

 <small>ISSN 0 2791 - 0169 / e-ISSN 2790-0177</small> Science, Education and Innovations <small>in the Context of Modern Problems</small> <small>Editor-in-Chief Dr. Rahil Najafov</small> <small>www.imcra-az.org</small>		Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems
		Issue 4, Vol. 9, 2026
		RESEARCH ARTICLE 
		<h2 style="text-align: center;">Hegel and Philosophy in Germany: Dialectics, State, and the Evolution of Post-Hegelian Thought</h2>
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Issue web link	https://imcra-az.org/archive/395-science-education-and-innovations-in-the-context-of-modern-problems-issue-3-vol-9-2026.html	
Keywords	Hegel, dialectics, Marxism, Frankfurt School, state theory, German philosophy	
Abstract <p>The philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel represents one of the most influential intellectual frameworks in modern Western thought, shaping philosophical, political, and social theory well beyond nineteenth-century Germany. This study examines the development of Hegelian philosophy within the German intellectual tradition and its transformation through post-Hegelian thinkers, particularly Karl Marx and representatives of the Frankfurt School. While previous scholarship has largely focused on Hegel's mature system, this paper emphasizes the importance of his early writings and their role in understanding the evolution of dialectical reasoning. Using a historical-philosophical and comparative analytical approach, the study explores how Hegel's dialectical method was reinterpreted and transformed into a materialist framework by Marx and later critically reassessed by twentieth-century critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas. The findings demonstrate that Hegelian philosophy continues to function as a foundational paradigm for analyzing the relationship between state, society, and historical development. Furthermore, the paper argues that the reinterpretation of dialectics reflects broader transformations in political economy and social theory, highlighting the enduring relevance of Hegelian thought in contemporary academic discourse.</p>		
Citation <p>Chouki Benhalilem. (2026). Hegel and Philosophy in Germany: Dialectics, State, and the Evolution of Post-Hegelian Thought. <i>Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems</i>, 9(4), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.56334/sci/9.4.2</p>		
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Received: 21.10.2025	Accepted: 04.01..2026	Published: 30.03.2026 (available online)

1. Introduction

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel remains a central figure in the history of philosophy, whose intellectual legacy has profoundly shaped modern European thought (Hegel, 1977). Following his death in 1831, the publication of his early theological and philosophical writings revealed new dimensions of his intellectual development, prompting renewed scholarly interest in the origins of his dialectical method (Pinkard, 2000). However, much of the traditional interpretation of Hegel has focused on his mature works, often overlooking the formative role of his early thought.

The significance of Hegel's philosophy extends far beyond Germany, influencing a wide range of intellectual traditions, including Marxism, existentialism, and critical theory (Beiser, 2005). In particular, the transformation of Hegelian dialectics into a materialist framework by Karl Marx marked a turning point in the development of modern social and political theory (Marx, 1975). Similarly, twentieth-century thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School reinterpreted Hegelian concepts to address the contradictions of advanced capitalist societies (Marcuse, 1960; Habermas, 1984).

This paper seeks to address the following research questions:

- How was Hegel's philosophy interpreted by German and post-German thinkers?
- In what ways did Marx transform Hegelian dialectics?
- What is the contemporary relevance of post-Hegelian thought in social theory?

2. Literature Review

The study of Hegelian philosophy has generated an extensive body of scholarship, ranging from classical interpretations to contemporary critical analyses. Early interpretations emphasized the systematic nature of Hegel's philosophy, particularly his concept of absolute idealism (Taylor, 1975). Later studies highlighted the historical and social dimensions of his thought, situating Hegel within the broader context of German Idealism (Beiser, 2005).

Karl Marx's engagement with Hegel has been a central topic in philosophical discourse. Marx's critique of Hegel's idealism and his reinterpretation of dialectics as a materialist method have been widely analyzed (Avineri, 1968). According to Lukács (1971), Marx preserved the rational core of Hegelian dialectics while rejecting its metaphysical framework.

