

# **A Daoist Critique of Dialectics and Why It Matters**

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## **Abstract**

Georg W. F. Hegel's theory of dialectics is one of the most influential modern attempts at a complete account of reality. Kant and other scholars had resurrected dialectics during the Industrial Revolution as the contradictory either/or thinking accorded with their sense of a fragmented and conflicted world. Hegel then developed a dynamic version of dialectics that he offered as a complete theory. Marx, following scientific trends, applied that dynamic approach to a material explanation of reality. These two dialectic theories, however, beginning with their assumption of contradiction as fundamental, also rested on controversial first principles and thus were stuck in the same kind of paradox that Hegel had originally lamented. The Eastern wisdom tradition of Daoism, in contrast to dialectics, encompasses not just contradiction in a disharmonious dialectic with confirmation, but also complementarity in a harmonious relationship with opposition. This complementarity allows for a seamless path to a transcendent whole and eventually to an ultimate reality, which in Daoism is called "the Dao." Though Daoism's particular metaphysical details have been overlooked even in China for much of the past two millennia, they have been practiced in Traditional Chinese Medicine and are otherwise central to much of Chinese culture. Daoism is the realization of the dialectical quest for a complete account of reality, and as such warrants contemporary scholars' attention.

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# A Daoist Critique of Dialectics and Why It Matters

## I. INTRODUCTION

Georg W. F. Hegel's theory of dialectics is one of the most influential modern attempts at a complete account of reality. Before Hegel, Plato had presented Socrates using a dialectical method in his dialogues to unfold the truth with his partners in conversation. Kant, however, refers to dialectics as a misuse of reason, as reflected in the famous antinomies in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Hegel inherits the word "dialectics" from Kant but then changes its meaning. In Hegel's sense, dialectics refers to the process of our cognition, through which a person may access an absolute knowledge. In short, Hegel treats dialectics as an account of an ideal reality. Finally, Marx infuses Hegel's dialectical method with scientific elements and applies it to a material rather than an ideal reality. Hegel and Marx's respective dialectical theories, however, failed to provide a coherent explanation. Though dialectics aimed to resolve paradox, it too was mired in paradox. In light of this failure, some scholars have given up on articulating a comprehensive account of reality, aiming instead to create a workable "model" of reality.<sup>1</sup>

Hegel and Marx, though familiar with some aspects of Eastern philosophy,<sup>2</sup> failed to see that a complete explanation of reality had been articulated 2,500 years ago in the Chinese wisdom tradition of Daoism. Daoism reveals how complementarity rather than contradiction is the key to obtaining the transcendent Whole as well as the ultimate reality of Emptiness—what in Daoism is simply called "the Dao." Contradiction exists only for this harmonious complementarity, as well as the Whole and the Dao, to be experienced. Through its three seamless cosmological and metaphysical layers, Daoism also shows how a person is both connected to the ultimate reality as Consciousness—another name for the Dao—and can

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, 166 (Ziermann ed., Walker trans. 2017). At one point well into his lecture series, Adorno reflected, "And dialectic is a trick—if you can forgive me this looser mode of expression—or perhaps at least an attempt to square the circle which this problem presents to you—just as dialectic as a whole is essentially the attempt to resolve the paradox of identity in non-identity not just by coming to a standstill here but by unfolding and advancing through these elements. I would therefore say that the authentic task of philosophical thought is to furnish certain models rather than trying to embrace everything, rather than yielding to the chimerical demand not to leave anything out..."

<sup>2</sup> Hegel had perused some important Daoist texts, but was generally dismissive of what he had found in them. He reflects on important passages from Chapters 1 and 42 of the *Dao De Jing*, as well as the Yin and Yang lines, triagrams, and hexagrams of the *I Ching*. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. I, 125 (E. S. Haldane trans. 1892-1896).

come to reflect on his- or herself for the experience of that larger Consciousness. Daoism further elucidates that this process necessarily involves both an intuitive knowledge as well as a logical framework. In a disharmonious state these two aspects may devolve into an erratic impulsiveness and a contradictory dialectics where the two sides antagonize and deplete each other. Finally, by integrating the individual self into a comprehensive cosmology and metaphysics, Daoism demonstrates why existence is meaningful in and of itself.

The first part of this paper outlines a brief history of dialectics, including how it developed in the work of Kant, Hegel, and Marx, and then shows how these dialectical approaches fell short as either suitable, in the case of Kant, or complete, in the case of Hegel and Marx, accounts of reality. The second part of the paper next demonstrates how Daoism provides a complete explanation of reality, including how complementarity allows for a return to the Whole and the ultimate Emptiness, as well as the dialectical contradiction necessary for that transcendent process to be meaningful. The third and final part of the paper provides a Daoist critique of Kant, Hegel, and Marx's respective dialectics, and the Western thought traditions upon which those theories are based. This part of the paper clarifies why dialectics emerged over the course of the Industrial Era, and how dialectics plays only a limited role in a much more nuanced and meaningful reality. Through comparing Daoism and dialectics, this last section underscores why the Daoist cosmology and metaphysics represent the only possible explanation of reality and are necessary for any meaningful progress going forward.

## **II. DIALECTICS AND HOW IT FELL SHORT**

Dialectics has long been considered a method of reasoning and ultimately discovering the truth of reality. Dialectics can be traced to the ancient Greek philosophers, and is perhaps best exemplified in Plato's dialogues. For Plato, dialectics is simply a cognitive method of reaching the truth, with "truth" as the highest value. This original dialectic relies mainly on intellectual intuition with limited supporting physical evidence; in other words, the process is idealistic.<sup>3</sup> The Greek approach reflects a general Western emphasis on either/or or neither-

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<sup>3</sup> See Plato, *The Republic*, 227, 233 (C.D.C. Reeve trans., Hackett Publishing Company, 2004.) In his dialogues, Socrates asks his audience or students questions, helping them to reflect on their pre-existing standpoints. After the dialogue, although an answer has often not been found, Socrates' audience or students may no longer hold their previous views. In this way, dialectics helps people to think more comprehensively and clearly. It is a kind of midwifery.

nor thinking, and has influenced subsequent generations that also sought to reduce the world to knowable parts and processes. In philosophical theory, dialectics arose again most recently with the Industrial Revolution.

The early part of the Industrial Revolution (1760 to between 1820 and 1840) was marked by an emphasis on human autonomy and a pride in human capacities. This positivistic trend, however, was accompanied by a sense of scarcity and conflict. During this era, human beings began to see themselves as capable of subjugating the natural world, but also in conflict with it.<sup>4</sup> With this faith in the power of human beings as well as this perceived threat, the study of reasoning or dialectical thinking, necessarily either/or or neither/nor, also saw a resurgence. Leading philosophers began to reconsider whether dialectics could lead to a complete explanation of reality, and if not, what its ultimate utility might be. They looked to the ancient Aristotelian model and altered it for their own purposes.

One of the first 18<sup>th</sup> century philosophers to engage the question of logical thought was David Hume (1711-1776), who focused on the power of reason.<sup>5</sup> Hume concluded that no form of reason could ever justify an inductive inference. In the wake of Hume and still during the early part of the Industrial Revolution, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) also examined “the ground of knowledge,” as he called it.<sup>6</sup> Kant accepted the Aristotelian understanding of logic as something that could be isolated from intuition, and considered the three laws of logic as an inevitable part of human reasoning.<sup>7</sup> Similar to Hume, however, Kant concluded that traditional logic, as distinguished from his own transcendental logic, merely dealt with the

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<sup>4</sup> For a description of this paradoxical “advancement,” see, e.g., Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy* 99, 115, and 121 (New York: Simon & Schuster (1933)). Durant describes this “awakening” as beginning with Sir Francis Bacon, who stressed that humankind must learn the laws of nature in order to be her master, and then continuing with figures like Leonardo, Copernicus, and Galileo. Durant concludes, “As knowledge grew, fear decreased; men thought less of worshipping the unknown, and more of overcoming it.” Id. Historians of science talk about the Scientific Revolution as a shift in perspective or thinking, including the sense that humankind could decipher and use the natural world. See, e.g., John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science* 1-3 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2008)).

<sup>5</sup> David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* 111-115 (London: A. Miller (1777) [1748]).

<sup>6</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* 110 (Preface B) (Guyer, ed., Wood, trans. 1999); and Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* 10 (Hatfield trans. and ed. 2004).

<sup>7</sup> In his preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant discusses the Aristotelian roots of logic and then summarizes the problems he sees with logic. See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *supra* note 6, at 106-07.

form of knowledge, and didn't relate to the objects themselves. Thus, traditional logic could not produce any real knowledge.

Kant demonstrated this deficiency in traditional logic with his explanation of the antinomies in *Critique of Pure Reason*. He argued that there are four antimonies, each of which has two equally valid propositions. At the same time, each proposition is sound and valid from the perspective of traditional logic. But, according to the traditional logic, the two propositions relating to the same issue could not both be true. Kant sought to solve or cancel this inherent paradox within reason. In his mind, moreover, this paradox conformed to common logical rules. Thus, from his view, formal logic could not guarantee that our knowledge could have a tenable basis.

In his third antinomy, for example, Kant argued that in nature (or experience), people are not free, because through their understanding, everything is determined by causality. Kant limited reason to empirical matters and claimed that knowledge of the noumena, or that which exists apart from understanding, could never be achieved because doing so always leads to contradictory judgments. Only in the field of noumena, or things in themselves, could such freedom exist. Because freedom is beyond experience, however, it doesn't belong to knowledge and could not be obtained through understanding. In short, reason could postulate, but not attain, knowledge of freedom.

Kant emphasized a tendency for reason to go beyond its bounds and step into the field of noumena. As Adorno, who lectured and wrote extensively on dialectics, summarizes, Kant concluded that "as soon as we try and extend the fundamental concepts of our reason, what are called our categories, beyond the possibilities of our experience, beyond the possibilities of sensible intuition, or in other words, when we try and formulate infinite judgments, then we inevitably run the danger of positing mutually contradictory judgments each of which seems to be equally convincing."<sup>8</sup> With this conclusion, Kant introduced the notion of an inevitable contradictoriness into the modern knowledge of reality.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 58, discussing Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and in particular the first antinomy.

<sup>9</sup> Kant thought that the ancient Greeks also must have used the word "dialectic" to signify the logic of false appearance or semblance. As he explained, to the Ancients, "it was nothing but the logic of illusion. It was a sophistic art of giving to one's ignorance, indeed even to one's intentional tricks, the outward appearance of truth, by imitating the thorough, accurate method which logic always requires, and by using its topic as a cloak for every empty assertion." Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *supra* note 6, at 61.

To illustrate such contradiction, Kant provided the traditional synthetic triadic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis,<sup>10</sup> with the three stages operating in an endless sequence. Kant pointed out that this infinite triadic, however, can have no relation to any real or ultimate truth. Kant's focus on logic and his logical method stands in contrast to his conclusions about logic, and is a paradox which Kant does not explain. At the same time, Kant's reliance on a linear triadic reveals an essentially reductionist approach to thinking about reality. This triadic offers no way to reach a transcendent whole or ultimate reality. Kant simply posited that this triadic necessarily existed as it did.

To reach truth, Kant instead thought that people must access a different realm, the transcendental realm. Kant distinguished between the experiential realm, where our sensation and understanding functions, and the transcendental realm, where he claimed pure knowledge was possible. In the transcendental realm, people would be free to engage in pure reason. Kant, however, did not explain how the experiential and transcendental realms are related, or how a person might reach the transcendental realm. He also did not address how a person might possess a useful reason while experiencing a kind of freedom that was not available in the experiential realm. He again simply posited that this *a priori* ultimate reality must exist.

In any event, Kant concluded that reason and dialectics are not a part of pure knowledge and cannot fully explain experience. He thought that the movement of contradiction was thus a malfunctioning on the part of consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Kant recognized that this sense of logic did not significantly contribute to an understanding of reality,<sup>12</sup> a point which he thought his ancient Greek predecessors had also understood. But he claimed it was better to recognize this problem than to ignore it. Kant's position might be interpreted as suggesting the futility of the pursuit of an ultimate truth.<sup>13</sup> At most, one can only posit such a truth exists.

Though Kant had demonstrated the problems with neither/nor logic, Hegel (1770-1831), following the increasingly progressive spirit of the end of the Industrial Revolution, thought that a complete logical explanation of reality still was possible.<sup>14</sup> Hegel first denied the Kantian distinction between sensibility and understanding, between thought and experience, which he asserted Kant had naively and drastically insisted upon.<sup>15</sup> Hegel rightly pointed out

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<sup>10</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, *supra* note 6, at 394.

<sup>11</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, *supra* note 6, at 394.

<sup>12</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, *supra* note 6, at 394.

<sup>13</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, *supra* note 6, at 110.

<sup>14</sup> Adorno, An Introduction to Dialectics, *supra* note 1, at 59.

<sup>15</sup> Adorno, An Introduction to Dialectics, *supra* note 1, at 58-59. As Adorno explains, Hegel argued that we cannot know how we can arrive at something like sensibility at all, that there

that under Kant's view it is impossible to know how to arrive at sensibility at all, that there is nothing sensory which is not itself mediated by understanding, and vice versa. Therefore, the whole rigid separation between sensibility and understanding—upon which the Kantian doctrine of the antinomies was based and which could in a sense protect us from becoming entangled in contradictions—could not be sustained.<sup>16</sup> Instead, Hegel argued, the two sides of a logical proposition should be seen as linked in a dynamic operation.

Hegel thus took Kant's idea of contradiction and argued that the contradictions were engaged in a never-ending movement that eventually would lead to an absolute knowledge. As Adorno explains, whereas Kant thought that the movement of contradiction was merely a malfunctioning on the part of consciousness, Hegel argued that it was "one of the accomplishments necessarily prompted by the essence of spirit, and that is precisely why thought essentially moves and develops in and through contradictions."<sup>17</sup> Dialectics, in Hegel's sense, meant a development of our cognition from primitive stages to absolute knowledge. This thinking accorded with the linear sense of development of the times.

Based on these conclusions, Hegel argued the three laws of logic were applicable only at an intermediate stage of thinking. Hegel thought the major deficiency of such logic in handling the macroscopic world was in dealing with change. Ordinary logic, because of its very nature and presuppositions, must end up with a static view of the world and a staticization of change. Hegel argued that the traditional synthetic triadic reduced to a lifeless schema could not be regarded as scientific. For example, Hegel argued against the Law of Identity as merely a law of abstract understanding.<sup>18</sup> Hegel instead sought a way to raise the triadic to an absolute significance, where *science* would emerge. In this sense, Hegel thought of his dialectics as a possible key to a transcendent, all-encompassing explanation of reality, a metaphysically complete science.<sup>19</sup>

To describe this advanced logical dynamic, Hegel replaced Kant's triadic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis with a new contradiction-centered triadic: abstract-negative-concrete,

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is nothing sensuous which is not itself mediated by the understanding, and vice versa, and therefore that the separation between sensibility and understanding—upon which the Kantian doctrine of the antinomies is based and which can in a sense protect one from becoming entangled in contradictions—cannot ultimately be sustained at all.

<sup>16</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 58-59.

<sup>17</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 58-59.

<sup>18</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* 409-411 (Miller trans. 1969). Hegel of course also criticized the Law of the Excluded Middle and the Law of Non-Contradiction. *Id.* at 438-43.

<sup>19</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* 29 (Miller trans. 1977).

with the abstract being negated by the concrete and vice versa.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to the synthetic method, his triadic stressed the dynamic contradiction between the two sides. At the same time, Hegel held that the two sides, albeit different, were not separate, and through the process of negation, may even become one another. In a circular way, Hegel found the identity between differences (“A” and “B” are different and thus identifiable) and the differences in identity (“A” and “B” are identifiable and thus different) to finally arrive at the identity of both “difference” and “identity.”<sup>21</sup> To account for qualitative change, Hegel argued that gradual quantitative changes led to crisis turning points where one force overcame its opposing force.

This triadic, as Hegel noted, represented a negation of the negation, a constant contradiction amounting to an infinite regression. Hegel argued that negation is both negative and positive. It is negative because during the process of cognition, the latter cognition negates or refuses the former cognition, leading to two possible outcomes.<sup>22</sup> The first outcome is negation results in skepticism or desperation, because nothing can be believed. There are no shared criteria for knowledge or cognition. Personal beliefs, values, and goals stand as supreme criteria. Everything is judged individually. Hegel claimed this zealous passion could not lead to truth or absolute knowledge, because it makes cognition irrelevant to the outside world.

The second outcome is cognition develops itself through this negation.<sup>23</sup> The endless negation does not mean that nothing can be believed, but that something should never be considered determinate. For instance, in the proposition, S is P, when it is negated, producing S is not P, what is known is simply S is not P, not S is nothing. Thus, it is possible that S be Q or T. These possibilities remain to be explored. In this sense, the progress or development of knowledge is based on the negation of former cognition. Thus, negation is both negative and positive. If the process of cognition is further taken as a whole, it is full of negation, and thus full of something negative and positive. Hegel argued that the contradiction ultimately cumulates in a non-contradiction, or what he posited as the whole. As Adorno summarizes, Hegel held that “thought is driven into repeated contradiction precisely through its own rigor

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<sup>20</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at 29.

<sup>21</sup> Tom Rockmore, *German Idealism as Constructivism* (2016).

<sup>22</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at sec. 78.

