whole must be limited. Indeed, Russon’s argument presupposes the possibility of an adequate understanding of absolute spirit.

Whether or not Russon’s argument is valid, this understanding of the necessity of trespass in Hegel is very influential. It is found in Sartre’s development of his paradox of love: one cannot but know another as object, yet the ultimate object of love is a free subject. The consequence of this reasoning is that lovers never really know each other as they are in themselves, only each one’s construction of the other as an object. The reader of Russon cannot help suspecting that love is still less than it often is, if, to extrapolate from Russon’s actual remarks, the solution to this problem is the pragmatic acceptance of this uncomfortable state of affairs. Such acceptance is, for Russon, simply a requirement for the subject to enter into the world, to meet the independent being of others and to ensure the subject’s own independent being.

The solution in Hegel himself is perhaps very different from this acceptance, as the need for forgiveness and the understanding of the self’s identity with others expressed in Hegel’s Phenomenology differ considerably from those entailed in Russon’s conception of Hegel’s concept of forgiveness. With Hegel, the need to forgive stems from the recognition that the subject has to act in the world but in the absence of the complete knowledge needed to understand this action’s ethical import. It is important to distinguish Hegel’s conception of the subject’s identification with others as conscious subjects suffering contingent limitations on their otherwise infinite potential for goodness and knowledge from Russon’s identification with the other as a nature essentially determined to act in certain ways.

One might have to admit that the spirit in Hegel is only realized by degrees in a world that is very much like our own, or the one we commonly experience, and that the wholly rational life would be one in which the need to forever interpret language and the nature of the subject of consciousness is overcome in the complete and immediate comprehension of the other as a spontaneous and fluid intuition of being. Of course, as Russon remarks, the unreflective, even abstractly reflective, approaches one takes to others can amount to trespasses. One suspects the solution is not to be found, however, in an acceptance and institutionalization of this mutual trespass, as sometimes, at least, the approaches people take to one another are guided by a quality of being, a quality of being spontaneous, sufficient for each to understand the appropriateness of everything the other says or does. Although Russon’s interpretation of Hegel is useful in relating spirit in Hegel to the concerns expressed in linguistic, empiricist discourses of the twentieth century, one can ask whether it does not also import into Hegel the very difficulties the linguistic turn encounters in attempting to account for intentionality and the self-knowledge of spirit, through linguistic philosophy’s rejection of the intuitive immediacy of the Cartesian idea of idea.

The Cartesian idea of idea is the unhappy consciousness, according to Russon, split off from its body (48) as ‘a way of comportment’ (59). Aristotle’s remarks in De Anima III, 5 about the independence of the mind from sensory organs seem to support the Cartesian viewpoint, but Russon argues that the ‘body of absolute knowing — absolute logos — is precisely passive mind, pathétique nous’ (132), which he suggests is a necessary element of Aristotle’s idea of the self-consciousness of thought. In other words, external relations constitute a necessary aspect of Hegel’s spirit. But Russon also wants to insist that in absolute knowing, ‘there are no “external relations” precisely because all those things that could naively be said to be “outside” the self now are recognized to be already internal to the self’ (104), and the compatibility of these two perspectives is unclear, given Russon’s reading of Hegel. This is where one might have used the idea of logically necessary self-reflective ideas to make Hegel really respond to the difficulties raised in linguistic philosophy concerning the Cartesian idea of idea, as the objectivity of the idea of idea might be said to rest in the necessity with which consciousness strives to conceive of the most complete and internally coherent idea of itself. In a sense, external relations are internalized through being accepted, but the problem for Russon is that the form of self-reflection in which the strife of finite spirits is accepted is an internal relation, and Hegel’s spirit is evidently capable of far more creative responses to the situation of being in community.

James Thomas
Ottawa, Ontario


Hiding behind the anodyne title of this book is a work of large scope and considerable interest for the Hegelian reader. Its main purpose is to vindicate a dialectical interpretation of Marxism in the context of recent analytical Marxism. The book falls into two parts. The first contains a detailed account of the dialectical analysis implicit in Marx’s work, and of its background in the philosophies of Kant and Hegel. The second shows how this account of Marx’s approach can be used to resolve some of the major issues in Marxist philosophy and to illuminate some of the central topics in Marxist social, political and economic thought.