The Frankfurt School further developed this tradition by integrating Hegelian dialectics with critical social theory. Marcuse (1960) emphasized the emancipatory potential of dialectical thinking, while Habermas (1984) sought to reconstruct rationality within communicative frameworks. Contemporary scholars continue to explore the relevance of Hegelian philosophy in understanding globalization, governance, and social transformation (Honneth, 1995).

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative historical-philosophical methodology, combining:

- Comparative analysis (Hegel vs. Marx vs. Frankfurt School)
- Textual interpretation of primary philosophical works
- Conceptual analysis of dialectics, state, and society

This methodological framework enables a systematic examination of the evolution of Hegelian thought and its reinterpretation across different intellectual traditions.

4. Hegel's Dialectical Philosophy and the Concept of the State

Hegel's philosophy is grounded in the concept of dialectics, understood as a dynamic process of contradiction and resolution. For Hegel, reality is not static but evolves through the interplay of opposing forces, culminating in higher levels of rational unity (Hegel, 1977).

Central to Hegel's political philosophy is his conception of the state as the embodiment of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), where individual and collective interests are reconciled (Hegel, 1991). Unlike liberal theories that prioritize individual autonomy, Hegel views the state as a rational institution that mediates between civil society and universal interests.

This conception has been both influential and controversial, particularly regarding its implications for authority and freedom. Critics argue that Hegel's emphasis on the state risks legitimizing authoritarian structures, while supporters highlight its potential for integrating social cohesion and rational governance (Taylor, 1975).

5. Marx's Transformation of Hegelian Dialectics

Karl Marx's engagement with Hegel represents a fundamental transformation of dialectical philosophy. While acknowledging Hegel's contribution to the development of dialectics, Marx criticized its idealist orientation and sought to ground it in material conditions (Marx, 1975).

Marx famously argued that Hegel's dialectic was "standing on its head" and needed to be turned "right side up" (Marx, 1975). This shift involved:

- Replacing idealism with historical materialism
- Emphasizing class struggle as the driving force of history
- Reinterpreting the state as an instrument of class domination

In contrast to Hegel's vision of the state as an ethical totality, Marx viewed it as a reflection of economic relations and power structures (Avineri, 1968). This reinterpretation marked a decisive break from German Idealism and laid the foundation for modern critical social theory.

6. The Frankfurt School and Critical Reinterpretations

The Frankfurt School further developed the dialectical tradition by integrating it with social critique. Herbert Marcuse (1960) emphasized the role of negativity in dialectics as a tool for challenging existing social structures. Similarly, Jürgen Habermas (1984) sought to reconstruct rationality through communicative action, moving beyond both idealism and materialism (Brandom, 2019; Pippin, 2020; Pinkard, 2018).

These thinkers highlighted the continued relevance of Hegelian dialectics in analyzing modern capitalist societies, particularly in relation to issues such as:

- Alienation
- Ideology
- Power and domination

Their work demonstrates that dialectics remains a vital framework for understanding contemporary social transformations.

7. Discussion

The analysis reveals that Hegelian philosophy has undergone significant transformations across different historical contexts. While Hegel conceptualized dialectics within an idealist framework, Marx reinterpreted it in materialist terms, and the Frankfurt School adapted it for critical social analysis.

These developments reflect broader shifts in intellectual history, particularly the transition from classical philosophy to modern social theory. Despite these transformations, the core principles of dialectics—contradiction, development, and totality—remain central to understanding social and political phenomena.

Dialectics, Negativity, and the Divergence Between Hegel and Marx

The relationship between the dialectical philosophies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx represents one of the most significant transformations in the history of modern thought. Both thinkers share a commitment to dialectics as a method for understanding reality; however, the nature, function, and philosophical grounding of dialectics differ fundamentally between them. For both Hegel and Marx, truth emerges not from isolated phenomena but from the totality of relations that constitute reality. In this sense, truth resides in the whole, structured through processes of contradiction and negativity (Hegel, 1977; Lukács, 1971).