<sup>23</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at sec. 79.

and possesses it logical unity—its non-contradictory character—only as a fully developed totality, not in the single steps which it undertakes.”<sup>24</sup>

Hegel, however, did not demonstrate that negation necessarily leads to positive result. According to the above analysis, after negation, the two outcomes are both possible. Hegel merely asserted negation could necessarily lead to progress or development, and casually implied that an outcome of skepticism or desperation is not possible. In short, he did not show the necessity of his more optimistic conclusion.

Aiming for a complete explanation of reality, Hegel asserted, “The true is the whole.”<sup>25</sup> The whole is the actualization of concepts. Concepts, in Hegel’s theory, start from the “absolute nothing,” which means they are merely words, empty and void, unactualized in the everyday world. With respect to the concept of freedom, for example, Hegel considered a definition or explanation of it important, but insufficient for grasping the concept, because freedom had not been experienced in daily life and observed in the real world. In this sense, everything in Hegel’s theory has two inseparable sides: in itself and for itself. The former involves understanding a definition or conception of something, and the latter is the realization or presentation of it in ordinary life. From this view, something true could be obtained only through its actualization; the actualization of the true, moreover, is also the process of our cognition.

Hegel, however, posited rather than justified that contradiction, the whole, and the true, each in relation to the others, contributed to a full explanation of reality. He did not clarify whether these concepts were the same or different, or some combination of the same and different. This problem is related to Hegel’s *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and in his *Logic* the same problem appears. For example, in his introduction to *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel used one word to designate various things. In section 73, he used “the absolute” to designate the full explanation of reality, and in section 75, he further defined “the absolute” as the true or truth. In addition, in section 79, Hegel indicated that the truth means the whole process of our cognition, which is also the process of realization of our knowledge. Thus, the full explanation of reality is also the whole and real. At last, the process of cognition, according to Hegel in section 80, is full of contradictions and negations, which means further knowledge is necessarily contrary to current knowledge and would negate what is considered true. Thus, the true or the absolute is also the contradiction.

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<sup>24</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 27-28.

<sup>25</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at 11.

Though Hegel did not explain the connection between contradiction and the ultimate reality of the true, Hegel in his *Science of Logic* began with pure being, as the epitome of abstraction, tantamount to nothingness.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, pure nothing, which is the same as pure being, is the first step in Hegel's logic.<sup>27</sup> Hegel did not specify how pure nothing and pure being could be the same (are they without an identity and thus like the whole or the true, or are they merely two aspects of the same thing). He also did not explain how this nothing, as perhaps the abstract, and this being, as the concrete, come to be different, though not separate. Furthermore, Hegel did not clarify the paradox about how being (or pure being) could be the epitome of abstraction. Both pure being and the epitome of abstraction have no content, and yet they are dependent on each other. Only when there is pure being can nothing be determined and vice versa. In other words, only when pure nothing is associated with something else, for example, thinghood itself, could pure nothing be appreciated.<sup>28</sup> He again posited these relationships, but did not show how this relationship could be actualized or transferred into reality in the everyday world. In short, Hegel posited a heavy metaphysical burden on daily experience and confused, but did not clarify, the understanding of experience.

Although Hegel posited being as the epitome of abstraction, he also sought to join thought with being—the common mind-body dilemma. He thereby sought to explain how a thing can come to reflect on itself (self-consciousness) and, in this way, also know something about ultimate reality. Similarly, Hegel sought to derive what is not peculiar to consciousness from consciousness itself and then to determine the form of contingency as a moment of necessity.<sup>29</sup> As just noted, in his *Science of Logic* Hegel started with being, as the epitome of abstraction that is tantamount to nothingness. As Kainz notes, from this paradox, Hegel derives “more and more sophisticated results of the interaction and conjunction of being and thought until, at the end of this logic, this interaction and conjunction itself is explicitly

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<sup>26</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *supra* note 18, at 69-70, 82. With respect to “abstraction,” Hegel seems to be talking about an abstraction that is an ultimate reality as in the “Abstract,” but he may also be talking about an abstraction at the level of experience as in the “abstract.” In either case, Hegel does not explain the relationship between “being” and these possibilities. Part IV of this article addresses the relationship between an ultimate reality that might be characterized as the Abstract and at the level of form what might be called the “abstract” as opposed to the “concrete.”

<sup>27</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *supra* note 18, at 82-83.

<sup>28</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 110-111. Adorno criticizes Hegel's doctrine as less an ontological quality of being and more the deficiency of any philosophical thought which simply terminates in being. *Id.* at 111-112.

<sup>29</sup> See generally, Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19.

recognized and designed by the technical term, the ‘Idea.’”<sup>30</sup> The term *idea*, like the true, seems to be another way of pointing to ultimate reality. For a full explanation of reality, Hegel again needed his system of dialectics to explain both the thought process and the thinghood (being), which does the thinking. He, however, again simply posited this complex relationship and that it culminated in the idea, rather than explaining these various relationships.

In contrast to Kant, who did not think people could be free at the level of experience because sensation was always conditioned by experience, Hegel asserted that freedom could be realized in the realm of experience. Hegel clarified this through his famous dialectic between masters and slaves. His argument proceeds as follows. First, masters and slaves are opposed to each other and the slaves are conquered or even killed by the masters. Second, the conquered slaves work for the masters, and the masters enjoy the services of the slaves. Finally, the masters are in fact dependent on the slaves, and the slaves through work become aware of their own abilities, desires, self-respect, and so on. With this process unfolding, the slaves further develop their self-consciousness and claim recognition from their masters. At this point, the masters and the slaves recognize each other’s necessity and they are both free in society.<sup>31</sup> It may not be apparent, however, how either the masters or the slaves are truly free. When the masters are beholden to the slaves for their freedom, the masters are not free. In other words, when the masters need the slaves for their freedom, the slaves have a certain amount of power over the masters.

Hegel also saw a pure freedom in the Absolute Mind in art, religion, and philosophy where it is subject to itself alone.<sup>32</sup> This pure freedom, in contrast with Kant’s sense of a transcendental freedom, is simply the consummation of contradictoriness—in other words, where the separate identities of subject and object merge. Hegel, however, did not explain why such a contradictory freedom at the level of experience was true freedom. He also did not specify the relationship between the freedom through dialectics of masters and slaves, and freedom in art, religion and philosophy.

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<sup>30</sup> See Howard P. Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System: A Contemporary Reconstruction of the Hegelian Problematic* 86-87 (1988), *citing* Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *supra* note 18, and G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Nature* (Miller trans. 1970).

<sup>31</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at 111-119. In the fourth chapter on “The Truth of Self-Certainty,” Hegel describes how when the master is dependent on the slave to obtain his freedom, in fact the slave enjoys a kind of freedom because through his work, the slave objectifies his subjective will. In fact, the master could not enjoy his freedom without the slave. *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> See generally, G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Mind* (Wallace and Miller trans. 1971).

As with his sense of freedom, Hegel also argued that some degree of truth exists in time. Though Hegel asserts that ultimate reality is a timeless, pure knowledge, he indicates that everything else, which exists in time and is based on dialectics, is also capable of achieving some semblance of truth.<sup>33</sup> Like Kant, Hegel on the one hand adopted the traditional conception of truth as something essentially timeless, as that which remains absolutely self-identical. In Hegel's terms, it is absolute knowledge or real truth. Thus, Hegel regards truth as *a priori*. Unlike Kant and on the other hand, Hegel believed that contradictory knowledge, which necessarily existed in space and time, was necessary to know or even discuss reality, and consequently some sense of the truth could also be identified *a posteriori*.<sup>34</sup> As Adorno explains, under Hegel, "no thought can actually be thought which frees itself from time, from its own temporal core."<sup>35</sup> Hegel seems to have concluded that in this temporal dimension, though some knowledge of the truth can be obtained, the full and absolute truth can never be attained. Hegel, however, fails to clarify the relationship between an *a posteriori* sense of truth and the *a priori* truth itself.<sup>36</sup> Hegel also does not explain how a contradictory state, which is still logical, is related to this timeless knowledge of the whole, or the true, and how

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<sup>33</sup> Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *supra* note 18, at 69-70, 82. In this respect, Hegel has adopted Kant's understanding that logic is necessary to know anything about reality (to even discuss reality), as well as Kant's neglect of intuition as an aspect of a more nuanced knowledge. As such, Hegel seems to be explaining how ultimate (or "the ideal") reality differs from practical experience. Hegel, however, does not explain how this immediacy, or the True, is related to the reason of the parts, if at all. For an analysis of this problem, see Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 111-112.

<sup>34</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *supra* note 19, at 12-13.

<sup>35</sup> Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 34. Earlier on in his lectures, Adorno had remarked, "Now the truly decisive challenge of dialectic lies not in the thought that truth must be sought within time or in opposition to time but, rather, in the idea that truth itself possesses a temporal core, or—as we might even say—that time exists in truth." *Id.* at 13-14. In his fourth lecture, he then concludes that this point means, "no thought can actually be thought which frees itself from time, from its own temporal core." *Id.* at 34.

<sup>36</sup> In reflecting on Hegel's sense of truth having a temporal core, Adorno says: "I have already suggested to you that this concept too has simply fallen from the heavens and, above all, is one that it is implicit in Kant himself....I have just pointed out that Kant still upholds the traditional conception of truth in the sense of the eternally immutable *a priori*. But, insofar as he also makes time into a constitutive condition of knowing as such, that traditional approach is already losing its meaning in Kant's philosophy, so that time itself — one could almost say — has now become the organon of truth. Yet, Kant did not recognize the full consequences of this, and it fell to his successors, and especially to Hegel, to draw out these consequences. And this then also affects the traditional conception of truth as the concordance or adequate correspondence of thought with being, an idea which must be changed and modified in the light of such philosophy." Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 14.

such a connection would not also be contradictory. He merely posits this connection between contradictoriness and immediate knowledge as possible.<sup>37</sup>

Hegel's dialectics was about the character of contradiction, while Kant was concerned with reducing the particular to its class or type, and Hegel sought to reach the truth precisely through the movement of these contradictions. In other words, Hegel wanted to offer a scientific (i.e., absolute) theory of reality with contradiction as its operating principle. Hegel asserted that contradiction would avoid all first principles, which might ensnarl his theory in reductionist paradoxical traps,<sup>38</sup> because contradictoriness as an absolute rule of experience answered itself—contradiction was only ever contradicted by contradiction, and so there was no paradox. In essence, Hegel argued that cognition is a process, during which contradictions arise and are resolved, and then arise and are resolved again, with resolution as the necessarily higher aspect. Though Hegel asserted that his theory resolved paradox, the reality of his theory was not so simple. As suggested above, Hegel's theory still rested on multiple first principles, and these first principles in turn were paradoxical.<sup>39</sup>

First and foremost, Hegel relied on the principle of contradiction, and his claim that contradiction was the fundamental property of experience is a paradoxical contradiction in itself.<sup>40</sup> Though Hegel sought to avoid paradox by positing contradiction as a fundamental

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<sup>37</sup> Hegel refers to pure knowledge as a simple immediacy. See, e.g., Hegel, *Science of Logic*, *supra* note 18, at 28-30.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of Hegel's intention to avoid first principles, see Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System*, *supra* note 30, at 98-99.

<sup>39</sup> In his book, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System*, Kainz discusses how Hegel's dialectical philosophy entailed numerous paradoxes, leading Kainz to consider the possibility that paradox is an important and even indispensable part of constructive thinking. See Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System*, *supra* note 30, at 111-13. At one point discussing Hegel's own descriptions of his philosophical system, Kainz writes: "the appearance of complexity is due to a string of paradoxes which can be isolated, highlighted, and listed as follows: Hegel's analytic method is simultaneously synthetic; the foundation of his system is also its result; the beginning, which should be (by definition) unmediated, is mediated; the indeterminacy of this beginning is, as it were, a determinacy over against that which results from it; the infinite backwards movement involved in the process of mediation is also an infinite forward movement; the goal of the mediating process is to return to its beginning; the determinations produced through mediation bring about a restoration of the original indetermination; the Concept, in becoming other to itself, preserves itself; the universal, in becoming particularized, remains universal; self-relinquishment is self-return; extension is intension; the greatest simplicity is the greatest comprehensiveness; and the highest apex of the entire system of Science is pure personality, which reestablishes contact with simple immediacy." *Id.* at 76.

<sup>40</sup> See Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 82-86 (discussing the problem and inevitable paradox of basing a theory on "contradiction").

property, he turned contradiction into a first principle, which could not be truly contradicted. Contradiction cannot be contradicted by itself but only by confirmation. Any other conclusion would deny confirmation as a true property, without explaining why it was acceptable to do so. Based on his own logic of contradiction, Hegel also could be said to have made a logical error at the level of experience. A condition of contradictoriness is the non-contradictory, or, to again phrase it in a positive form, confirmation. Finally, Hegel could not refer to experience to justify this theory of contradiction as a complete explanation without also violating his theory, because it must also be possible to contradict any conclusion at the level of experience. In other words, confirmation is a fundamental property of experience.

Second, Hegel relied on the principle of a “dynamic” contradictoriness.<sup>41</sup> That reality could be based on dynamic contradiction was also a contradiction of Hegel’s theory. A condition of the dynamic is obviously the static. In other words, the dynamic is contradicted by the static, and even in Hegel’s theory these two aspects should exist simultaneously, with neither having a preferred place over the other. Furthermore, Hegel did not explain how his dynamic contradictoriness could have originated. Because Hegel aims for a complete explanation of reality, his theoretical project was perhaps much greater than Kant’s, and he should have explained how the dynamic process could have arisen. He did not do so. In Hegel’s theory, the process of dynamic contradiction exists in a vacuum, and therefore also constitutes a first principle, which is paradoxical. Finally, Hegel does not explain how humankind could become capable of recognizing the dynamic, whereas previously it had been stuck in a static framework. He simply posits this ability.

Third, Hegel relied on the principle that negation is also a progression. Because his theory was centered around contradictoriness, Hegel had to offer that the negation of the negation (a seemingly infinite regression) was ultimately a progression, at least at the level of the whole. Hegel, however, did not explain how such a regression could also be a progression. In slightly different terms, he failed to show how such a negation could also be an affirmation, even if only at a transcendent level. As already discussed, through negation Hegel arrived at two possible situations and claimed without demonstration that negation could lead to progress or development of cognition.

Fourth, Hegel relied on the principle of quantitative change leading to qualitative change. Hegel could not explain how quantitative change (at crisis points) could lead to qualitative

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<sup>41</sup> For the “intrinsically” or “internally” dynamic character of Hegel’s contradictoriness, *see* Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 84. 110.

change, and simply posited such a transformation. Again, Hegel seems to have needed this transformation to explain qualitative differences among phenomena and thus simply posited a connection between the two sides. In this sense, Hegel may have been following other thinkers of his time like Thomas Malthus, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer, who were focused on the quantitative and regarded it as primary. The relationship between the quantitative and qualitative, however, doesn't even apply Hegel's sense of contradictoriness, and in this way is also inconsistent with his own theory. There is no reason under Hegel's theory for one side to turn into the other, and to do so only at crisis points. Should the qualitative also change into the quantitative? This paradox remained unresolved.

Fifth, Hegel relied on the principle of contradictoriness consummating in the whole. In addition to asserting that contradiction resulted in a progression, Hegel of course posited that contradiction was consummated in a non-contradictory whole. Yet, Hegel did not explain how contradiction could become non-contradiction, even if only at a transcendent level. It is also possible for contradiction to result in something only equal to or less than the whole, or to amount to perhaps nothing at all. This vital point in Hegel's theory was thus also paradoxical. Again, Hegel seemed to need this consummation for a full explanation of reality, but without a proper explanation of the relationship between contradiction and non-contradiction, Hegel is only positing such a connection.

Sixth, Hegel relied on the principle of "The true is the whole." As already discussed, Hegel in his *Science of Logic* merely posited the whole as true. This conclusion, however, is also inconsistent with his own theory's central point. According to Hegel's theory of dynamic contradiction, the whole cannot be without the contradictory parts, and vice versa. In addition, following his theory of contradiction, the whole cannot be true without it also being false. Hegel did not explain this paradox. In some respects, this kind of paradox again is inevitable in Hegel's theory, because Hegel presented contradiction as the fundamental property of experience. Hegel did and did not violate his own theory. If Hegel's dialectics is correct, its main idea could still be applied to his own ideas, as in the true.

Seventh, Hegel relied on the principle of a whole that is really both independent of the mind and dependent on the mind. To the extent that the whole is independent of the mind, Hegel did not clarify how the whole could be free of the mind, which is where Hegel located the whole. In essence, Hegel did not explain how the whole could also be a nothingness. As such, the whole itself is paradoxical. In some respects, this problem of a whole independent of the mind is like Hegel's failure to connect the ultimate truth at the transcendental level with the sense of truth at the level of experience, as will be discussed further below. At the

same time, to the extent that the whole is dependent on the mind, Hegel did not explain how dialectical thinking can complement the transcendent whole, and how the transcendent whole can complement the ultimate nothingness. Finally, Hegel's theory necessitating both a mind-independent whole and a mind-dependent whole is paradoxical. Hegel did not explain how these two possibilities may co-exist or otherwise be related to each other.

Eighth, Hegel, like Aristotle and Descartes before him as well as many others after him, left unresolved the principle of a thought and being (mind-body) dichotomy. Hegel did not explain how thought and being were related to each other at the level of experience, and how both thought and being were related to the ultimate reality, whether this reality is called the idea or the true. Hegel did not provide a metaphysical explanation; he merely posits these relationships as necessary for a complete explanation of reality. In this sense, the mind-body relationship is a first principle and therefore also paradoxical. With contradictoriness, thought and being should exist in a contradictory state. So, again, it is impossible to see how thought and being could be related or at any stage merge into a whole, which is true. Similarly, Hegel could not resolve how a thing could come to reflect on itself (self-consciousness); he simply assumed that it could, again creating a paradoxical first principle. How could a self reflect on itself?