The detailed analysis of the philosophy of dialectic in the first half of the book is perhaps its most valuable part from a philosophical point of view. Hunt starts with Kant. Here he is going over some well trodden ground; in the process, however, he provides a useful summary of Kant’s thought and of the various modern interpretations of it. Kant uses the term ‘dialectic’ to describe the contradictions and errors in which reason gets entangled when it attempts to operate beyond the limits of possible experience. Hegel’s dialectical philosophy is directly a response to this Kantian view. Such contradictions, Hegel maintains, should not be seen as mere errors. Rather, as Hunt explains, they ‘result from abstracting or isolating aspects of reality ... which necessarily belong together’ (p. 7). A dialectical approach is needed to resolve such contradictions. This enables us to see a contradiction of this sort ‘as the expression of the mutability of a finite thing, that is, of the necessary tendency of a finite thing to become other than itself because its nature is at odds with itself’ (p. 7). In this way, the contradictions of reason can lead to a deeper and truer grasp of the real nature of things.

Though Marx wrote little on dialectic or logic as such, his philosophy is clearly a product of this tradition. Despite an excessive deference to analytical Marxism, Hunt sensibly ignores its attempts to interpret Marxism without reference to Hegel. Instead he starts by assuming that Marx ‘holds that there are contradictions in reality’ (p. 8). Even so, how precisely Marx
appropriates and how he transforms Hegelian dialectic remain topics of fierce dispute. Hunt gives a useful survey of the debate. However, his own position on the issue of whether there are contradictions in reality remains somewhat murky. He prefers to explain dialectic in terms of the concept of the 'unity of opposites', but precisely how this relates to the notion of contradiction is left unclear.

According to Hunt, Marx agrees with Hegel on the main features of the dialectical approach, which Hunt enumerates as follows.

1. To understand something adequately is to understand it, not only as it is, but in a process of becoming something other than what it is.
2. To understand something adequately is to see it as a 'unity of opposites'.
3. A thing necessarily becomes something other than it is by virtue of its being a 'unity of opposites' (p. 48).

Hunt's subsequent account tends to lose sight of the dynamic and historical aspect of dialectical thought referred to in the first of these points, which is of such importance to Hegel and Marx. He focuses predominantly on the structural and logical aspect, expressed in the notion of the 'unity of opposites'. Hunt associates this notion particularly with the idea of an organic whole. A detailed philosophical discussion of this notion forms the core of Hunt's account, and is among the most useful features of the book.

Again Kant serves as the starting point. Hunt begins with a detailed presentation of Kant's account of organic systems in the Critique of Judgement. Kant specifies three criteria which distinguish organic or 'self-organised' from purely mechanical systems. In the first place, 'the parts, both as to their existence and form, are only possible by their relation to the whole'; second, the parts are reciprocally cause and effect of each other, so that 'every part is thought as owing its existence to the agency of all the remaining parts, and also as existing for the sake of the others and of the whole'; and third, each 'part must be an organ producing the other parts — each, consequently, reciprocally producing the others'. Such a system functions as if it is 'self-organised' and working towards an end.

Although Kant argues that we are led to view living things, including human beings and even creation as a whole, in this way, he refuses to attribute objective validity to such judgements of purposiveness. To do so, he maintains, inevitably leads our thought into conflict with the scientific view formed by the understanding that reality is governed by causal, mechanical laws. The notion of organic organisation seems to transcend and negate these.

According to Hunt, both Hegel and Marx accept the view that organic wholes involve principles of organisation different from those of mechanical systems, and adopt the analysis of the difference spelled out by Kant. Hegel's account of organic systems, Hunt maintains, precisely follows Kant's. Hegel explicitly discusses the notion of organic systems and distinguishes them from purely mechanical and chemical processes in the third section of the Logic, in his account of teleology. Curiously, Hunt does not focus particularly on this. Rather he tries to interpret Hegel's account of organic systems as pervasive in the latter parts of the Logic. This is connected with his attempt to portray organism as the central notion of dialectic. In any case, he usefully explains Hegel's approach using Hegel's highly idealised account of relations between the sexes in love and marriage.

Marx takes over the Hegelian account of organic unity and develops it in a materialist fashion. According to Hunt the notion of organic unity is the key to Marx's dialectic and fundamental to his thought. On the basis of Marx's lengthy analysis of the relationship between production, consumption and exchange in the 1858 'Introduction' to the Grundrisse, Hunt shows that Marx treats society as an organic entity in metabolism with nature. Marx's detailed spelling out of this organic conception, as Hunt shows, revolves around the idea that production, consumption and exchange form a unity of opposites. This notion, Hunt maintains, is central to Marx's dialectic.

The 'Introduction' to the Grundrisse is notorious for being one of the most Hegelian passages in the whole of Marx's mature output. Marx here brings out in an unusually explicit fashion the connection between his account of the economic structure of society and the categories of Hegel's Logic. This passage was not written for publication and its status has been questioned. For example, Martin Nicolaus (translator of the standard Penguin edition of the Grundrisse), suggests that it is intended by Marx as a parody of Hegel. Hunt rejects this view. Rightly, I think, he insists upon the key importance of the 'Introduction' for an understanding of Marx's philosophy and its relation to Hegel's. He shows how it spells out Hegelian ideas that are present throughout Marx's work.