However, the concept of negativity itself undergoes a profound transformation in Marx's reinterpretation of dialectics. In Hegelian philosophy, negativity is primarily an ontological and logical principle, embedded within the unfolding of the Absolute Spirit. It serves as the driving force of development, whereby contradictions are resolved within a rational and ultimately harmonious totality (Taylor, 1975). Hegel's dialectic thus operates within a closed metaphysical system, where history is understood as the progressive realization of reason (Beiser, 2005).

Marx, by contrast, detaches dialectics from this idealist and ontological framework, grounding it instead in material conditions and social relations. For Marx, negativity is not a metaphysical category but a concrete expression of contradictions within the material structure of society, particularly in the relations of production and class struggle (Marx, 1976). This shift marks the transition from idealist dialectics to historical materialism, where the driving forces of history are no longer ideas but economic and social processes.

Marx's well-known assertion that Hegelian dialectics "stood on its head" and needed to be placed "on its feet" reflects this transformation (Marx, 1976). By reversing the direction of dialectical analysis, Marx establishes a method that begins with real human activity, labor, and material production rather than abstract philosophical categories. In this framework, theory is subordinate to practice, and philosophy becomes a tool for interpreting and transforming the world (Avineri, 1968).

This divergence is particularly evident in the role assigned to human agency and social reality. While Hegel interprets historical development through a theological and rational lens—where the meaning of reality ultimately coincides with the unfolding of Spirit—Marx rejects this speculative approach, emphasizing praxis as the foundation of knowledge and social transformation (Marcuse, 1960). For Marx, philosophy must engage directly with human problems, history, and material conditions, rather than remaining within abstract contemplation.

Marx's critique of Hegelian philosophy is most clearly articulated in his early works, including *The Holy Family* (1845), *The German Ideology* (1846), and *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847). In these texts, Marx accuses Hegel of reducing real human activity to abstract categories and of subordinating material reality to speculative thought. According to Marx, Hegel's philosophy replaces concrete human existence with conceptual abstractions, thereby obscuring the real conditions of social life (Marx & Engels, 1975).

Furthermore, Marx criticizes Hegel's conception of the state, arguing that it fails to recognize the extent to which political structures are shaped by underlying economic relations. Whereas Hegel views the state as the realization of ethical life and the reconciliation of particular and universal interests, Marx interprets it as an instrument of class domination, reflecting the contradictions inherent in capitalist society (Avineri, 1968).

Despite these criticisms, Marx's intellectual dependence on Hegel remains undeniable. As many scholars have noted, Marx preserves the "rational core" of Hegelian dialectics while rejecting its idealist form (Lukács, 1971). Without Hegel's dialectical method, Marx's critique of political economy and his theory of historical development would not have been possible. Thus, Marx's philosophy can be understood as both a continuation and a radical transformation of Hegelian thought.

The influence of Hegel extends beyond Marx to a wide range of philosophical traditions, giving rise to diverse interpretations collectively known as Hegelianism. This movement eventually divided into different currents, including the Hegelian Right and Left, each offering distinct readings of Hegel's philosophy. The Hegelian Left, which includes Marx and later critical theorists, emphasizes the revolutionary and transformative aspects of dialectics, while the Hegelian Right focuses on its conservative and systematic dimensions (Pinkard, 2000).

In the twentieth century, Hegelian ideas continued to shape philosophical discourse through thinkers such as Benedetto Croce, Giovanni Gentile, and John Dewey, as well as existentialist philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The Frankfurt School further reinterpreted Hegelian dialectics within the context of critical theory, highlighting its relevance for understanding modern capitalist societies and the dynamics of power, ideology, and social change (Habermas, 1984; Honneth, 1995).