Ninth, Hegel relied on the principle of human freedom in either the narrow sense of a controlled contradiction (like the owner and the slave) or the non-contradictory sense of an Absolute Mind. Hegel, however, doesn't explain why people at the level of experience are truly free. He addresses this through his dialectics between masters and slaves, but the nature of this dialectics is very ambiguous: is it a rough summary of actual history or a normative framework for Hegel to explain or justify something? Hegel did not clarify this point. Hegel's theory is again paradoxical: such people are not entirely free. He also does not explain how people can overcome such contradictions to achieve the Absolute Mind. He merely posits such as transcendental freedom as possible, at least in the case of people devoted to the sublime fields of art, religion, and philosophy. How is such an absolute freedom truly a freedom without having some ongoing sense of what it is not? At the same time, Hegel's views seem to imply a hierarchy of needs, so that when people satisfy or overcome their physical needs they can move on to satisfy their higher needs for things like art. Hegel, however, fails to explain why this hierarchy should exist and work from the bottom up. He only assumes that people can and must educate themselves to overcome the base contradictions. This materialistic hierarchy is thus paradoxical.

Tenth, Hegel relied on the principle of three-dimensional being (form). Related to the mind-body dichotomy, Hegel did not explain how three-dimensional form can arise from the Absolute, nor how it is related to thought at the level of experience. Likewise, and as already discussed, Hegel did not explain how a separate body could come to reflect on itself (self-consciousness). Even the foundations of his theory presume that a material human being simply could reflect on his- or herself.<sup>42</sup> He simply posits separate material form as existing. This existence may seem obvious or necessary for any theory, but without explaining material existence, such existence could be contradicted and thus it also represents a paradoxical first principle.

Eleventh, Hegel relied on the principle of an ordered thought and unordered being. As explained above with the Absolute Mind and freedom in art, philosophy and religion, Hegel presupposed an unordered materiality, which the idea must overcome. But he did not explain why reality should be unordered, he assumes or posits it as such. This assumption is also a contradiction. How could the orderly mind of contradictions exist against such an unorganized materiality? Hegel seems to have assumed a separation between thought and being, as well as what may have created this dichotomy (a god or first mover), and in this respect his theory again is paradoxical.

Twelfth, Hegel relied on the principle of truth as both mind-dependent and mind-independent. As already noted, Hegel failed to explain the relationship between mind-dependent truth (the *a posteriori*) and mind-independent Truth (the *a priori*). Hegel in fact could not explain how truth could be obtained through concepts in space and time or where concepts as well as space and time came from. He again simply posited this possibility. At the same time, he indicated that the ultimate Truth was possible only in the transcendental realm. If the truth is beyond time, how could it be grasped through mental concepts tied to time? Hegel simply asserted that these two kinds of truth existed and were related, but he

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<sup>42</sup> Rather than provide an explanation of consciousness and self-consciousness, Hegel makes certain assumptions about these two phenomena, and these assumptions in turn are paradoxical. In other words, Hegel does not really explain consciousness and self-consciousness, but simply asserts them as paradoxical phenomena. See Hegel, G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* xx-xxiv (Pinkard trans. 2018) (in the introduction to his translation of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Pinkard summarizes Hegel's "claims" and "arguments" with respect to consciousness and self-consciousness); Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 175-76 (describing Hegel's "attempt" to derive what is not peculiar to consciousness from consciousness itself and then to determine the very form of contingency as a moment of necessity); and Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System*, *supra* note 30, at 86 (characterizing Hegel's sense of self-consciousness as "the paradoxical unity-in-distinction of concept and object, consciousness and thinghood, thought and being.").

provided no explanation for why truth should be considered this way. In doing so, Hegel was again being paradoxical.

In short, though Hegel sought to develop a complete *scientific* theory of reality, his dialectical explanation rested on numerous first principles and therefore was still a reductionist partial description of reality. At the same time, though Hegel thought that he could use contradictoriness to resolve paradox, all his first principles, which were non-contradictory, resulted in paradoxes themselves. By raising “contradictoriness” to an absolute status at the level of experience, Hegel confined his theory to paradox.<sup>43</sup>

One major problem with Hegel’s theory, as already discussed, is that he did not connect his ideal narrative to material phenomena, which of course was the primary focus of the emerging scientific age. With Europe advancing into the Industrial Era, characterized by economic conflict and materialism, Karl Marx (1818-1883) took Hegel’s dialectical theory in precisely that direction. Marx admired Hegel’s dynamic approach to dialectics as well as his attempt to offer a complete theory of reality, but Marx concluded that Hegel had focused on the wrong aspect of reality.<sup>44</sup> According to Marx, reality did not depend on the ideal, as Hegel had suggested, but instead on the material. To achieve a useful explanation of reality, Marx thus sought to apply Hegel’s dialectics to an explanation of a distinctly material world.<sup>45</sup> In doing so, Marx was certainly in tune with his natural science contemporaries, who were focused in general on the material and particularly on physical survival. Marx’s thinking, for example, accorded with Social Darwinism, which was emerging at the same time (Charles Darwin 1809-1882, *On the Origin of Species*, 1859).

Hence, Marx applied Hegel’s sense of a dynamic contradiction and consummate whole to how human beings go about meeting their basic needs: economic production and the process of material exchange. In short, Marx posited that the material world was inherently contradictory, and that such contradictoriness could explain historical economic, and thus

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<sup>43</sup> Because of his primary principle of contradiction, Hegel’s dialectics, despite attempting to explain paradox, was really saddled by paradox.

<sup>44</sup> For a brief discussion of the relationship between the thinking of Hegel and Marx, see Kainz, Paradox, Dialectic, and System, *supra* note 30, at 67.

<sup>45</sup> Though Marx is often associated with the terms “dialectic” and “dialectical materialism,” he only discussed dialectics briefly in the afterword of the second edition of *Capital*. Kainz argues that Marx employed dialectic overall, referring to it as the “method of science,” and in particular in *Capital* frequently referencing “contradictions,” “antithesis,” and “oppositions” in the capitalist system which supply the springboard for further conceptual development. See Kainz, Paradox, Dialectic, and System, *supra* note 30, at 67-68, 72-74. Subsequent Marxists adopted and often relied on the term “dialectic” to describe Marx’s thought.

social, phenomena. Much like the new sciences, Marx insisted that his social theory had no need for a god, because material contradiction could explain everything perfectly well. Marx, however, like Hegel could not explain why contradiction should be primary. He just accepted it as given. The world was contradictory, and that was it.

In embracing Hegel's dynamic contradictoriness, Marx also accepted that the negation of the negation was still essentially a progression. In material terms, Marx concluded that socio-economic forces were in conflict, and this conflict led to overall improvements in the society. In his day, Marx, of course, saw the two main social forces, an individualistic capitalism and a paternalistic socialism, as in conflict with each other, and productive of an overall benefit for society. Marx also adopted Hegel's position that dialectical change could explain the passage of the quantitative into the qualitative, whether it be in physical organisms or social movements. Gradual changes again led to crises and then turning points, where one force overcame the opposing force.

Because Marx rejected Hegel's idealism and instead was focused on the material progression of society, Marx, however, abandoned Hegel's triadic method of abstract-negation-concrete, and instead resurrected the traditional synthetic method of thesis-antithesis-synthesis."<sup>46</sup> In Marx's view, the two initial states were in conflict and produced a third synthetic state, which then became the thesis and conflicted with its antithesis, producing a new synthesis and so forth. Though Marx returned to the traditional synthetic method, in the spirit of a scientific dialectics, he considered the two sides of thesis and antithesis to be together and dynamic, rather than separate and static, as Kant and other earlier philosophers may have considered them to be.

Given his material standpoint, Marx asserted that the contradiction consummated in the whole of a human society. Whereas Hegel had turned the moment of non-identity into the whole, some final or conclusive identity of thought and being in the world as it is, that is in the object of knowledge, Marx turned it into the process of reality itself. As Adorno describes it, for Marx the moment of non-identity was "the world with which we are concerned, the world with which humanity in general has been concerned to this very day."<sup>47</sup> In other words, whereas in Hegel's work the contradiction was between concepts and the consummation in a self-identical whole, in Marx's theory the contradiction was between economic classes,

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<sup>46</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Institute of Marxism Leninism trans. 1955 [1847]). In the second chapter of this book, Marx emphasizes the traditional synthetic method over Hegel's negation-centered method, though he does assert that they are the same.

<sup>47</sup> See Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 82-86.

namely the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the consummation of this material contradiction was humanity as a whole.

In contrast to Hegel's focus on the ideal, but consistent with his own focus on the material, Marx thought that the attainment of the non-contradictory whole depended on not philosophy, but human praxis (practice).<sup>48</sup> In other words, through practice, human beings could transcend their contradictory ways and settle into a non-contradictory whole. Marx's dialectic suggests that the goal of human existence is simply to recognize and practice the non-contradictory whole. Unlike in Hegel's dialectic, no transcendent reality is found to be possible, or considered at length.

Finally, based on his materialist perspective, Marx offered a historical explanation of human economic and social development, and then theorized that human society at some point in the future would necessarily settle into a non-contradictory communist state. The dialectical notion of contradictoriness, traditional synthetic method, and form of reality free from contradiction set the stage for Marx's explanation of history. Following the principle of contradictoriness, Marx believed that human beings were engaged in an ongoing struggle over the means of production and that this struggle inevitably resulted in economic class conflicts, which resulted in progressive breakthroughs.<sup>49</sup> Marx cited three major historical periods, namely slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, to substantiate an overall progression. He then argued that according to dialectics, human beings, once satisfied materially—likely when capitalism was ripe—would settle into a non-contradictory whole, because it would be in the best interests of most of the people to do so. At that final stage, the contradiction and socio-economic conflict would not necessarily cease, but most people would conclude that a collective ownership of the means of production and a fair distribution of material goods was in their overall best interests.

Marx's dialectical thinking, with its focus on the material, shares several foundational problems with Hegel's theory, such as beginning with contradiction,<sup>50</sup> and also is plagued by new problems that were peculiar to Marx's materialist focus. As might be expected, whereas

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<sup>48</sup> See generally, Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 84-86. Adorno argues that this reliance of praxis (practice) can be derived from the essence of dialectic itself and that it was also evident in Hegel's ideal version of dialectics. *Id.*

<sup>49</sup> See generally, Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy* (Fowkes trans. 1976 [1887]). For a discussion of how Marx's thinking on economic conflict was related to dialectics, see Kainz, *Paradox, Dialectic, and System*, *supra* note 30, at 72.

<sup>50</sup> See Adorno, *An Introduction to Dialectics*, *supra* note 1, at 82-86 (discussing how the material version of dialectics also suffers from the problem and inevitable paradox of using contradiction as a basis).

Hegel's theoretical problems were idealistic in nature, Marx's are clearly materialistic in nature. In many respects, because Marx more closely examined daily practice, his theory encountered greater complexities when attempting to provide a consistent explanation of reality. He may have concluded, like his natural science contemporaries, that a complete explanation of reality was either impossible or unnecessary, and that it was sufficient to explain observable phenomena.

Marx's materialist perspective burdened his dialectical theory with an even greater mind-body problem than Hegel had encountered. If reality is entirely material, how do beings even conceive of reality, as Marx himself was doing in the process of devising his theory? Whereas Hegel could not explain thought in the context of an ultimate reality and then connect that thought to being or physical form, Marx, though not concerned with ultimate reality, could not connect being, or physical form, to thought—the essential reflections on that being. In addition, Marx did not clarify how human beings recognize the contradiction of a contradictory and dynamic material reality. In other words, how could the material contradiction ever escape itself (i.e., step outside of its contradictoriness and become what it is not, e.g. confirmation) to realize that it was contradictory? Should that recognition of material contradiction not also be contradicted? Marx simply assumed these possibilities, perhaps because, as with Hegel, he needed them for a seemingly complete theory of reality.

Like Hegel but within the context of a material world, Marx could not explain how the negation of a negation could lead to a progression. Marx embraced the default dialectical position that a whole must exist and that contradictions must result in a progression and ultimately consummate in this whole. As already discussed with respect to Hegel, however, there is no logical reason for either this progression or this result in the whole. In the case of a material reality specifically, there is no reason this conclusion would be any more logical than the negation of a negation simply causing human society to either slide sideways or even regress. Contradiction, and thus negation, could be destructive at both the level of rival civilizations and within individual societies themselves. Marx emphasized the ostensible benefit of material contradiction—economic efficiency or progress—without acknowledging, beyond economic exploitation and class conflict, its many other harmful aspects, such as death and destruction from aggressive inter-societal conflict, pollution from harmful production methods and wasteful consumption, and poor overall human health from stress or exhaustion. In emphasizing conflict as inevitable and ignoring these additional side-effects, Marx's theory could even be accused of confining human beings to a less than optimal state of existence.

To explain qualitative differences in human development, Marx also seems to have accepted Hegel's sense that quantitative change led to qualitative change. With his consummation of the whole, Marx believed that material satisfaction would lead people to recognize and adopt a non-contradictory state. Like Hegel, however, Marx did not provide any reason quantitative crises should lead to qualitative changes, and why such transformations should not also remain stuck in contradiction. Marx simply posited that such breakthroughs must be possible. It's of course also possible that such crises would lead simply to societal collapse, perhaps including a man-made environmental catastrophe, rather than an advanced material state.

Marx also could not explain his synthetic method of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, which he raised in a dynamic state to a truth of material reality. First, like Marx's problem with the mind-body dilemma where he does not explain how physical bodies could have arisen in the first place, Marx does not specify where the initial "thesis" comes from, or why this thesis is necessarily opposed by an antithesis. Second, as with the issues involving negation leading to a progression, Marx does not explain why synthesis is necessarily a progression and not a regression. As already noted, with the two sides in conflict, the result could be a regression. Finally, Marx does not explain how a dynamic synthetic method, in contrast to Kant's static model, avoids the three laws of logic (i.e., Identity, Excluded Middle, and Non-Contradiction). For the purposes of describing reality, for example, Marx must regard the thesis and antithesis as identifiable, but for his dialectical theory, he also must regard them as non-identifiable. Marx did not directly address or resolve this paradox.

Similar to the lack of an explanation for how a negation of a negation can lead to a progression, Marx did not explain how material contradiction can consummate in a social whole, or why the material whole should be human society rather than some larger material reality, like the earth or the solar system. First, as already noted, contradiction could lead to something far short of the whole (i.e., a negative-sum result); after all, contradiction could be an overall destructive force. Unlike Hegel, moreover, Marx did not posit a transcendent whole, but assumed a finite material whole, where tradeoffs (i.e., zero-sum, win-loss result) would normally be expected to occur. Second, Marx did not explain what would constitute the specific social whole. As he himself noted, societies face conflicts between various socio-economic factions, such as capital and labor, and the social body may not be a whole so much as one political faction dominating another. Finally, the material whole could be something larger than the social body. Within the material realm, what if human beings are also in conflict with nature, and the overall natural environment is an even more important material

whole? Marx did not explain these points in his theory, but instead simply posited them, and again such positions were paradoxical.

Marx did not explain how contradiction could consummate in a non-contradictory whole of human society. Marx claimed not that contradiction would cease to exist, but that it would be controlled, because controlled contradiction would benefit most people. Marx asserted that such a development would be possible because of praxis (practice), but as already discussed, he did not explain how people, who are inherently contradictory, could even conceptualize non-contradiction, let alone come to practice it. At the same time, Marx's emphasis on material contradiction suggests that the non-contradictory whole is at best a zero-sum material exercise—unlike Hegel, there is no transcendent positive-sum possibility. If the non-contradictory whole really is a zero-sum equilibrium, how can people at any point cease fighting over the necessarily scarce material resources? This point is another contradiction in Marx's theory: though Marx suggested people will achieve a positive-sum state where most people agree to a collective ownership of resources because it is within their best interests, his theory appears to only allow for at best a zero-sum whole.

Finally, because of these theoretical problems, Marx's account of historical, economic, and social developments fails as a complete theory. First, as already noted, Marx did not explain why material contradiction should result in a progression and consummate in a social whole. Second, Marx's theory does not include the possibility of past non-contradictory societies, such as hunters and gatherers or homesteaders, or that they may have superseded contradictory societies, such as slave-based savages or a feudalistic order. It is possible, after all, that non-contradictory societies would be stronger than contradictory ones. Third, also previously discussed, Marx did not explain how, beyond the three initial progressive contradictory stages, the social whole could become non-contradictory. In a way, he simply accepted this result as necessary for the dialectical vision.

Marx's dialectical theory also fails as a coherent account of even just material reality. Marx may not have been concerned with an overall explanation of reality and instead, as in the study of science, focused purely on material phenomena,<sup>51</sup> but he still failed to see that

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<sup>51</sup> Scientific thinkers like Thomas Malthus (scarcity), Charles Darwin (natural selection), and Herbert Spencer (survival of the fittest), who were prevalent at the time, also were not providing an explanation so much as a one-side description of reality. Perhaps for Marx, even more troubling than for the scientists, progress, in the form of a non-contradictory whole, was a "good" in and of itself (it didn't depend on a larger metaphysics). Marx must have recognized that this conclusion could be contradicted, but he posited it because, for a complete dialectical theory, he need a non-contradictory whole.

his basic conclusions could be contradicted and thus did not explain reality. Moreover, Marx's empirical observation and the concrete conclusions that followed contravened the original constant self-contradictoriness of dialectics and thereby exposed his theory to even greater attacks than Hegel's theory might incur. One example of this vulnerability is how a material negation of a negation could lead to a material progression and then eventually result in a non-contradictory whole. There is no support, theoretically or empirically, to justify either part of this claim. Finally, though Marx had claimed he had no need for a god, he still needed a first mover to explain his contradictory material world. His reductionist thinking relied on a first mover in a non-traditional (i.e., non-religious) sense.

