this relationship for contemporary debates in political theory and the study of Marxism.



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