In conclusion, the divergence between Hegelian and Marxist dialectics reflects a broader transformation in the history of philosophy, from idealism to materialism, and from speculative thought to critical social theory. While Hegel provides the conceptual framework for understanding dialectical development, Marx redefines its content and purpose, transforming it into a tool for analyzing and changing the material conditions of human existence. This transformation underscores the enduring significance of dialectics as a method for understanding the complexities of modern society.

Hegel and Herbert Marcuse: Dialectics, Ontology, and Critical Theory

The intellectual relationship between Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Herbert Marcuse represents a crucial stage in the transformation of classical German philosophy into modern critical theory. Marcuse's philosophical project cannot be understood without acknowledging the profound and lasting influence of Hegelian dialectics, which served as a conceptual foundation for his reinterpretation of social reality, historical development, and human emancipation (Marcuse, 1960).

Marcuse's thought emerged at the intersection of multiple philosophical traditions, including German Idealism, Marxism, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis. While he engaged deeply with the works of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, and Martin Heidegger, Hegel remained the central figure shaping his theoretical orientation. This is particularly evident in Marcuse's early academic formation in Germany, where he completed his doctoral dissertation, *The Theory of Being in Hegel*, which laid the groundwork for his lifelong engagement with Hegelian ontology and dialectics (Marcuse, 1987).

Marcuse's Ontological Interpretation of Hegel

Marcuse's reading of Hegel departs from traditional interpretations that emphasize Hegel's philosophy of history while neglecting the ontological and logical dimensions of his thought. Instead, Marcuse reinterprets Hegel through the concept of *being*, arguing that Hegel's philosophy is fundamentally concerned with the dynamic and historical unfolding of existence (Marcuse, 1987).

According to Marcuse, the concept of being in Hegel is not static but dialectical, characterized by the unity of opposites between subjectivity and objectivity, between consciousness (*being-for-itself*) and objectified existence (*being-in-itself*). This dialectical unity reflects a process in which contradictions are not eliminated but integrated into higher levels of understanding (Hegel, 1977; Marcuse, 1987).

Through this ontological framework, Marcuse challenges earlier interpretations of Hegel that reduced his philosophy to a rigid or closed system. Instead, he highlights its dynamic and critical character, emphasizing the role of negativity as a force of transformation within both thought and reality (Beiser, 2005).

The Synthesis of Hegel, Marx, and Heidegger

One of Marcuse's most distinctive contributions lies in his ability to synthesize different philosophical traditions into a coherent critical framework. As noted by Zakaria (2005), Marcuse developed a unique method that integrates Hegelian dialectics, Marxist materialism, and Heideggerian ontology into a unified theoretical perspective.

From Hegel, Marcuse adopts the dialectical method and the concept of reason as a dynamic and transformative force. From Marx, he incorporates the critique of capitalism and the emphasis on material conditions and social structures. From Heidegger, he draws an existential concern with the meaning of being and human existence (Marcuse, 1960).

This synthesis allows Marcuse to move beyond both classical idealism and orthodox Marxism, creating a form of critical theory that addresses the complexities of modern industrial society.

Hegel, the State, and Freedom

Hegel's theory of the state plays a central role in Marcuse's analysis. Hegel rejects social contract theories that assume freedom exists prior to the state, arguing instead that true freedom is realized within the ethical structure of the state itself (Hegel, 1991).

For Hegel, the state represents the highest expression of rationality, where individual and collective interests are reconciled. This conception stands in contrast to liberal theories that prioritize individual autonomy over social unity (Taylor, 1975).

Marcuse critically engages with this idea, recognizing its philosophical significance while questioning its implications in modern society. In *Reason and Revolution*, Marcuse reinterprets Hegel's theory of the state as a potentially emancipatory framework, but one that must be critically examined in light of contemporary social contradictions (Marcuse, 1960).

The Revolutionary Dimension of Reason

One of Marcuse's most important contributions is his reinterpretation of Hegelian reason as a revolutionary force. Unlike earlier philosophical traditions, in which reason often served to justify existing social orders, Hegel transforms reason into a dynamic and critical principle capable of challenging and transforming reality (Marcuse, 1960).