In the end, dialectics, based on contradiction in its idealist and its materialist versions, could not provide a complete or useful explanation of reality. Both Hegel's and Marx's theories contained numerous first principles, which were in turn paradoxical. Though Hegel and Marx tried to resolve paradox through the principle of never-ending contradiction, the reality of contradiction is not so simple—contradiction is opposed not by itself but by confirmation. Both Hegel and Marx relied on a logical sleight of hand, in which dynamic contradiction solved the problem of their paradoxical explanations. Hegel and Marx did surpass their dialectical predecessors, Kant and the ancient Greeks. They also provided valid criticisms of Kant and the ancient Greeks. They failed, however, to recognize that dialectics, with contradiction as its centerpiece, was inevitably limited.

### III. DAOISM AS A COMPLETE EXPLANATION OF REALITY

Around 2,500 years ago, as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were developing their sense of dialectics, Chinese sages were also contemplating the truth of reality. In contrast to their Western counterparts, however, the Chinese philosopher-poets began not from a world of discrete things but from the standpoint of an absolute Emptiness.<sup>52</sup> Any other cosmology

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<sup>52</sup> Hegel was aware of this difference between Western and Eastern thought, reflecting, "To the Chinese what is highest, the origin of things, is nothingness, emptiness, the altogether undetermined, the abstract universal, and this is also called the Tao..." See Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, *supra* note 2, at 125. But Hegel did not understand the significance of this Emptiness to the ensuing Daoist metaphysics. At the end of this brief passage on the significance of Daoism, Hegel concludes about this Emptiness, "But if Philosophy has got no further than to such expression, it still stands on its most elementary stage. What is there to be found in all this learning?" Id. In the same passage, by way of contrast, Hegel noted the West at an absolute level speaks of an affirmative thing, "When the Greeks say that the absolute is one, or when men in modern times say that it is the highest

would have been inconclusive, and the manifest world itself was ephemeral. In addition to supporting a temporal and spatial world, this ultimate reality suggested that everyday reality was subtle—a thing could be both empty and full, a process both determinate and variable, a pair both one and two, rather than, as the Greek philosophers might have considered, simply one concept or another.<sup>53</sup> Eventually, the Eastern masters expounded a seamless, layered truth (reality), from the ultimate reality of Emptiness to a central YinYang dynamic to the multitude of things. For ordinary form to experience the absolute Emptiness, this exposition entailed the YinYang forces in a complementary relationship, leading first to a transcendent Whole and finally to the ultimate reality. For this ideal to be meaningful, the explanation also encompassed the counter possibility of the YinYang interaction in a contradictory phase, where life was experienced as a lesson. This wisdom has endured in classics like the *Dao De Jing*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Huangdi Neijing (The Yellow Emperor's Medical Canon)*.<sup>54</sup> The authors of these works were sagacious and even in their times, only a few people, likely also part of the literati, could comprehend what they were saying.<sup>55</sup>

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existence, all determinations are abolished, and by the merely abstract Being nothing has been expressed except this same negation, only in an affirmative form.” Id. Perhaps reflecting a Yin (阴) bias, Eastern thought has always been comfortable with emptiness. The West, by way of contrast, has focused on things, whether they be gods in the heavens or material objects on earth. In the YinYang (阴阳), the Yin is the dark, hidden aspect, whereas the Yang (阳) is the light, apparent aspect.

<sup>53</sup> As explained eventually in the main text, the ancient divination text *Zhouyi* (周易), which with later commentaries is now usually referred to as the *I Ching* (易经), translated into English as *Book of Changes*, involves the subtle play of the YinYang, or the “Two,” and three dimensions, or just the “Three.” For a translation of the *I Ching*, see *The Complete I Ching* (Alfred Huang trans. 1998). The YinYang reflects both emptiness and fullness as well as both one and two. The *Zhouyi* itself is a combination of the determinate and variable. This ancient Chinese text also exemplifies the Eastern emphasis on process over things, an emphasis that follows logically from the standpoint of an ultimate Emptiness.

<sup>54</sup> For English translations of part or all of these books, see Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* (D. C. Lau trans. 1963); Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Brook Ziporyn trans. 2009); and Huang Di nei jing su wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions, Volumes 1 and 2 (Paul U. Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow trans., University of California Press 2011). The *Huangdi Neijing* is divided into two main parts: *Suwen*, which might be translated into English as “Basic Questions” or “Fundamental Questions” and *Lingshu*, which might be translated as “Energy Points.” The *Tao Te Ching* is another romanization for the *Dao De Jing*, which is now used in Mainland China.

<sup>55</sup> Chapter 70 of the *Dao De Jing* laments that few people understand the Dao, while Chapter 57, for example, calls for keeping the common people as simple as possible. See *Tao Te Ching*, *supra* note 54, at 118, 132 (chs. 57, 70).

The first line of the *Dao De Jing* famously begins by pointing towards the ultimate reality, archetypically called the “Dao,” usually translated into English as “the Way.”<sup>56</sup> The Dao eludes all positive attribution, such as form, time, or place. It can only be named, but even then, as the first line cautions, it must be remembered that the Dao is not the name. Though the Dao can perhaps best be characterized as an ultimate Emptiness, it might also be described as an ultimate Consciousness, Truth, or Darkness.<sup>57</sup> The Dao is the absolute Field behind the emergence of all things.<sup>58</sup> Though the Dao is the only true reality, in order to experience itself, the Dao must give rise to that which it is not. In other words, the Dao must beget form, or things, that may possess attributes, including the dimensions of space and time. If all that existed was the Dao, there would be no way for this Absolute Reality to experience its own profundity.

The first step in creating such form, as Chapter 42 of the *Dao De Jing* elucidates, involves the Dao giving rise to the One.<sup>59</sup> The first step of a seamless cosmological and metaphysical explanation necessarily entails such a singularity or totality, a transcendent

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<sup>56</sup> Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 57, 103 (chs. 1, 42). The Daoist wisdom, based on an ultimate Emptiness but involving a play of form, indicates the world is metaphorical. For this reason, the Daoist philosopher-poets use metaphors to indicate most phenomena, including not just the Dao as Emptiness and the YinYang as the central relationship but also the numbers 5-9 as representing each of the Five Phases. *See, e.g.*, Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54, at 83-94 (ch. 4).

<sup>57</sup> Daoist texts commonly refer to the Dao as Obscure, Darkness, or Blackness. *See, e.g.*, Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 57, 62, 85 (chs. 1, 6, 28) (regarding the Dao as obscure and black); Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries, *supra* note 54, at 90-91 (ch. 22) (referring to an exchange between Nothingness and Radiance, and describing Nothingness as a darkness, an emptiness); and Yuan Dao: Tracing the Dao to Its Source 67-69 (sec. 3) (D. C. Lau and Roger T. Ames trans. 1998) (describing the Dao as obscure and dark).

<sup>58</sup> Chapter 25 of the *Dao De Jing* characterizes the Dao as a background field (域). Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 82 (ch. 25).

<sup>59</sup> For the Dao giving rise to the One, *see* Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 103 (ch. 42). Chapter 42 features the famous line, “The Dao begets the One, the One begets the Two, the Two begets the Three, and the Three begets the myriad things.” Interestingly, Hegel in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy also considered this “celebrated” passage but noted simply that “In this men have tried to find reference to the Trinity.” *See* Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, *supra* note 2, at 125. Over the last 2,500 years, scholars even within China have frequently misinterpreted the cosmological and metaphysical significance of Chapter 42. *See* Joseph L. Pratt and Liu Chenting, 道家还原论宇宙观中的谬论 — 以老庄思想和《黄帝内经》为中心的分析 (Daoism’s Mistaken Reductionist Cosmologies — How Laozi, Zhuangzi, and the Yellow Emperor’s Medical Canon Explain Reality) (August 9, 2018). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3229541>.

Whole.<sup>60</sup> Any other condition would leave an inexplicable gap between the ultimate Emptiness and the eventual emergence of form. At the same time, the Dao and the One represent a primordial relationship with metaphysical significance. The Dao and the One are necessarily both the same thing and two distinguishable things.<sup>61</sup> The first step of the One is distinct from the ultimate reality of the Dao, but ultimate reality is all that truly exists and the One, by definition, knows no separation. In Daoism, the subtle relationship between the ultimate reality of the Dao and the transcendent One means that, from a cosmological or metaphysical standpoint, no separate god or first mover is necessary, because there is no acute seam between the ultimate Emptiness and the initial Totality.<sup>62</sup> Because the Totality itself knows no distinction, however, the Dao and the One cannot by themselves constitute a form that might be considered separate and come to experience the Dao.

The next step in the creation of this form is for the One (really the Dao and then the One) to give rise to the Two, what in Daoism is archetypically called the “YinYang.”<sup>63</sup> The Yin aspect shadows the Dao and is the hidden, receptive side, while the Yang aspect reflects the One and is the apparent, initiative side.<sup>64</sup> Representing the primal Dao and One relationship at this new level, the YinYang entertains all possible dichotomies, such as the negative and positive, the intuitive and logical, and the determinate and variable, with the first hidden aspect being a Yin property and the second apparent aspect being the Yang counterpart. Deriving from and returning to the One, this layer of Two necessarily involves both a union or oneness between the Yin and Yang aspects, as well as a distinction between the two sides.<sup>65</sup> At this junction in the continuous scheme there must be the possibility of both a unity

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<sup>60</sup> For the One as a primal unity, *see, e.g.*, Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 66, 79 (chs. 10, 22).

<sup>61</sup> Daoist texts frequently equate Emptiness, or the Dao, with the Primordial One, *see id.* *See also* Yuan Dao, *supra* note 57, at 107-111 (sec. 15) (discussing the primacy of the “formless” and the “one”). At the same time, the Dao and the One are distinguishable, creating the notion of separation and thus the eventual YinYang. This distinction of course is necessary for the experience of the Dao. For a discussion of the related sense of the YinYang as both union and distinction, *see* Robin R. Wang, *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* 4-6 (2012).

<sup>62</sup> In this way, Daoism again differs from the Western conception of a world of things and also in the requirement of a god or first-mover to explain the appearance of things.

<sup>63</sup> Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 103 (ch. 42). This chapter states that, “The One begets the Two,” which is accurate because the YinYang Two follows and returns to the One (and then the Dao). It is important to note, however, that the YinYang Two reflects both the Dao and the One.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*

<sup>65</sup> *See* Wang, *Yinyang*, *supra* note 61, at 4-6. Since the Dao is ultimate reality and the first step is a totality (which also results in a division), unity of course is the higher aspect of the

allowing for a return to the Oneness and a distinction allowing for that unity to be purposeful. Any other explanation would again leave an unaccounted-for metaphysical gap. This YinYang dynamic appearing just below the transcendent One, however, is but an abstraction and thus still not capable of constituting form, or things, that might return to the One and come to experience the Dao.

The final step in Daoism's seamless cosmology and metaphysics is thus for the YinYang Two to give rise to the Form Three.<sup>66</sup> The Three is not simply so many quantitative units, but primarily the qualitative property of three-dimensional fullness. This three-dimensionality provides the structure for both what is thought of as a physical object as well as what is considered to be a conceptual matter, which necessarily precedes the physical and of course also requires a contextual framework. In concrete terms, the three-ness means that a physical object cannot be considered from more than three dimensions (i.e., length, width, and height), at least not without moving to a different scale, which would then also involve three dimensions. In like fashion, the three-ness in abstract terms signifies that an abstract matter always involves three dimensions. Simply put, an abstract matter cannot be considered from merely one or two dimensions without ignoring integral parts of it, and, like the concrete, also cannot be considered from more than three dimensions without moving to a different conceptual scale.<sup>67</sup> For example, identifying a person's body might involve the three qualities of age, height, and weight, while analyzing a persuasive argument could depend on the three properties of logos, pathos, and ethos.<sup>68</sup> At this final layer of form, separate abstract and concrete matters thus can exist for the union of the YinYang dynamic, a return to the transcendent One, and finally, the experience of the Dao itself. In this way, the Daoist cosmology and metaphysics explains all of reality, including, as will be discussed below, the dimensions of space and time.

Within this coherent scheme, the YinYang Two and the Form Three necessarily work together.<sup>69</sup> First, as the central property of all of reality, the YinYang also applies to itself and

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two.

<sup>66</sup> Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 103 (ch. 42).

<sup>67</sup> Like a concrete matter, a conceptual matter cannot be considered from more than three dimensions, at least not without moving to a different scale or question, which would then also involve three dimensions. This structure allows for the perfect combination of simplicity and complexity.

<sup>68</sup> A physical person or persuasive argument of course could be reduced to any number of components, but as the Daoist metaphysics shows, such reductionism miscomprehends the nature of reality and leads to wrongful conclusions about that reality.

<sup>69</sup> The critical relationship of the YinYang Two and the Form Three is captured in the ancient

the Three: the YinYang Two is a Yin aspect, while the Form Three is a Yang aspect.<sup>70</sup> The YinYang Two mirrors the Dao in its essential hidden characteristics, while the Form Three reflects the One in its essential apparent characteristics. Whereas the YinYang Two follows the One, which is a Yang property, the Form Three of course follows the YinYang Two, which as just explained is a Yin quality. At the same time, the Form Three could not exist without the YinYang Two, and without the Form Three, the YinYang Two would have no way, or “form/context,” to experience itself. In physical terms, at the level of YinYang Two and Form Three, the YinYang Two may be said to be a hidden energy (with both negative and positive aspects), while the Form Three is an apparent mass or materiality. Finally, as already noted with respect to the metaphysical necessity of the YinYang dynamic, any other relationship between the YinYang Two, akin to conventional energy, and Form Three, akin to common matter, could not bridge conventional three-dimensional form, or common “matter,” with the transcendent Whole and background Emptiness.

With this combination of the YinYang Two and the Form Three, again akin to ordinary energy and matter, all things, from the microscopic to the galactic, may arise.<sup>71</sup> The numbers after three constitute the variety of things, both conceptually and then materially, always existing against the background of the transcendent Oneness and ultimate Emptiness. As with the properties of 0 through 3 (the Dao, Oneness, YinYang Two-ness, and Form Three-ness), the subsequent numbers have both a higher Yin qualitative aspect (e.g., whereas the number “3” is a Yang number allowing for the creation of process-forms, the number “4” is a Yin number precipitating the actual appearance of process-forms) and a lower Yang quantitative aspect (e.g., the numbers “3” and “4” stand in numerical relation to all of the other numbers

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text *Zhouyi* (周易), which as already noted with later commentaries is often called the *I Ching* (易经), commonly translated into English as the *Book of Changes*. The *Zhouyi* likely predates and inspired the other classic Daoist texts. As the *Zhouyi* depicts, three pairs of YinYang dimensions, referred to individually as triagrams, or when combined in sets as hexagrams, are engaged in a continuous play of form. See The Complete I Ching, *supra* note 53. In physical health terms, the crucial relationship between the YinYang Two energetic and the Form Three material is also detailed in the *Huangdi Neijing*, which is the basis of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This medical canon is largely about energy, or “qi (气),” and of course human health, or form (xing 形). See generally, Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54.

<sup>70</sup> Just as the Dao and One work together, so do the Two and the Three. As explained in the text, whereas the Two is Yin, the Three is Yang. The Two (YinYang) necessarily gives rise to the Three (form), but without the Three (form), the Two (YinYang) could not manifest.

<sup>71</sup> Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 103 (ch. 42) (noting the Three begets the myriad things). From a purely metaphysical perspective, the YinYang Two energetic and the Form Three materiality can give rise to everyday things.

within the totality).<sup>72</sup> The subsequent numbers, and thus the multitude of process-forms, also follow a YinYang curvilinear pattern. In spatial terms, for example, the number 5 denotes the archetypal center or “here,” while the number 6 is north, 7 is south, 8 is east, and 9 is west.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, in temporal terms, the number 5 signifies the archetypal long-summer or “now,” while the number 6 is winter, 7 is summer, 8 is spring, and 9 is fall.<sup>74</sup> Finally, the numbers follow scales based on the central number of 5.<sup>75</sup> The numerical properties 0-4, with 4 as precipitating process-forms,<sup>76</sup> represent a Yin genesis and set up the numbers 5-9, which constitute the initial Yang process-forms.<sup>77</sup> The numerical properties 5-9 correspond to the numerical properties 0-4 and, as the *Huangdi Neijing* notes, constitute the “Five Phases.”<sup>78</sup> All subsequent scales, such as 0-99 or 0-99,999, follow this pattern of phases. These subtle YinYang patterns are necessary for the Dao to experience itself. If the pattern of things was either simply circular or linear, such patterns could not be sustained either theoretically or practically and existence also would seem meaningless. As already suggested, the primary circular aspect is necessary for the existence of the secondary linear aspect, and without the secondary linear aspect there would be no context for the primary circular aspect. As will be

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<sup>72</sup> All even numbers carry the aspects of the Dao and YinYang (0 and 2), while all odd numbers carry the aspects of the One and Three-ness (1 and 3). In other words, a Yin evenness and a Yang oddness are integral to numbers. For this specific point in a Daoist text, see *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, *supra* note 54, *supra* note 54, Vol. 1 at 83-94 (ch. 4) and Vol. 2 at 191 (ch. 67) (respectively describing the numbers 5-9 and noting that even numbers are Yin while odd numbers are Yang).