Hunt describes in detail how Marx's account of the relations of production and consumption, which Marx characterises as forming an 'organic unity', directly connects with and parallels the three features of organic systems described by Kant and echoed in Hegel. As Hunt shows, Marx demonstrates how 1) there is an immediate identity and opposition between production and consumption; 2) they depend on and mediate each other; and 3) each produces the other.

Marx's dialectic differs from Hegel's ontologically, in that Marx is a materialist while Hegel is an idealist. For Hegel, 'organic life forms are expressive of purposive agency or rationality, whereas the materialist view is that they are simply material systems' (p. 48). According to Hunt, moreover, this difference is also evident in their different treatments of the concept of the unity of opposites. Hegel, he argues, gives an idealist account of the unity of a living organism, whereas Marx implies that organic unity can be understood as 'a particular form of causal interaction ... as a reciprocal interaction of its elements without appealing to the notion of a design which the [organism] ... strives to realize' (p. 73).

**Marxist applications**

The second half of the book is an extended attempt to vindicate this interpretation by demonstrating its fruitfulness in other areas of Marx's work. Using the account of Marx's methods that he has outlined, Hunt applies the resulting approach to some of the central theoretical issues of Marx's social, economic and political thought. He shows how these can be understood as examples of the unity of opposites along the lines analyzed, and how interpreting them in this fashion can resolve some of the major disputes in contemporary Marxism.
Much ground is covered in the second part of the book; the main areas of Marx's social, economic and political thought are all dealt with. There are discussions of the concepts of the forces and relations of production, base and superstructure, the relation of value and price and the theory of value, and of the relation between reformist and revolutionary politics. All these topics are analyzed as exemplifications of the ‘unity of opposites’. By approaching these issues in this way, Hunt maintains, many of the traditional disputes and arguments of Marxist theory can be resolved. For these involve treating these opposites in the non-dialectical fashion characteristic of the analytical understanding by abstracting one from the other and treating each as isolated and separate.

Hunt's main protagonists in the latter part of the book are analytical Marxists such as Cohen, Elster and Roemer. But Hunt's discussion of Marxist theory ranges wider to take in much of the recent discussion of Marxist social theory. Apart from anything else, these chapters provide a helpful survey of recent work in Marxism; but that is not Hunt's primary purpose. Hunt is concerned to demonstrate, concretely and in practice, the real utility of the theory of the 'unity of opposites'. Particularly useful is Hunt's detailed discussion of Marx's concept of value and its relation to price, and his critical account of the concepts of forces and relations of production.

Given the wide range of issues covered, it is hardly surprising that at times the treatment of issues is somewhat mechanical, and that Hunt sometimes seems more concerned to demonstrate that the formula of the 'unity of opposites' applies than to illuminate the subject under discussion. But that should not be allowed to detract from the impressive scope of Hunt's argument. Indeed, it is the demonstration of the scope and power of his approach that best establishes its claim to provide the key to the interpretation of Marx's method.

Organism and mechanism

The achievements of this book are considerable. Its account of Marx's dialectic and of its roots in Hegelian and Kantian philosophy is detailed, clear and useful — particularly for its discussion of the idea of an organic whole. Hunt regards this as central to an understanding of dialectic in general and Marx's materialist version of this philosophy in particular.

However, it is also necessary to register some reservations about the account that Hunt gives. Hunt tends to associate the philosophy of dialectic too closely with the notion of organic unity and with the idea of development involved in this. He portrays Marx's social theory as based on this notion. According to Hunt, Marx's dialectic is not a universal logic, it applies only to organic entities. There is no dialectic involved in purely causal processes. Whether or not this is what Marx really thought has been much disputed, but this debate receives scant attention from Hunt. Sometimes it is said that Marxism is primarily concerned with social and historical questions and, in that context, logical and metaphysical questions about its philosophy of nature are of no concern. Hunt, however, is dealing with issues of metaphysics and logic and so he cannot evade the issue in this way.

Moreover, it is central to the differences between the classical German philosophers. For Kant, the natural world as comprehended by the natural sciences is a causal world. Regarded

purely as natural phenomena, living organisms, including human beings, have this character too. Reason leads us inevitably to see the world as if it is organised purposively, but we can never know that this is its objective character. As we have seen, Hegel rejects this Kantian 'as if': there really is design and purpose in the world, and a proper understanding of dialectic enables us to grasp this.