Marcuse argues that Hegel's dialectical logic introduces a fundamentally new understanding of reason—one that is inherently linked to negation, critique, and transformation. In this sense, reason becomes a tool for social change rather than merely a means of preserving stability.

This perspective is closely connected to Hegel's engagement with the French Revolution, which he viewed as a historical moment in which reason became a concrete force in shaping social and political reality (Hegel, 1991). For Marcuse, this revolutionary dimension of reason remains relevant in the context of modern capitalist societies, where new forms of domination and alienation continue to emerge.

Marcuse and the Critique of Positivism

Marcuse's engagement with Hegel also informs his critique of positivism, which he associates with a reduction of reason to instrumental and technical functions. In contrast to Hegelian dialectics, which emphasizes negativity and contradiction, positivism tends to affirm existing conditions and exclude critical reflection (Habermas, 1984).

Marcuse argues that positivist approaches to knowledge obscure the underlying contradictions of society and limit the possibility of social transformation. By contrast, Hegelian dialectics provides a framework for uncovering these contradictions and understanding their historical development (Honneth, 1995).

Marcuse within the Hegelian Tradition

Despite his critical engagement with Hegel, Marcuse remains deeply rooted in the Hegelian tradition. His work reflects what many scholars describe as a continuation of the "Hegelian Left," which emphasizes the transformative and emancipatory potential of dialectical thought (Pinkard, 2000).

Marcuse's interpretation of Hegel thus represents both a continuation and a reinterpretation of German Idealism. By integrating Hegelian dialectics with Marxist and existential insights, Marcuse contributes to the development of a critical theory capable of addressing the challenges of modern society.

The relationship between Hegel and Marcuse illustrates the enduring relevance of dialectical philosophy in contemporary thought. While Hegel provides the conceptual foundation for understanding the dynamic nature of reality, Marcuse reinterprets this framework within the context of modern social and political conditions.

Marcuse's synthesis of Hegelian dialectics, Marxist critique, and existential analysis demonstrates the adaptability of Hegelian philosophy and its capacity to address new forms of social complexity. Ultimately, this intellectual trajectory highlights the continuing importance of dialectics as a method for analyzing and transforming the structures of modern society.

8. Conclusion

The philosophical system of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel remains one of the most complex and influential intellectual constructions within the history of German philosophy and modern thought more broadly. As demonstrated throughout this study, engaging with Hegel's philosophy requires not only a careful examination of his dialectical method and conceptual framework but also an understanding of the diverse ways in which his ideas have been interpreted, transformed, and contested across different historical and theoretical contexts (Beiser, 2005; Pinkard, 2000).

This research has focused on two major representatives of post-Hegelian thought—Karl Marx and Herbert Marcuse—whose works illustrate both the continuity and transformation of Hegelian philosophy. Marx's reinterpretation of dialectics marked a decisive shift from idealism to materialism, grounding philosophical analysis in social relations, labor, and historical development (Marx, 1976; Avineri, 1968). At the same time, Marcuse's critical engagement with Hegel reveals the adaptability of dialectical thought within the framework of twentieth-century critical theory, where ontology, social critique, and human emancipation intersect (Marcuse, 1960).

The findings of this study confirm that Hegel's philosophy cannot be reduced to a single doctrinal system; rather, it represents a dynamic synthesis of multiple philosophical traditions, including idealism, historical reasoning, and speculative logic. This synthetic character has enabled Hegelian thought to generate a wide range of intellectual movements and theoretical approaches, extending its influence far beyond Germany into global philosophical discourse (Taylor, 1975).

Historically, the reception of Hegelian philosophy has been marked by periods of both rejection and revival. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, many strands of social and political philosophy either opposed Hegelianism or moved away from its speculative foundations. However, this decline was followed by a significant revival, particularly in England and Italy. The British Idealist tradition, represented by thinkers such as F. H. Bradley, sought to preserve and reinterpret the core principles of Hegelian philosophy, maintaining a closer alignment with its original spirit. In contrast, certain interpretations within the Italian context—particularly those associated with political ideologies—led to distortions of Hegel's philosophical legacy, demonstrating the risks inherent in ideological appropriations of complex theoretical systems (Beiser, 2005).