<sup>73</sup> These curvilinear designations are mentioned in connection with the Five Phases. See *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, *supra* note 54, Vol. 1 at 83-94 (ch. 4).

<sup>74</sup> *Id.*

<sup>75</sup> See *Tao Te Ching*, *supra* note 54, at 103 (ch. 42) (describing the Yin and Yang in things, Yin is circular, Yang is linear). This dynamic is also apparent in the Daoist diagrams *Hetu* and *Luoshu*, see Wang, *Yinyang*, *supra* note 61, at 209 (presenting the diagrams). Five as a prime number is involved in every number ending in zero and five. It is thus, for example, part of both 10, a new scale beginning with a Yin phase (10-14), and 15, the scale's Yang phase (15-19). This structure with Yin and Yang phases repeats forever at all scales. The importance of five thus includes both the basic five phases (0-4 and 5-9), and also the measure of scales. The *Hetu* diagram also indicates the number 10 is 2 x 5, rather than 10 individual units. For its depiction, see Wang, *Yinyang*, *supra* note 61, at 209.

<sup>76</sup> See *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, *supra* note 54, Vol. 1 at 128 (ch. 6) (describing the living potential residing in the place of Yin, and being called Yin within Yin). The number 4 is Yin and follows the number 3, which is Yang. At the same time, as the Daoist metaphysics necessitates, the numbers 0-4 are the living potential, while the numbers 5-9 are the corresponding living manifestation.

<sup>77</sup> *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, *supra* note 54, Vol. 1 at 83-94 (ch. 4).

<sup>78</sup> *Huang Di nei jing su wen*, *supra* note 54, Vol. 1 at 83-94 (ch. 4).

explained further in the paper, for an eventual return to the Whole, these two opposing aspects also must complement each other.

In accordance with these patterns and for the experience of the Dao to be meaningful, the myriad things undergo constant change. This change, like all phenomena, follows Daoism's all-encompassing cosmology and metaphysics, including the central YinYang pattern.<sup>79</sup> By way of explanation, the Dao could be considered the ultimate Changeless (or Eternal), while the One is the transcendent Change. At the level of YinYang Two-ness, the Yin aspect is the changeless and the Yang aspect is its counterpart, change. Finally, at the level of YinYang Two-ness and Form Three-ness, the YinYang Two-ness is the changeless component, though it encompasses both changelessness and change, and the Form Three-ness is the corresponding component of change. As with the circular and linear, both the changeless and change are necessary for the experience of the Dao.<sup>80</sup> The ancient Chinese divination text *Zhouyi* (周易), which with later commentaries is now referred to as the *I Ching* (易经), or *Book of Changes*, depicts the YinYang Two and the Form Three in eight trigrams, and when these eight trigrams interact, 64 hexagrams, in this way capturing the specific pattern of change from one circumstance to the next.<sup>81</sup> This constant unfolding is necessarily both determinate and variable—another YinYang dynamic.<sup>82</sup> As just demonstrated, at the level of

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<sup>79</sup> The *Zhouyi* (周易), now usually understood simply as the basis of the *I Ching* (易经), or *Book of Changes*, focuses on continuous change. For a translation of the *I Ching*, see *supra* note 53. Over the last 2,500 years, many scholars, including influential early Confucianists, have misinterpreted the cosmology and metaphysics of the *Zhouyi*. See Joseph L. Pratt and Liu Chenting, 用道家思想看待易学宇宙观 (Considering the Zhouyi's Cosmology in the Context of Daoism's Holistic Vision) (August 9, 2018). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3229533>.

<sup>80</sup> Chapter 25 of the *Dao De Jing* discusses changeless-change. See Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 82 (ch. 25).

<sup>81</sup> For the *I Ching*, see *supra* note 53. Besides the *I Ching*, this dynamic pattern of apparent change is also emphasized in Daoist-based practices like Traditional Chinese Medicine. For the Traditional Chinese Medicine emphasis on change, see generally, Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54 (discussing YinYang patterns). Interestingly, Hegel in his Lectures on the History of Philosophy considered in detail the philosophy of the “Y-king” but found the *I Ching*, at least as explained by the Confucian commentaries, to be “quite mythological, fabulous, and even senseless.” See Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, *supra* note 2, at 125.

<sup>82</sup> The determinate and variable exist in a YinYang relationship, and as such follow the same overall cosmology and metaphysics. The Dao is Determinate, the One Variable; the YinYang Two is a determinate-variable dynamic; the YinYang Two and Form Three is a final determinate-variable dynamic. In harmony, the determinate and variable complement each other for the experience of first the One and ultimately the Dao. In discord, the determinate and variable contradict each other, morphing into a polarity like the fixed versus the random.

everyday reality the pattern of changeless-change derives from a transcendent source, and then, through the YinYang Two and Form Three, follows a transcendent pattern.<sup>83</sup> When a person aligns with his or her essential nature of the Dao, the person may accord with this perfect reality of changeless-change.<sup>84</sup>

The ongoing transformation of things within the Totality involves a subtle combination of both Yin qualitative change and Yang quantitative change. As the Daoist cosmology illustrates, the Yin Dao can transform into the Yang One, and the Yang One can transform back into the Yin Dao. The same is true for the YinYang Two, as for example representing negative and positive charges, and the YinYang Two and the Form Three, as for example signifying energy and matter. This alternating relationship is often expressed in well-known aphorisms, like “the Yin contains the Yang and the Yang contains the Yin” and “the Yin transforms into the Yang and the Yang transforms into the Yin.”<sup>85</sup> The Yin and Yang can only work with and transform into each other; there is no other possibility.<sup>86</sup> Daoism also highlights how an extreme Yin necessarily turns quickly into a Yang, and vice versa.<sup>87</sup> If the process of change was only Yin qualitative, there would be no way to relate different things (within the totality). Likewise, if the process was only Yang quantitative, change would only be a matter of scale (e.g., millimeters, centimeters, meters, kilometers, and so forth). In short, the mutual qualitative-quantitative transformations are necessary for the myriad things to

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<sup>83</sup> The *Zhouyi*, or *I Ching*, which again depicts the YinYang Two and the Form Three in eight triagrams and, when these eight triagrams interact, 64 hexagrams, demonstrates how the pattern of change involves the interaction of the YinYang Two and Form Three. This interaction of course derives from and can only follow the transcendent One and ultimate Dao. This pattern could be described as a super-determinism. The determinate and variable follow the seamless cosmology and metaphysics, so although the overall pattern is determinate, the sublayers entail both a hidden determinism and an apparent variability.

<sup>84</sup> The *Dao De Jing* and other texts highlight the effortless-action, or actionless-action (无为), akin to changeless-change, in the context of a sage adhering to the Dao. See, e.g., Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 58, 59, 66, 96, 99, 104, 119, 123, 124, 125 (chs. 2, 3, 10, 37, 38, 43, 48, 57, 63, 64).

<sup>85</sup> In Chinese, this expression is Yinzhong you Yang, Yangzhong you Yin (阴中有阳，阳中有阴).

<sup>86</sup> As Daoism explains, the two sides necessarily transform and change into each other (Zhuanhuan 转换). For an explanation of this process, see Wang, Yinyang, *supra* note 61, at 40.

<sup>87</sup> This sentiment is often expressed as “an extreme must turn” (Wuji Bifan 物极必反). Wuji Bifan appears in ancient Daoist texts like the *I Ching* as Piji Tailai (否极泰来) (chs. 11 and 23) and *Guiguzi* as Yangyuan Zhongyin, Yinji Fanyang (阳远终阴，阴极反阳) (ch. 1). For a description and translation of Piji Tailai in the *I Ching*, see The Complete I Ching, *supra* note 53, at 117-133.

exist within the totality and eventually for a transcendence to the One and the experience of the Dao.

With the central YinYang property, Daoist cosmology and metaphysics provides a seamless way for form to experience the Dao (or more accurately, for the manifest Dao to experience the ultimate Dao). This transcendent path is also referred to as the Dao—recognizing that the path derives from and leads to the Dao.<sup>88</sup> It is also called the Middle Way, recognizing that the path involves a subtle fusion of the opposing Yin and Yang aspects.<sup>89</sup> The Yin monistic aspect is the key for transcendence, while the Yang dualistic aspect is necessary for that experience to be meaningful. To accord with the Middle Way, these two components must be in harmony and complement each other, achieving something greater than the sum of their distinguishable parts.<sup>90</sup> In such a harmonious state, the two aspects, such as the whole and the parts, or the intuitive and logical, are said to lean on, support, and attain one another.<sup>91</sup> In Chinese, this situation is referred to as the YinYang in

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<sup>88</sup> Daoist canons like the *Dao De Jing*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Huainanzi* simply use “the Dao” for this transcendent path. See, e.g., Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 107 (ch. 46), Zhuangzi, *supra* note 54, at 9-21 (ch. 2), and Yuan Dao, *supra* note 57, at 63-65 (sec. 2).

<sup>89</sup> The phrase “Middle Way of the Dao” (Zhongyong zhi Dao 中庸之道) runs through much of Chinese philosophy and is specifically addressed in the first part of the classic text *The Middle Way* (Zhongyong 中庸), in one major English version also translated as “*The Doctrine of the Mean*.” See Confucius, *The Doctrine of the Mean* (trans. James Legge, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Beijing 2012). *The Middle Way* uses the terms “Zhongyong” and “Dao” interchangeably. See *id.* at 9-10 (chs. 3, 5). *The Middle Way* is an apt translation for the title of this text because the Chinese characters Zhongyong 中庸 connote an absolute (yong 庸) middle way (zhong 中) that is necessary for the experience of the Dao. Because the first part of this book, from which the title is taken, is discussing a fundamental property of reality rather than a theoretical doctrine, translating the title as “*The Doctrine of the Mean*” would seem to be misleading. See *id.* at 5-11 (chs. 1-5). Though *Zhongyong* is considered a Confucian and not Daoist text, its initial chapters are about the experience of the Dao. *Id.* In some respects, this text bridges Confucianism with Daoism.

<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, C. G. Jung, who had a great interest in Daoism in so much as it informed his own practice of analytical psychology, reflected on the Middle Way and complementarity by saying that, “Unfortunately our Western mind, lacking all culture in this respect, has never yet devised a concept, nor even a name, for the union of opposites through the middle path, that most fundamental item of inward experience, which could respectably be set against the Chinese concept of Tao.” See C. G. Jung, *Collected Works*, Vol. III, “Two Essays on Analytical Psychology,” 203 (R. F. G. Hull trans.).

<sup>91</sup> As the *Huangdi Neijing* explains, in harmony the YinYang’s two aspects lean on, support, and attain each other. This particular description of the YinYang in harmony comes from *Huangdi Neijing*, *Suwen* (Fundamental Questions) chs. 62 (YinYang Xiangqing 阴阳相倾) and 81 (YinYang Xiangchi 阴阳相持), and *Lingshu* (Energy Points), ch. 39 (YinYang Xiangde 阴阳相得). The second chapter of the *Dao De Jing* uses identical or similar terms,

harmony or balance (YinYang pingheng 阴阳平衡). In practical terms, when the higher Yin aspect is stable and the lower Yang aspect is secure, a person may experience a sense of wholeness, as well as both emotional and physical security.<sup>92</sup> The person is healthy and strong, and accords with the way of the universe.

For this experience of complementarity to be purposeful, however, the comprehensive cosmology and metaphysics also entails the opposite possibility of contradiction: the loss of the Middle Way with the Yin and Yang aspects in conflict with each other.<sup>93</sup> The divisiveness at the level of everyday form reflects the Dao and the One in a phase of separation, albeit everyday form allows for a much greater sense of separation and discord than could be found at that primordial level. In this disharmonious state, the YinYang's two aspects (for example, the whole and the parts or the intuitive and logical) are said to not only contradict each other, but also to chase and deplete each other.<sup>94</sup> In Chinese, this state is often referred to as the YinYang flexing and contracting (YinYang kaihe 阴阳开合), with the emphasis on the flexing or separation, rather than the contracting or combination. In practical terms, a person may experience this loss of the stable Yin and secure Yang as a sense of alienation and insecurity.<sup>95</sup> The person may endure internal conflicts, such as a pull between

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namely begetting (Xiangsheng 相生), generating (Xiangcheng 相成), forming (Xiangxing 相形), reinforcing (Xiangqing 相倾), harmonizing (Xianghe 相和), and according (Xiangsui 相随). Daoist texts, of course, frequently discuss the YinYang in either complementarity or contradiction. For a summary of the complementary and contradictory positions in the *Huangdi Neijing*, see Wang, Yinyang, *supra* note 61, at 178-181.

<sup>92</sup> As the *Huangdi Neijing* explains, in the Middle Way, the Yin "union" aspect is stable and the Yang "division" aspect secure (Yinping Yangmi 阴平阳秘). For a translation, see Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54, at 78 (ch. 3).

<sup>93</sup> The *Dao De Jing* repeatedly talks about contradicting the Dao and even specifically warns against the dialectical (辩). See Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 143 (ch. 81). The *Dao De Jing* differentiates between this lower dialectic (bian 辩) and a higher dialectic (dabian 大辩), the latter of which is akin to discernment and necessary for distinguishing between complementarity and opposition as well as complementarity and contradiction. For the higher dialectic, see *id.*, *supra* note 54, at 106 (ch. 45). The *Zhuangzi* in its second chapter uses identical language (i.e., lower dialectic (bian 辩) dominated by neither/or negation and higher dialectic (dabian 大辩) leading to both/and unification) to critique dialectics. For one English translation of this text, see Zhuangzi, *supra* note 54, at 12-14 (Ch. 2).

<sup>94</sup> Again, this particular description of the YinYang in contradiction comes from the *Huangdi Neijing*, *Lingshu (Energy Points)*, chs. 35 (YinYang Xiangzhu 阴阳相逐), 28 (YinYang Xiangni 阴阳相逆), and 50 (YinYang Xiangshi 阴阳相失).

<sup>95</sup> Again, as the *Huangdi Neijing* explains, in the Middle Way, the Yin "union" aspect is stable and the Yang "division" aspect secure (Yinping Yangmi 阴平阳秘). Conversely, a person who deviates from the Middle Way suffers a sense of alienation from the whole as well as

the heart and mind, and the external world may be experienced as paradoxical, as both helpful and harmful, for example. The person may suffer physical and mental ill-ness.<sup>96</sup> The situation can become so severe that the person is said to “hit rock bottom,” and thus have no choice but to change his or her ways.

Although a person may deviate from the Middle Way, a person can never separate from the Middle Way entirely. As already noted, the Dao ultimately is the only reality and everything else, including the YinYang, is but a play of form for the experience of that ultimate reality. In short, neither the loss of the Dao nor the resulting contradiction is absolute. Because of Daoism’s necessarily upward-leaning metaphysics, the *Zhuangzi*’s second chapter famously likens the Middle Way to a pivot around which form (i.e., things) may revolve but never separate.<sup>97</sup> Consistent with this pivot-like character, the more a person (or any other form) deviates from the Middle Way, the more he or she will feel pulled back to the Middle Way. As already noted, when a person does not accord with the Dao, life may be experienced as a series of challenging life lessons ending in the proverbial rock bottom.<sup>98</sup> A person who has strayed from the Dao may also make a conscious choice to return to the Middle Way path.<sup>99</sup> In between rock bottom and this conscious choice, a person may further waver between according with the Middle Way and deviating from it.<sup>100</sup>

As the above explanations indicate, the two possible states of complementarity and contradiction necessarily exist in an oppositional rather than a contradictory relationship. Specifically, complementarity allows for a return, first to the One as a “Whole” that is greater than the sum of the parts, and finally to the Dao as the ultimate reality. Contradiction, on the other hand, always falls short of this transcendent Whole, resulting in a continuous negative-sum outcome until a positive change occurs. Complementarity therefore is akin to the higher true or absolute, whereas contradiction is akin to the lower artifice or relative, which in a

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personal insecurity. For a translation of this passage, *see again* Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54, at 78 (ch. 3).

<sup>96</sup> *See, generally, Huangdi Neijing, supra* note 54.

<sup>97</sup> Zhuangzi, *supra* note 54, at 9-21 (ch. 2) (describing the Dao as a pivot (道枢)). *See also* Yuan Dao, *supra* note 57, at 78 (sec. 4). Professor Bo Mou describes Chapter 2 of *Zhuangzi* as denoting, “[a] dao pivot that equalizes things” (Dao Shu Qi Wu 道樞齊物). *See* Bo Mou, *Quine’s Naturalized Epistemology and Zhuangzi’s Daoist Naturalism*, in *The Philosophical Challenges from China* 316-317 (Brian Bruya ed. 2015).

<sup>98</sup> *See id.*

<sup>99</sup> As discussed later in the main text, this conscious choice involves both intuition and logic, another YinYang dynamic.