Where does Marx stand on this issue? To be sure, as Hunt well shows, he adopts the notion of organic organisation which is involved in the Hegelian dialectical approach, and thereby accepts the idea that organic organisation is an objective feature of (some) things themselves. But according to Hunt Marx rejects Hegel's idealism, which Hunt identifies with Hegel's teleological approach. In doing so, Hunt claims, Marx treats organisms as purely causal systems (p. 73). But then how does the concept of organic organisation fit into Marx's picture? If it is not, as Hunt holds, merely a way in which we subjectively see the world, how is it located in the causal scheme of nature?

According to Hunt, both Hegel and Marx hold that organic systems are governed by the objective processes of conflict at work within them.

According to Hegel, organic systems develop because the working of each element of the system tends to frustrate as well as further the realization of the system as a whole, so that eventually and inevitably its development escapes the bounds of self-propagation and something new comes into being. For Hegel, the mark of finitude is the conflict between the existence and concept of any finite being, where its 'concept' is its reason or purpose for being (pp. 77-8).

Thus for Hegel the conflict which produces change is between an ideal element and material reality. Hegel's theory of change portrays it in quasi-Aristotelian terms as the realisation of a potential. Change 'takes the form of perfecting the form of expression of the spiritual principle of an institution' (p. 92). For Marx, by contrast, change is produced causally as 'the result of an incoherence within the material conditions of the reproduction of the system' (p. 80).

It seems to me that the way in which Hunt opposes (Hegelian) 'teleological idealism' to (Marxist) 'causal materialism' is in danger of reproducing a Kantian duality which makes the issue of the relation of organism to mechanism insoluble. Hegel and Marx seek to avoid such a dualistic division. What both suggest, rather, is that organic organisation and purpose develop out of and are emergent from causal nature. There is some indication that Hunt is thinking along these lines too, but his views in this area are not very fully formed or articulated and there is a need for more work here.

Sean Sayers
University of Kent at Canterbury

See also S. Sayers, 'Engels and Materialism', in C.J. Arthur (ed.), Engels Today: a Centenary Appreciation (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 153-72. It should be noted that Hegel denies any actual evolutionary process among organic species. Marx had no clear conception of evolution either, at least at this period, which was still prior to the publication of Darwin's work.

---

Conference Report

"Hegel and His Legacy"

Northwestern University, November 14 & 15, 1998

Those in attendance at the Hegel conference hosted by Northwestern University last November must have been impressed by the unusual diversity of views represented and philosophical substance of the debates inspired by it. Under the unifying theme "Hegel and His Legacy" the conference gathered scholars from different generations of Hegel studies, and, even more impressively, from different schools of philosophical thought. The questions that emerged from it were not only academic or historical in orientation ("What did Hegel really mean by x?" or "What would Hegel have said about y?") but pragmatic ("How can Hegelian ideas help us solve z?"). If the Northwestern conference is any indication, the legacy of Hegel is richer than we might have expected; for just as the left-Hegelian wing of Hegel studies has begun to recede in the wake of Marxism's post-1989 decline, a new pragmatic approach to Hegel has emerged. The Hegel legacy is not quite so contested as it was in Berlin in the 1830s — in a world more secular and liberal there is not so much at stake as there was for our predecessors, the Old and Young Hegelians — yet it is far from clear that orthodoxy of any kind has attained hegemony. What follows is a report of the conference proceedings; it is not intended to serve as a critical review, but, so far as may be possible, as a disinterested account.

The conference was organized around six papers, each of which was adjoined by commentary. We will look at each of the papers presented, and glance briefly at their respective commentaries. For those interested in more details, the conference proceedings will be published in a forthcoming volume of the European Journal of Philosophy.

Jürgen Habermas (Northwestern) opened the conference with a paper entitled "From Kant to Hegel and Back Again: The Move Toward Detranscendentalization". Habermas began by observing that the most interesting developments of post-Hegelian philosophy are effectively described in terms of a detranscendentalizing of the knowing subject. By placing Kant's transcendental subject into context and situating reason in social space and historical time, Hegel inaugurated this fundamental shift in philosophizing. However, he did not in the final analysis accept the intersubjective and historical forms of consciousness emphasized in his earlier writings. Instead, as Habermas sees it, Hegel reverted back to Kantian transcendentalism, postulating a kind of subjectivity writ large, a higher order subject that knows better: absolute spirit. Although some scholars have attempted to deflate the "absolute" character of Hegel's absolute spirit by emphasizing its inherent intersubjectivity, Habermas contends that this reading is deficient and un-Hegelian. For Habermas the question remains: why this reversion? Why did Hegel squander the gains won from such a profound criticism of mentalism and its corresponding dualism by positing a philosophy of absolute spirit?

Habermas finds an answer to this difficulty in Hegel's critical appraisal of the French Revolution. Hegel's immanent criticism of the moral worldview typified by Kantian ethics led him to develop a system of legal and political institutions that provide the necessary framework