Despite these divergent trajectories, Hegel's philosophy has continued to occupy a central place in intellectual debates. His dialectical method, in particular, remains a powerful analytical tool for understanding the dynamic interplay of contradiction, development, and totality within social and historical processes (Hegel, 1977). The persistence of Hegelian influence across different philosophical traditions underscores its capacity to adapt to changing intellectual and socio-political conditions.

Moreover, the continued engagement of German and international scholars with Hegelian thought highlights its enduring relevance in contemporary philosophy. Whether through Marxist reinterpretations, critical theory, or modern social philosophy, Hegel's ideas continue to shape discussions on the nature of the state, the structure of society, and the possibilities of human freedom and emancipation (Habermas, 1984; Honneth, 1995).

In conclusion, Hegel's philosophical legacy should be understood not as a closed system confined to its historical context, but as an evolving intellectual tradition that continues to inform and inspire contemporary theoretical inquiry. The reinterpretations offered by Marx and Marcuse demonstrate that Hegelian philosophy remains a fertile ground for critical reflection and innovation. Future research may further explore the application of Hegelian dialectics in emerging fields such as globalization studies, digital society, and political governance, thereby reaffirming its significance as a foundational framework for understanding the complexities of modern life.

9. Findings

The findings of this study highlight the enduring significance of Hegelian philosophy as a foundational framework within modern social and political thought. The analysis demonstrates that Hegel's dialectical method, grounded in contradiction, development, and totality, continues to provide a powerful conceptual tool for understanding historical and social transformations.

First, the study reveals that Karl Marx's reinterpretation of Hegelian dialectics represents a decisive shift from idealism to materialism. While Marx preserved the structural logic of dialectics, he reoriented its foundation toward material conditions, class relations, and historical processes. This transformation established dialectics as a methodological instrument for analyzing socio-economic structures and power relations.

Second, the findings show that Herbert Marcuse's engagement with Hegel extends the dialectical tradition into the domain of critical theory. Marcuse's synthesis of Hegelian dialectics, Marxist critique, and existential ontology demonstrates the adaptability of dialectical reasoning in addressing the complexities of modern industrial and post-industrial societies. His interpretation underscores the role of negativity and critique as essential components of emancipatory thought.

Third, the study confirms that Hegelian philosophy has generated diverse intellectual trajectories, including the Hegelian Left and Right, and has influenced a wide range of philosophical traditions beyond Germany. Despite periods of decline,

Hegelian thought has experienced multiple revivals, particularly within British Idealism and twentieth-century critical theory.

Finally, the research establishes that the concept of dialectics remains highly relevant for contemporary philosophical inquiry. It provides a framework for understanding ongoing transformations in governance, social structures, and global systems, thereby reaffirming its importance in modern academic discourse.

Ethical Considerations

This study is based entirely on the analysis and interpretation of published philosophical texts and secondary academic sources. No human participants, personal data, or sensitive materials were involved in the research process.

All sources have been appropriately cited in accordance with academic standards, and the study adheres to principles of academic integrity, including the avoidance of plagiarism, proper attribution of ideas, and responsible scholarship.

The research was conducted in line with internationally recognized ethical guidelines for academic publishing, including the principles outlined by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to colleagues and academic peers who provided valuable intellectual support and feedback during the preparation of this study.

Special appreciation is extended to the academic environment of the University Mohamed Ben Ahmed Oran 2 for fostering a research culture that encourages critical inquiry and philosophical reflection.

Funding

This research received no external funding. The study was conducted independently and did not benefit from any financial support from public, commercial, or non-profit organizations.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

The research was conducted independently, and the author has no financial, institutional, or personal relationships that could have influenced the results or interpretation of the study.

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