<sup>100</sup> This combination between the determinate and variable ensures that everyday existence is meaningful. As already noted, the determinate and variable exist in a YinYang relationship.

discordant time becomes a false, or mistaken, narrative of reality.<sup>101</sup> At the same time, in a state of complementarity or a state of contradiction complementarity and contradiction exist in a further YinYang relationship. As just indicated, the Yin complementarity aspect always co-exists with a Yang oppositional aspect; opposites can be complementary, essentially a union.<sup>102</sup> The Yang contradiction aspect, on the other hand, always co-exists with a Yin confirmative aspect. If there was only contradiction, there would be no way of recognizing such contradiction. Though in a harmonious state the Yin complementarity may lead the Yang opposition, it is never without the Yang opposition. Similarly, although in a discordant state the Yang contradiction may dominate the Yin confirmation, it never occurs without the Yin confirmation. These differing sub-relationships finally illustrate how complementarity through opposition may descend into confirmation and contradiction, and how contradiction through confirmation may ascend into opposition and complementarity.<sup>103</sup> Essentially, the transition downward is a loss of balance between complementarity and opposition resulting in a shift from opposition into confirmation and contradiction, and the transition upward is a restoration of balance between confirmation and contradiction leading to a movement from confirmation back into complementarity and opposition. To put it in logical terms, both/and and either/or relying on either/or devolves into either/or and neither/nor dominated by neither/nor, while either/or and neither/nor leaning towards either/or evolves into both/and and either/or led by both/and. The oppositional can be either complementary or contradictory.

As this difference between the two states of complementarity and contradiction further exhibits, the central YinYang property may manifest as two ostensibly different narratives. In

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<sup>101</sup> Complementarity and confirmation may both be linked to the Dao, or Absolute, while opposition and contradiction are linked to the One, or the Relative. In Daoism's seamless cosmology and metaphysics, the absolute and the relative exist at different levels and mean slightly different things at each level. As just noted, the Dao is the Absolute with an upper-case "A," while the One is the Relative. The YinYang Two is then an absolute-relative dynamic at the next level. Finally, the YinYang Two and Form Three is a further absolute-relative dynamic at the level of form. In harmony, this final dynamic is experienced as a true complementarity-opposition, while in discord it is experienced as a false confirmation-contradiction. The complementarity and confirmation thus are linked to the Dao as the Absolute, while the opposition and contradiction are only a relative, or relational, component.

<sup>102</sup> Complementarity as the true or absolute aspect always trumps contradiction as the false or relative aspect. Simply put, contradiction can never overcome complementarity, though in a confused state it may seem possible, if not likely, for it to do so.

<sup>103</sup> *See id.* The two sides could be characterized in many ways. For example, instead of saying "complementarity and opposition," one could say "union and distinction." Similarly, instead of saying "confirmation and contradiction," one could say "combination and division." Using this new terminology, union would necessarily trump division. In other words, union is the true reality, while division is a false relative narrative.

a harmonious condition, the two sides are defined by their complementarity and convergence (opposition converging with complementarity), whereas in a discordant state they are defined by their contradiction and divergence (contradiction diverging from confirmation). As just noted, in a complementary state the YinYang aspects are said to complement, support, and attain each other, while in a contradictory phase the two sides contradict, chase, and deplete each other.<sup>104</sup> By way of further example, in a complementary relationship the twin aims of societal objectives and individual goals might be defined as the common weal and individual pursuits, whereas in a contradictory situation they could be characterized as the public good versus private interests. Similarly, in a harmonious period the dual concepts of darkness and light could be portrayed as depth and radiance, while in a discordant time they might be depicted as darkness versus the light. As these examples show, a person's sense of day-to-day reality is thus related to the person's state of being.

In a muddling contradictory state, moreover, a person may find it difficult to conceive, let alone be conscious of, the higher possibility of complementarity.<sup>105</sup> The person may also fall victim to an illusion that the conflict, expressed as, for example, a "survival of the fittest," is either a progression or part of a zero-sum reality where only one side may win.<sup>106</sup> First, as already shown, contradiction always leads to a negative-sum outcome in an otherwise positive-sum reality. The Middle Way leading to the Whole is the only possible positive-sum outcome. Because there is no "lesser whole" of various discrete parts, albeit in only an artificial way, there is no possibility of a purposeful zero-sum outcome. In short, in discordant times, each side loses in terms of the true nature of reality, regardless of what any side may miscomprehend.<sup>107</sup> Second, contradiction may appear to be a progression because,

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<sup>104</sup> See *supra* notes 91 and 94 (discussing the YinYang in complementary and contradictory states).

<sup>105</sup> A person stuck in a contradictory mindset may find it difficult to even conceptualize a complementary positive-sum result. As explained eventually in the main text, intuition and logic are in a YinYang relationship. Progression and utilization, akin to intuition and logic, mean that progression is linked to intuition, and then utilization is linked to logic for that experience. Hence, the progression is more intuitive than it is logical. In other words, relying on logic, especially in a contradictory state where people confuse contradiction as absolute and thus logic becomes dialectical, may make it difficult for a person to even conceive of a true progression.

<sup>106</sup> In conflict, a person may see the world as limited to so many scarce "goods" and not realize that existence revolves around a transcendent Middle Way where scarcity is not an issue. The Middle Way by definition provides a positive-sum outcome where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

<sup>107</sup> In discord, one side may think it has won vis-à-vis a competitor, but it has lost. As the Daoist wisdom indicates, the more a side thinks it has won over a competitor, the more it has

similarly to how contradiction always exists with confirmation, regression is not absolute but instead always works with succession.<sup>108</sup> If only regression existed, there would be no way to recognize it. In a discordant state, however, the opposite of regression is not a true progression, as in the Middle Way, but only a sense of succession.<sup>109</sup> Simply put, in a discordant time, a person is seeing a succession (as in a continuation of phenomena) rather than a true positive-sum movement.<sup>110</sup> Finally, in a disharmonious period, a person experiencing contradictory thinking may discount dominant regressive tendencies, such as a serious physical disease or severe environmental harm. Nevertheless, as the holistic metaphysics underscores, such downsides always exist, outweighing any successive aspects. In a disharmonious state, the twin aspects of succession and regression are always contradicting, chasing, and depleting each other until either a total collapse or a positive change occurs.

As Daoism explains, whether a person is in a state of harmony or discord depends on the person's consciousness.<sup>111</sup> In the same way that the Dao eventually becomes three-dimensional form, the Dao as Consciousness manifests in each individual self. The Dao could be characterized as an ultimate Consciousness.<sup>112</sup> In contrast with this ultimate Consciousness, the One is then a transcendent Cognition, or "Matter."<sup>113</sup> At this level, the Matter is only for the experience of the ultimate Consciousness. At the next layer of reality,

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lost. The "winning" side is simply ignoring the many physical, mental, and even spiritual downsides of its one-sided win. As religious traditions have noted, the spiritual loss—in other words, the loss of consciousness—is the greatest loss, though the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects are all interrelated.

<sup>108</sup> Just as complementarity and contradiction manifest as two different realities, progression and regression appear as two different narratives. In harmony progression is juxtaposed with utilization, while in discord succession is pitted against regression.

<sup>109</sup> An absolute regression (without the other side of succession) is not possible and would not be meaningful because it would be patently wrong to the observers and also collapse in on itself.

<sup>110</sup> Conversely, in a harmonious state, progression is juxtaposed with a utilization, rather than a regression. The two sides complement each other.

<sup>111</sup> Carl Jung through his empirical work also concluded that consciousness was the most important aspect of a person. Jung found that Daoism provided the right explanation of the need and process for a person's opposing sides to complement each other. See Jung, *Collected Works*, *supra* note 90, at 203.

<sup>112</sup> The Dao is associated with a background Emptiness (wu 无 or xu 虚) or Quietness (jing 静), and in contrast to a cognitive movement could be characterized as a Consciousness. See, e.g., *Tao Te Ching*, *supra* note 54, at 72 (ch. 16).

<sup>113</sup> In contrast to the Dao as Consciousness, the One is Cognition, or Cognitive Matter. In the *Dao De Jing*, cognition is often expressed as knowledge (zhi 知) or understanding (chang 常).

the YinYang Two is then an energetic consciousness-matter dynamic. At this level, the matter is but a cognitive matter. Lastly, at the level of actual form, the YinYang Two exists with the Form Three, or a material matter, as a further consciousness-matter dynamic.<sup>114</sup> Here, the Form Three aspect is a material matter, in contrast to the YinYang Two's Yang aspect as a conceptual matter.<sup>115</sup> As this unfolding illustrates, the YinYang Two's Yang conceptual matter is an intermediate step leading to the Form Three material matter. On the other hand, the last level of YinYang Two consciousness and Form Three matter is linked through the YinYang Two's Yin consciousness to the One as a transcendent Matter and finally the Dao as the ultimate Consciousness. In this way, Daoism shows how a person, or any other form, is linked to the ultimate Consciousness but may also be conscious and conceive of an individual self.

In a harmonious state, an individual may realize that his or her individual consciousness is but a manifestation of a larger ultimate Consciousness. At the same time, the person may recognize that his or her cognitive matter and material matter are related to the transcendent Matter, or the One, which derives from the same ultimate Consciousness. In short, a person sees that every aspect of his or her being is but a manifestation of the Dao. In harmony, as explained above with respect to complementarity and contradiction, the person's YinYang consciousness-cognition is stable and secure, and the Form Three material matter—the Yang to this Yin—is also secure. The person feels at home in the world and with its wisdom (the Dao) and both perceives and conceives of the separate self as secure in that overall context. The person is aware of a complementary Middle Way, and thus employs complementary thinking to supplement an inner knowledge and acts accordingly by taking affirmative actions to follow the Middle Way. Attaining the transcendent One “Cognitive Matter” and ultimate Dao “Consciousness,” the person may experience a blissful sense of all-knowing, the original Pure Matter.

In a discordant state, on the other hand, a person may misidentify with his or her separate self, or “body,” in short, becoming self-conscious. With only a tenuous connection to the Totality and thus suffering from a sense of alienation and insecurity, the person misperceives

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<sup>114</sup> In contrast to consciousness (wu 无) and cognition (zhi 知), form is usually described as simply form (xing 形) or the material (wu 物). *See, e.g., Tao Te Ching, supra* note 54, at 103, 117 (chs. 42, 51)

<sup>115</sup> As this depiction of the seamless and layered cosmology and metaphysics indicates, the YinYang Two's Yang aspect, as conceptual matter or positive energy, for example, is a link to the Form Three as physical matter or mass. The links in this cosmology and metaphysics run in both directions, as they must do for a seamless explanation.

of this separate self, or again, body, as essentially in conflict or competition with other separate forms or bodies, leading to the self and the other paradox: how is the self related to the other and vice versa? The person may then become entangled in his or her thoughts about the separate form or body vis-à-vis other forms or bodies. The person both needs the other and conflicts with the other. These contradictory thoughts cannot be resolved. At the same time, the person cannot explain the relationship between the mental thoughts about the separate physical self, or body, and the body itself, giving rise to the mind-body dilemma. In such a state, a person's consciousness may even be conflated with or subordinated to the person's contradictory thinking, because consciousness is wrongly thought to be subservient to the cognitive function. In such times, a conscious person is simply a thinking person.<sup>116</sup> As Daoism shows, however, consciousness is the higher of the two aspects of consciousness and cognition, and even though at the final level of form, the YinYang Two is a consciousness in relationship with the Form Three as a material matter, the YinYang Two encompasses both a consciousness and a cognition.

As noted above with respect to the effect of contradiction on an individual, a person in an unconscious state suffers not just cognitive, or mental, dis-ease, but also bodily disease. In discord, the YinYang Two conscious and cognitive aspects conflict with each other and then, together as a final Yin aspect, also conflict with the Form Three, or the material body, as a final Yang aspect. These layered struggles result in the depletion of a person's consciousness and cognition as well as the person's individual form. To deal with the attendant frustration, the person may either internalize the angst, in which case the person poisons him or

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<sup>116</sup> In truth, as demonstrated above, consciousness is the absence of any dialectical thinking. As will be discussed in the main text, when a person accords with the Way, intuition and logic work in harmony, with intuition as primary and a complementary logic as secondary. In a sense, the person allows the Dao to simply work through the individual self—logic is a faithful servant to an accurate intuition and the person accords with the Way. This process explains why great artistic creation is not “thought out” so much as it is simply “intuited.” If someone asks the artist to explain the process, the artist cannot do so—the process simply accorded with a deep inspiration. Dialectical thinking, on the other hand, may dominate in a discordant state. Experiencing alienation and insecurity and under the influence of erratic impulses, people resort to one-sided thinking. No amount of such contradictory thinking, however, can resolve the problem, and in fact the thinking often only leads the person further astray. What's really needed is a return to the harmonious Middle Way. Ironically, nowadays, when a person such as a professional athlete accords with the Middle Way, which could be described as something like “being in the zone,” they are usually described as being “unconscious,” while someone who is highly intellectual and whose mind is dominated by thoughts is said to be “conscious.” Daoism demonstrates why this sense is mistaken and actually reflects confusion.

herself,<sup>117</sup> or externalize the pressure, in which case the person exhausts him or herself.<sup>118</sup> As alluded to above, the person of course may also return to a harmonious state and in that way resume both an inner sense of harmony and good physical health. As Daoism once again provides, a person as well as reality in general consists of a layered consciousness-cognition and form, allowing for the experience of a transcendent One, or Matter, and the ultimate Emptiness, or Consciousness, rather than simply a discrete mind and body polarity.

In addition to consciousness-cognition and form, the Daoist cosmology and metaphysics accounts for conventional space and time. Both space and time are also a function of the Dao and flow through the layered metaphysical continuum into everyday reality. As already noted, the Dao as the Absolute is beyond all conventional attribution, including with respect to space and time. The Dao might be considered an Absolute Zero or Circular Immediacy, or perhaps more conventionally as a fathomless “Here and Now.” The Dao then gives rise to the One, which, juxtaposed with the Dao, is a Relative Oneness, or Linear Proximity to the Dao’s Circular Immediacy. The One provides an overall context for common space and time to occur. With the Dao and the One, the YinYang Two next arises. The YinYang Two is the relationship between the circular immediate sense of space and time and linear proximate sense of space and time at the level right above physical form. The YinYang Two might be considered an energy encompassing both a circular here and now as well as a linear near and far as well as past and future. Finally, for the experience of the Dao as the Here and Now to be meaningful, this YinYang Two gives rise to its complement, the Form Three. At this base level of reality, the Form Three constitutes a secondary linear sense of space and time, whereas the YinYang Two is the primary circular sense of space and time. The YinYang Two of course continues to involve an intermediate Yang linear aspect, akin to cognition, thus providing for the mental sense of a linear space and time. Meanwhile, through the YinYang Two’s immediate Yin circular aspect, akin to consciousness, a form may return to first the Relative One and finally the Absolute Dao—again, the Here and Now.

As with a person’s sense of reality in general, a person’s consciousness and cognition of space and time depend on the person being in a state of either harmony or discord. As just noted, conventional space and time are a combination of both the circular immediate aspect

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<sup>117</sup> See, e.g., Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 59, 107, 114 (chs. 3, 46, 53) (describing how the loss of the Dao results in various harms). The *Huangdi Neijing* which as mentioned is the basis for Traditional Chinese Medicine, highlights these discordant YinYang patterns. For a description of this discord in the context of Traditional Chinese Medicine, see Ted J. Kaptchuk, *The Web That Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine* 4 (2000).

<sup>118</sup> *Id.*

akin to the Dao (i.e., the *a priori*) and the linear proximate aspect akin to the One (i.e., the *a posteriori*). In a YinYang harmonious state, a person experiences the linear proximate aspect of space and time, including the near and far or past and future, as being but for the circular immediate aspect, which would be the corresponding here and now. The person realizes that the YinYang Two circular immediate aspect, especially the Yin consciousness aspect, is the key to the Middle Way and the return to the transcendent One and ultimate Dao—the Here and Now.<sup>119</sup> When the YinYang is in discord, on the other hand, the linear proximate and circular immediate aspects of space and time come to conflict with each other. In such circumstances, a person may experience space and time as a tension between the need to be in some other place or time versus the need to be present for one's own good or the good of others.<sup>120</sup> With little or no sense of the circular immediate aspect of space and time, a person may see linear proximate space and time as either all-important or completely pointless. Furthermore, the person stuck in such contradictory thinking cannot explain how linear space and time may have arisen.

Just as Daoism explains how an ultimate Consciousness is related to an individual consciousness, Daoism shows how “Truth,” another possible name for the Dao, is related to the common sense of truth. Again illustrative of the seamless cosmology and metaphysics, the Dao is the Truth, while the One is the counterpart Artifice, for that ultimate Truth to be meaningful. At the level of the YinYang Two, the Yin is then the truth and the Yang is the artifice counterpart. Finally, at the level of the YinYang Two and Form Three, the YinYang Two is the truth and the Form Three is the artifice for the experience of that subtle truth. The YinYang Two's Yang artifice component is a link between the truth and the Form Three's artifice. The Truth thus entails both the Dao as the ultimate reality and as the Middle Way for form to experience that ultimate reality (i.e., both *a priori* as before form and *a posteriori*, as following or consummate with form). In other words, with the transcendent Middle Way leading to the Dao, and through a harmonious combination of the immediate consciousness (i.e., the *a priori*) and the proximate cognition (i.e., the *a posteriori*), the Truth is always

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<sup>119</sup> The Dao is the circular aspect while the One is the linear aspect. These two aspects of course exist as the level of the YinYang Two as well as at the level of the YinYang Two energetic and the Form Three materiality.

<sup>120</sup> Through this seamless explanation, Daoism shows why mindful activities like Taiji, yoga, or meditation, which emphasize the circular here and now aspect of time and space, benefit those who practice them. Through attaining a harmonious balance, a person may come to appreciate the true nature of space and time, which as just explained is crucial to understanding a person's own form and reality in general.

accessible to conventional form. In a harmonious state, a person may recognize this Truth, accord with the Middle Way, and ultimately experience the final Truth of the Dao.

Conversely, in a discordant state a person may lose consciousness of the Middle Way Truth and then ordinary cognitive truth may become warped in contradiction. Coming from a distorted consciousness of alienation and insecurity, the truth is assumed to be either absolute and higher than the separate self (i.e., purely *a priori*) or relative and attainable only through the separate self (i.e., simply *a posteriori*). Neither of these two truths, however, can be maintained. At the same time, these alternative senses of the truth may come to conflict with each other. The higher truth, based on certain assumptions about the nature of reality, such as viewing human beings as fallen creatures subject to a higher god, differs from the lower truth, based on other assumptions of reality, such as viewing human beings as evolutionary mechanisms reducible to so many parts. Finally, on a theoretical and practical level, the truth and artifice devolve into a dialectic of validation versus falsification—akin to confirmation versus contradiction—with the two sides dominated by falsification.<sup>121</sup> A religious belief or scientific theory, for example, is considered to be either true or false, though such a belief or theory could never be shown to be true. As the Daoist cosmology and metaphysics has indicated, such contradictory thinking, as opposed to complementary thinking, can never illuminate common phenomena, nor lead to actual Truth, as in the Middle Way and ultimately the Dao.

As with discovering the Truth, the Daoist texts demonstrate that recognizing the Truth and becoming Consciousness involves both intuition and logic—another YinYang dynamic, akin to the above-mentioned truth and artifice as well as consciousness and cognition.<sup>122</sup> Once again following the seamless layers, the Dao could be described as Pure Intuition, while the One would be the opposing Pure Logic, for the experience of that Pure Intuition. At the level of YinYang Two-ness, the Yin is an immediate intuitive property mirroring the Dao, while the Yang is a step-by-step logical property again reflecting the One. At the final layer of YinYang Two-ness and Form Three-ness, the YinYang Two-ness is a further inward intuitive component while the Form Three-ness is an outward logical counterpart. In this

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<sup>121</sup> In such as a discordant condition, however, there is no absolute “falsity,” and at the same time, there is no real “truth.”

<sup>122</sup> Intuition is necessarily a Yin property, while logic is necessarily a Yang property. As the Daoist metaphysics indicates, these two aspects always exist together in a YinYang relationship. The first chapter of the text *Guiguzi* (鬼谷子), which might be translated into English as *The Master of Spirit Valley*, discusses the relation between wisdom and categories. No formal English translation of this work exists.

way, Daoism shows that a person is primarily an intuitive being, though intuition and logic always work together, with logic as the necessary secondary aspect for the experience of primary intuitive aspect. The logical is akin to both conceptual matter and material matter; in other words, matter always appears to be logical. At the same time, in a harmonious YinYang condition, intuition and logic complement each other with an intact intuition employing a faithful logic to accord with the Middle Way, leading to the experience of the transcendent One and the ultimate Dao.<sup>123</sup> In this balanced state, logic itself is also complementary. That is to say, the two sides of any logical proposition, such as intuition and logic, truth and artifice, and common weal and individual pursuits, complement each other.

In a discordant state marked by alienation and insecurity intuition and logic disintegrate into a tangle of competing considerations. Intuition becomes an erratic instinctual impulse (i.e., conflicted gut feelings), while logic turns into contradictory either/or thinking (i.e., dialectics). The gut instincts, sometimes characterized as the “heart,” and dialectical thinking, usually considered the “mind,” then struggle with each other. In such a state the one-sided instinctual impulses can never be explained but simply must be accepted as “demonstrably” or “empirically” true. Under such regressive pressure, a religious or scientific belief system can turn dogmatic. At the same time, the lower either/or dialectical thinking cannot lead to any true knowledge and also cannot explain itself.<sup>124</sup> As just explained, intuition and logic may devolve into instincts in conflict with dialectics, while the previous examples of truth and artifice may degenerate into validity versus falsehood, and common weal and individual pursuits into public good versus private interests. Any logical conclusion reached, as with the erratic impulses, must simply be accepted as valid, or at least as not yet demonstrably false.

In such a conflicted state, moreover, a person may not realize that his or her instinctual impulses could be wrong, or that the related neither/nor thinking is inherently self-limiting and based on errant instinctual impulses. The person may struggle to recognize the existence of a complementary and consistent logic and deeper wisdom. For example, coming from a

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<sup>123</sup> As Daoism’s seamless explanation indicates and as also explained above with respect to dualistic notions like complementarity and opposition or common weal and individual pursuits, logic can be and ideally is complementary. The two sides of any seemingly dualistic relationship can complement each other and indeed must complement each other for a return to the transcendent Whole and the ultimate Dao.

<sup>124</sup> The Daoist classics warn against clever sophistical disputation. *See, e.g.,* Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 74, 75, 109, 133 (chs. 18, 19, 47, 81); and Zhuangzi, *supra* note 54, at 103-107 (ch. 24). Because of the nature of such a dialectic, as Hume and Kant demonstrated, any conclusion reached—though it may “seem” right—can always be contradicted and thus is ultimately wrong.

position of alienation and insecurity, and stuck in the contradictory mindset of the public good versus private interests, a person may be unable to imagine the possibility of individual pursuits complementing the common weal and vice versa, which as already discussed above is the only possibility for a positive-sum outcome. As indicated by the primacy of consciousness over cognition, this problem in recognition is a matter of consciousness (again, akin to intuition) even more than it is a matter of cognition (again, akin to logic). In other words, a person cannot simply reason his or her way out of the contradictory thinking, though reflecting on the problems of contradiction may lead to helpful insights. As the Daoist masters emphasized, the mind is not a primary but only a secondary tool.<sup>125</sup>

In conclusion, the Daoist sages explained reality as a set of seamless layers beginning with the Dao as the ultimate reality, and then continuing with the One as a transcendent whole, the YinYang Two as a monistic-dualistic bridge to that transcendent whole, and finally the Form Three (allowing for the myriad things) as the conceptual and material framework for the experience of the higher states. The explanation entails the possibility of complementarity as the means of attaining the Middle Way and the Dao, as well as contradiction for that complementarity to be meaningful. This layered reality, furthermore, illuminates conventional concepts like consciousness, cognition, and form as well as space and time. The consistent cosmology and metaphysics can be applied to explain all phenomena. At the same time, any other approach would involve reductionist explanatory gaps. The relationship between the cosmological and metaphysical layers with their various properties is necessarily subtle because, as the Daoist sages understood, a complete explanation of reality, from the Formless to form, could be no other way.

Over the last two millennia, the most powerful exposition of the Daoist insights has been Traditional Chinese Medicine, though the central property of the YinYang has also been applied in other fields, such as warfare, art, and exercise.<sup>126</sup> In discordant times, as the Daoist texts themselves note, this simple but profound wisdom is often disregarded. In such times, academic and religious leaders, coming perhaps from a place of alienation as well as insecurity, may focus instead on discord and contradiction to decipher reality. Plagued by such contradiction, however, these descriptions always fall short of a complete explanation, resorting to paradoxical first principles that cannot be sustained.<sup>127</sup> Kant, Hegel, and Marx

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<sup>125</sup> The *Dao De Jing* at several places warns of intellectualism. See id.

<sup>126</sup> The famous text *The Art of War* (Sunzi Bingfa 孙子兵法) is based on Daoist principles. Similarly, the martial arts exercise of Tai Chi (Taijiquan 太极拳) is based on Daoism.

<sup>127</sup> Following Daoism's subtle logic, there is no need for a separate first-mover. The Dao is

were grappling with many of the same questions resolved by the ancient Chinese sages, and through examining dialectics in the context of Daoism their missteps become clear.

#### IV. WHERE DIALECTICS FELL SHORT

Each of the three versions of dialectics has related but slightly different problems. Kant may not have approved of Hegel or Marx extending dialectics to a comprehensive theory of reality, and they in turn of course thought Kant's static version was but a preliminary stage of knowledge. At the same time, Hegel and Marx disagreed with each other over the basic nature of dialectics, including whether transcendence was possible. Although in Hegel and Marx's theories, dialectics aimed to provide a philosophy without presuppositions or paradox, their theories did not accomplish this task. Daoism, by way of contrast, follows a seamless set of properties from the Dao to the One to the YinYang, and finally to three-dimensional form as well as space and time. The Truth is the Dao, and this Truth can also be understood and experienced by an individual through the Middle Way. Although dialectics and Daoism share some ideas, such as "the whole," the problem with dialectics really began with Kant's conclusion on logic and Hegel and Marx's acceptance of this conclusion.

Kant, following the ancient Aristotelian tradition, wrongly thought that logic could be isolated from intuition and that logic was necessarily contradictory.<sup>128</sup> As Daoism explains, intuition and logic exist in a YinYang relationship, always influencing each other. Intuition and logic, moreover, can be in either a complementary or a contradictory state. In line with this state, logic itself is either complementary or contradictory. In a harmonious state, the logical relationship is complementary, while in a discordant state logic is contradictory and understood as necessarily dialectical.<sup>129</sup> In chaotic periods, this contradictory dialectic may be prized while intuition—or really, an erratic impulsiveness—is neglected and vice versa. The

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the same as the One, the original totality, and also different from it.

<sup>128</sup> As discussed in Part I, Kant accepted the three Aristotelian laws of logic, which necessarily entail some sense of contradiction, and also thought that ultimately beyond the realm of experience there would be contradictory antinomies.

<sup>129</sup> As explained at the conclusion of this paper, the swirling Taiji diagram really represents the Daoist sense of a complementary logic as opposed to the Western sense of a contradictory logic. In the Taiji diagram, the Yin aspect contains the "eye" of the Yang aspect and vice versa—there is no Law of Identity. At the same time, the Yin and Yang aspects may become each other and in harmony are One, so there is no Law of the Excluded Middle. Finally, the Yin and Yang aspects, rather than contradicting each other, complement each other for the return to the Whole.

two sides undergo a continuous struggle. Finally, Kant failed to recognize that dialectics necessarily involves not just contradiction but also confirmation. A condition of contradiction is confirmation and the two aspects always exist together, although they may chase and deplete each other. In a harmonious state, complementarity in like manner exists with opposition, though in this mutually beneficial condition, the two aspects support and can even become one another. In considering logic, Kant perhaps deferred too much to the ancient Aristotelian dialectical tradition, but this way of thinking, as the Daoist explanation indicates, also revealed Kant's own internal contradictions as well as his era's conflicted state.

Following his misconception of logic, Kant also wrongly regarded the experiential world as inherently paradoxical (i.e., contradictory). Daoism explains paradox as the two YinYang aspects in a conflicted, seemingly contradictory state. In such a situation, rather than a "both/and" complementarity, a "neither/nor" contradiction prevails. Paradox is neither/nor, where it cannot be said that either side is true because the two sides contradict each other. In such a situation, a thinker like Kant may come down on the side of contradiction, but such thinking is always paradoxical in and of itself. As just discussed, a contradiction neither can nor cannot contradict itself. In a harmonious state, there is nothing contradictory about the two positions, and opposition complements complementarity. In other words, the two sides exist in a harmonious relationship for the experience of the transcendent One and ultimately the Dao.

As with the first two problems, Kant wrongly regarded the synthetic triadic "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" as an inevitable mental construct at the level of experience. As already discussed, this neither/nor dialectic is far from inevitable and does not lead to a synthesis. The opposing aspects of a logical proposition can be in a complementary state, and only in a complementary relationship do the two aspects synthesize in the sense of a transcendent Whole and ultimate Emptiness. In such a complementary state, moreover, the basic dichotomy would be a symbiotic "truth and idea," akin to "intuition and logic," rather than the antagonistic "thesis and antithesis." Under a holistic explanation of reality, the hidden aspect, as in the Yin truth or consciousness, always comes before the related apparent aspect, as in the Yang idea or cognition.<sup>130</sup> In other words, the idea is only for the experience of the truth. On the other hand, in a contradictory state marked perhaps by a sense of alienation and insecurity, the misguided thesis and antithesis complex arises with the thesis cognitive

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<sup>130</sup> The key to a consistent explanation is the negative, on an even higher level (i.e., the Dao), with negative-positive (YinYang) play of form below. The Daoist metaphysics shows how a complete explanation of reality could be no other way.

element regarded as an essential if not primary feature of knowable reality. This thesis-antithesis dialectic, however, cannot lead to any true synthesis but rather represents an ongoing struggle between the analytical and the synthetical aspects, with the analytical aspect as decisive.<sup>131</sup> Again, a true synthesis, as in the Whole, can be achieved only through complementarity. At the same time, as just explained, a relationship defined by contradiction involves not just contradiction but also confirmation for that contradiction to be meaningful. Similarly, a relationship defined by the analytical also involves the synthetical for that analytical to be purposeful. In a contradictory state, however, these two sides merely chase and deplete each other—there is no synthesis as in the Whole. As Daoism shows, Kant's triadic reflects an errant overall worldview. Reality is not about pursuing a linear dialectic dependent on cognitive postulates, but instead about a circular union based on a conscious sense of the truth (i.e., intuition).<sup>132</sup> In Daoism, the Form Three rather than being about a linear triadic is about a circular return of both abstract and concrete form to first the One and finally the Dao. Kant missed this holistic possibility.

Because Kant was focused on contradictory logic, which he rightly recognized could not produce an ultimate truth, Kant wrongly distinguished between the realm of experience and the transcendental realm, where such a truth could exist. As Daoism explains, there is no sharp line distinguishing these realms, and drawing a sharp line could never produce a useful explanation of reality. The play of form is connected through the harmonious Middle Way to the transcendental One and ultimately the Dao. The “Dao,” in fact, often refers to both the ultimate reality and the path for experiencing it. Though the Dao as an ultimate reality can only be named, it can always be pointed to at the level of experience. This pointing entails a balanced combination of intuition, which is always direct, and logic, which is the indirect counterpart and why intuition is purposeful.

Along these same lines, Kant had no basis for regarding or characterizing the transcendental realm as pure reason. As Daoism explains, intuition is primary and logic secondary, and even at the level of form, for the experience of the transcendental One, logic is but secondary to intuition. At the level of the transcendental One, moreover, the Dao as a circular intuition exists in a unity with the One as a linear logic. The Dao itself could be characterized as a Pure Intuition or Consciousness. At the transcendental level, logic always

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<sup>131</sup> In Daoism, the thesis-antithesis-synthesis relationship might be described as the YinYang opening and closing (YinYang Kaihe 阴阳开合). In this situation, the YinYang come together not as a harmonious blending (YinYang Heping 阴阳和平), but as two distinct parts.

<sup>132</sup> Instead of looking at a false dialectic, Daoism considers patterns of harmony and discord.

works with the Dao's intuition and conforms to a divine pattern. As such, there is no separate logic or reason. The One might be called "Pure Logic" or "Pure Reason," but this logic or reason cannot be separated from Pure Intuition. Kant, as already noted, appears to have been a product of his times and in elevating reason to a primary good may have been following the common sense of a mind-body dichotomy and otherwise reductionist reality.

Kant also misconceived of the transcendental realm as the only possibility for a transcendental freedom. He thought that in nature (or experience), human beings were not free because through understanding, everything was determined by the other (again, the inevitable contradiction). As explained in the previous paragraph, however, Kant was wrong to draw a rigid distinction between the experiential and transcendental realms. As Daoism shows, these two realms, or layers of reality, are seamless, and through the harmonious Middle Way, people can experience freedom even at the level of form. This freedom consists of people living in harmony with their surroundings, including with other people, and thereby experiencing the transcendent possibility reality offers. This freedom begins as an inner freedom but also acts as an outer freedom. When people accord with the Dao, the world accords with them. As already explained, in such a state, a secure logic is a faithful servant to an accurate intuition, and people know what they should do and are fulfilled in their pursuits. In the ideal state, the self and the other become a seamless whole.

In conclusion with respect to Kant's sense of dialectics, Kant misunderstood the nature of logic as well as the relationship between the experiential and transcendental realms and what was capable in such realms. The consistent Daoist explanation indicates that Kant's mistaken conclusions stemmed from his own errant instincts on the nature of reality: namely, that at the level of experience, reality was composed of separate matters, whether conceptual or material, essentially in conflict. Why did Kant suffer this confusion? As Daoism explains, when people deviate from a holistic sense of the world and come to experience alienation and insecurity they are apt to see a fragmentary world and then turn to an unstable intuition (i.e., impulsiveness) and an insecure logic (i.e., dialectics) to describe that world. At the same time, they cannot see how the erratic intuition or dialectical logic are related to each other and the larger context. People who turn to such dialectics are still using an intuitive, albeit misguided, sense of reality, and vice versa. In addition to these problems, Kant mischaracterized the transcendental realm as Pure Reason and the only possibility for freedom. In doing so without any possibility of explaining these phenomena, Kant was most likely thinking in terms of a separate first mover. Kant's philosophical work was successful,

however, in recognizing the limitations of a contradictory dialectics, even if he could not explain how he could come to this conclusion logically (and not dialectically).

Following Kant, Hegel sought to avoid this limitation by making such contradictions dynamic and elevating this contradictory state to a first principle. As already noted, Hegel recognized that Kant's sense of antinomies meant that it would be impossible to know anything definite through them. Hegel, however, was wrong to think that making contradiction dynamic and elevating it to a first principle could resolve this problem and provide a complete explanation of reality. As Daoism explains, contradiction is but for the possibility of complementarity and the realization of the Middle Way, transcendent Whole, and ultimate Emptiness. Elevating a dynamic state of contradiction to a first principle could never change its ultimate function. Though in a discordant state contradiction may dominate, moreover, contradiction never exists without the corresponding aspect of confirmation (again, just as in a harmonious state, complementarity may dominate but always co-exists with opposition). In addition, though Hegel is right that the two sides of a logical proposition cannot be separated (as demonstrated by the YinYang monism-dualism and as discussed above with respect to Kant's use of Aristotelian logic), Hegel, like Kant, was wrong to emphasize dialectical logic and isolate it from intuition. As demonstrated above with respect to Kant's sense of Aristotelian logic, intuition and logic exist in a YinYang relationship with intuition as the primary aspect. Coming at these questions from a worldview characterized by separation and contradiction, rather than characterized by the Whole as Daoism does, Hegel perhaps simply could not see that even in his fragmented scheme, confirmation and instinctual sensations were the necessary and essential counterparts to his contradiction and dialectics.

In some respects, Hegel was right to regard contradiction as dynamic rather than static, but he did not see the essential eternal, or changeless, aspect of reality or how the eternal, or changeless, aspect of reality was related to what he was considered the dynamic, or change, aspect of reality. As Daoism explains, the eternal, or changeless, is the primary aspect of reality and the dynamic, or change, is a secondary aspect for that eternal aspect to be meaningful. In a complementary state, the eternal and change lead to the transcendent One and ultimate Dao. Hegel did not realize that while he was right that everyday reality was dynamic—as opposed to static—there was still an eternal aspect of reality that was necessary for a return to the Whole and eventual Emptiness. In some respects, moreover, Hegel's theory of a dynamic reality violated his own principle of contradiction, because the dynamic should also be contradicted. Again however, Hegel failed to see that other than a “static” possibility

for reality, there was also an “eternal” possibility for reality, and this eternal aspect keyed the complete explanation. Hegel’s mistake perhaps derived from his acceptance of contradiction as a first principle and then his inability to grasp a seamless cosmology and metaphysics based on that principle. Consequently, he simply posited that the dynamic would result in the whole. The dynamic in contrast to or negating the static only comes into play in a misguided contradictory state. On a theoretical level, Hegel’s own work with one-sided first principles like contradiction and negation could be regarded as a static sense of reality and thus also contradicted his own sense of contradiction as dynamic. Within his contradictory metaphysics, Hegel could not resolve this paradox.

Hegel’s triadic of abstract-negation-concrete comes closer to a full explanation of reality than Kant’s synthetic triadic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis to the extent that the abstract precedes the concrete. Hegel’s triadic, however, is still wrong to the extent that the quality of negation, akin to contradiction, always works with affirmation, akin to complementarity, and affirmation or complementary is necessary for the logical relationship to be consistent. First, Hegel was correct that the abstract and concrete stand in relation to one another, with the abstract as the primary aspect and the concrete as the secondary aspect. As already noted, the Dao as well as the YinYang Two could be considered the Abstract or abstract, respectively, while the One as well as the Form Three are the corresponding Concrete or concrete, respectively. But, also as already noted, the abstract and concrete need not exist in a contradictory state and when they do exist in such a state, no return to the transcendent One is possible. At the same time, to the extent that negation is akin to contradiction, negation exists in relation to a continuation, akin to confirmation. In a harmonious state, this negation is understood as but a misguided sense of reality in contrast to affirmation, akin to the complementary, as the correct sense of reality. Again, Hegel thought that focusing on negation could avoid paradox, but he failed to realize that it entailed paradox. Negation cannot be negated by negation unless one makes negation into an absolute rule, which would be paradoxical. Logically, negation can only be contrasted at the same level with a continuation and at a higher level with a complementary affirmation. In creating his first principle of negation, Hegel was engaging in a logical sleight of hand—simply positing that negation has no opposite.<sup>133</sup> He failed to see how such a rule itself could be contradicted and that affirmation was an essential aspect of an explanation of reality.

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<sup>133</sup> Daoism warns against such obfuscations. The *Dao De Jing*, for example, warns against intellectualism. See, e.g., Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 143 (ch. 81).

Hegel also was wrong to posit quantitative change as leading to qualitative change. As explained in Part III, the Yin qualitative and the Yang quantitative always work together in a YinYang relationship, with the qualitative as the primary aspect and the quantitative existing but for that qualitative aspect. As a YinYang, the two sides constantly influence and transform into each other. The qualitative is necessary for the experience of the transcendent One and ultimate reality, but without the quantitative, the qualitative would not be meaningful. Hegel was right that crisis points, Daoism would say “extremes,” can lead to a sudden change from the quantitative to the qualitative, but the process also works in reverse, where the qualitative suddenly transforms into the quantitative. In beginning with the quantitative and arguing that gradual quantitative change led to qualitative change, rather than the qualitative and quantitative existing in a YinYang relationship, Hegel may have been following the scientific reductionism of the prevailing age. As Daoism explains, however, the truth of transformation is much more interesting than such a reductive and quantitative description could allow.

Following from his misunderstanding of the role of contradiction and negation, Hegel wrongly regarded negation of a negation as a progression. As discussed above, Hegel was wrong to focus on negation and highlight it in his triadic; as noted above, negation always exists but for the experience of affirmation. Hegel was also wrong that negation of a negation could lead to a progression. Daoist metaphysics illustrates how a negation of a negation is a negative-sum operation and cannot lead to the transcendent One—a situation where the Whole would be greater than the sum of the parts. In conflicted times, negation may seem like a progression, but only because its harmful effects are either overlooked or ignored. In such times, negation as the lower Yang aspect exists with continuation as the higher Yin aspect, with the two sides essentially contradicting, chasing, and depleting each other. To achieve the positive-sum transcendent One, there must be affirmation, rather than negation, and the two aspects of affirmation and distinction, akin to complementarity and opposition, must be in a harmonious state. Hegel’s thinking may have reflected the notions of scarcity and struggle that again dominated his era, and possibly an inner sense of personal insufficiency and conflict. Daoism, however, shows that such a state is inherently unsustainable. As Daoist metaphysics and especially Zhuangzi’s pivot shows, it is only a matter of time before a discordant contradictory condition returns to a balanced state. Negation ends not in a progression but in collapse or transformation.

Similarly, Hegel misconstrued contradiction as consummating in the Whole. As Daoism explains, contradiction is neither a first principle nor a primary aspect of reality, and

contradiction can never lead to the transcendent Whole. Contradiction, like the series of negations in the previous paragraph, is always a negative-sum operation. In a contradictory state, the two considerations, such as the communal and the individual, simply chase and deplete each other. As explained above, moreover, contradiction exists only for the experience of complementarity. In a complementary state, the two aspects, by supporting and attaining each other, achieve a transcendent Whole that is greater than the sum of their individual parts. Even in harmony, this YinYang relationship is complementarity and opposition, rather than complementarity as distinguished from contradiction. Only in discord does contradiction, in a relationship with confirmation, arise. As Daoism indicates, Hegel's misconceived theoretical position may have reflected Hegel's own contradictions and wishful thinking—a desire to escape them. He also needed contradiction to consummate in the Whole to provide a complete theory of reality.

Because of his emphasis on contradiction and negation, Hegel could never connect his abstract-concrete dynamic to a transcendent or ultimate reality. Seeking a full explanation of reality, Hegel merely posited the abstract and concrete as related to these higher phenomena. The Daoist metaphysics, on the other hand, shows how this dichotomy relates to the transcendent One and ultimate Dao. As covered briefly above, the abstract is a Yin property, while the concrete is a Yang property. At the level of ultimate reality, the Abstract is the Dao, which can only be named but is not the name itself, and this Abstract gives rise to a Concrete, which is the transcendent One, and an initial totality. The interplay of these two properties then produces the abstract-concrete YinYang Two—a consciousness-cognition, if you will, which, like the Dao, overall is a Yin abstraction. This YinYang Two finally gives rise to the Form Three, which of course is a final concrete aspect. This third-level concrete is necessary for the experience of the YinYang Two abstract, as well as the transcendent Concrete One and ultimate Abstract Dao. The abstract and concrete thus have three interrelated meanings: first, an absolute emptiness, as in the Abstract, and a transcendent totality, as in the Concrete; second, the abstract-concrete, as in the YinYang Two, which is a consciousness-cognition relationship, and third, the abstract as in this YinYang Two in contrast to the concrete as Form Three, which is regarded as matter. In this way, Daoism shows how an ultimate Abstraction can give rise to the everyday concrete, or form. At the level of form, the abstract YinYang Two and concrete Form Three may exist in a state of complementarity and thereby realize the transcendent Concrete One and ultimate reality of the Abstract Dao.

As demonstrated in the previous paragraph and also in other parts of this paper discussing the relationship between the Dao and the One, Hegel in conclusions such as the true is the

whole either wrongly conflates ultimate reality with the transcendent Whole or confuses the transcendent Whole with the ultimate True. While in some respects, as Daoism also recognizes, the ultimate reality of the Dao, or the True, and the transcendent One, or the Artifice, are the same, in other respects they are different. As Daoism explains, the ultimate reality is the ineffable, an absolute Abstraction, and although this ultimate reality gives rise to the transcendent One, and absolute Concretization, and can be considered the same as this transcendent One, the ultimate reality is also distinct from the transcendent One. First, the Totality is not Emptiness, but instead a necessary step for the experience of Emptiness. Similarly, whereas the Dao is the ultimate True, the One is the transcendent Artifice for the experience of that ultimate True. Finally, the Dao and the One must be distinguishable as the True and Artifice to give rise to the YinYang Two at the next level and for the experience of everyday reality to be meaningful. The hidden Dao and the apparent One exist as the fundamental YinYang Two relationship, which for the experience of the ultimate reality can exist in either a complementary or a contradictory state. The relationship between the Dao and One at most could be explained as, “The Dao is the One, but the One is not the Dao.”<sup>134</sup> To the extent that Hegel was confusing the One as the Whole with the Dao as the Truth, Hegel was wrong. Hegel perhaps needed to characterize the Whole as the True for a complete theory of reality, but without understanding the relationship between the ultimate reality of the Dao (i.e., Emptiness and Truth) and the transcendent One (i.e., Fullness and Artifice), he was not providing a coherent cosmology.

Hegel also wrongly regarded the immediate as accessible through contradiction. Although Hegel was right that ultimate reality could be characterized as the Immediate (the Here and Now), he was wrong that a contradictory dialectics could ever arrive at this Immediacy. As Daoism illustrates, the Dao is the Immediate, akin to Consciousness or Intuition, and the One is the Proximate, akin to Cognition or Logic. The YinYang Two is then a further immediate-proximate dynamic, akin to intuition-logic or consciousness-cognition. Finally, the YinYang Two and Form Three are a final immediate-proximate relationship, akin to a final intuition-logic or consciousness-cognition manifestation. The Immediate is related to Consciousness or Intuition at each of the three levels. To the extent that cognition or logic is involved in the

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<sup>134</sup> To the extent the whole, or One, is True, it is so only in relation to the Dao. The Dao is in everything, as the *Zhuangzi* so ingloriously pointed out. See *Zhuangzi*, *supra* note 54, at 90-91 (ch. 22). However, everything is not the Dao, as the *Dao De Jing* explains in its first chapter. See *Tao Te Ching*, *supra* note 54, at 57 (ch. 1). Not even the One is the True, or the Dao as ultimate reality itself; the Dao and the One are sometimes the same and sometimes different (both one and two).

Immediate, this cognition or logic must complement the related consciousness or intuition. When the two sides of consciousness and cognition or intuition and logic are in conflict—as in the case of dialectics, where the intuition as an impulsiveness and the logic as a dialectical reasoning chase and deplete each other—there is no sense of the immediate. The person is dominated by dialectical thinking, rather than accessing an intact consciousness, or the intuitive. This conflict may be further experienced as a pivotal struggle between the immediate here and now and the proximate near and far or past and future. In short, dialectics is not just a matter of the secondary cognitive and logical function, but a warped cognition and logic. Dialectics, even in a dynamic state, thus is the antithesis of immediacy.

Hegel wrongly perpetuated the mind-body distinction. As discussed in Part II, Hegel at the level of contradictions wanted to join both thought and being, the common mind-body dilemma, and thereby come to understand how a thing can reflect upon itself (self-consciousness). In a similar way, he wanted to derive this self-consciousness from a larger consciousness. For a full explanation of reality, Hegel needed his system of dialectics to explain both the thought process and the thinghood (being), which does the thinking. Because of the problems in his metaphysics, however, he could not accomplish these aims. As Daoism shows, Hegel was wrong to focus on the mind-body distinction to explain how a thing could come to reflect upon itself. As discussed in the previous paragraph, Hegel's mind, or thought, should be considered as a consciousness-cognition "YinYang Two" that works with Hegel's body, or "Form Three." In a holistic metaphysics, the mind, or cognition, is but a secondary aspect. At the same time, the material body is but secondary to an energetic consciousness (which encompasses both consciousness and cognition). Daoism further explains that when a person experiences alienation and insecurity, they are apt to misidentify with their separate self (the body) and think that their thoughts (the mind) about that separate self are all-important. In such a state, the person disregards consciousness and in fact may be said to become unconscious, in the sense they are no longer in touch with the consciousness aspect which leads to the ultimate Consciousness, or the "Dao." As the Daoist explanation indicates, Hegel may have focused on the mind-body distinction because of a felt sense of alienation and insecurity. It likely also reflected the mindset of his age. When people exist in a state of harmony, they become conscious that their own consciousness and cognition, as well as their form, are but a manifestation of an ultimate Consciousness. In such a state, moreover, the mind, as the logical operation, plays only a secondary role to consciousness, as the primary intuitive operation.

Following the above explanation, Hegel's characterization of being, or form, as the epitome of abstraction is thus also misleading. As Daoism explains, being, in the sense of a three-dimensional form, is the concrete and consciousness-cognition is the abstract. Although these two aspects work together, and although form is but an artifice to consciousness-cognition as the truth, form is still a concretization rather than an abstraction. Even at the level of the transcendent One and ultimate Dao, the concrete and abstract are distinguishable with the transcendent One as the Concrete and the ultimate Dao as the Abstract. As already explained, these two phenomena should not be conflated. Consequently, though being, as in three-dimensional form, could be characterized as the final step or manifestation for the experience of the ultimate Abstraction, it is not the epitome of that Abstraction.

Related to Hegel's misguided focus on the mind-body dichotomy and his misplaced emphasis on contradiction, Hegel wrongly emphasized the identification and differentiation of things as a fundamental purpose of existence. For Hegel, the abstract and concrete are engaged in an endless back and forth at the level of the ideal, and through this process human beings come to identify and differentiate things. As Daoism explains and as indicated above, everyday reality is populated by process-forms rather than discrete "things." The outer form is but an artifice for the experience of the inner process as the truth. As an ideal philosophy, Hegel's dialectics perhaps should have recognized this relationship. To the extent process-forms may be distinguishable, moreover, it is always along YinYang both/and lines, rather than reductionist either/or divisions. In other words, process-forms, whether as classes of natural species or within a class of species, are related in a curvilinear YinYang way rather than a purely linear pattern, and consequently it is impossible to reduce the myriad process-forms to discrete linear categories. At the same time, the various process-forms, whether appearing as chemical elements, internal organs, or seasonal changes, are related in both indirect and direct ways, another YinYang. This point is underscored in the Five Phases explanation.<sup>135</sup> Because of the necessity of unity, the curvilinear structure of the phenomenal world, and the indirect and direct relation among things, Traditional Chinese Medicine, exemplifying the Daoist approach, focuses on the intricate YinYang patterns rather than a purely local factor, such as heart disease.<sup>136</sup> Finally, the purpose of process-forms is not to identify and differentiate other process-forms, but to align with the Middle Way and thereby experience the transcendent Whole and ultimate Emptiness. At some point, all process-forms

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<sup>135</sup> See Huang Di nei jing su wen, *supra* note 54, at 83 (ch. 4).

<sup>136</sup> See Kaptchuk, *supra* note 114, at 4-7, 13-15 (noting that Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners look for patterns of events rather than discrete cause and effect relationships).

are part of and must return to the transcendent Whole and ultimate Emptiness. Although distinctions can be drawn among process-forms, such distinctions must not conceal the harmony among forms. Only in a confused state do the distinctions among “things” seem primary or fundamental. Hegel was thus wrong to think that the phenomenal world could be differentiated and that the purpose of existence was to do so.

Because Hegel misconstrued thought and being, he also mischaracterized ultimate reality as the Idea. Hegel regarded spirit as a primal quality, and then attempted to explain how a being could reflect on itself. As already explained, the ultimate reality is Consciousness, while the transcendent reality could be considered Cognition, or Idea. These two phenomena should not be conflated. Individualized thought does not occur until the level of YinYang Two (i.e., consciousness-cognition), and in the realization of the ultimate reality, such cognition plays only a secondary role to the primary consciousness. With the proper consciousness, human beings recognize that the world unfolds in the only way it can, following the YinYang Two, and thus step-by-step cognition has only a supplemental role to play. Hegel was thus again wrong to champion thought and Idea.

Though Hegel regards the ideal and material as connected, his emphasis on distinction implies that these two categories are separate, and in any case, Hegel cannot show how the two aspects are related. As just explained, the purpose of reality is not about distinguishing among things—Daoism is a process-form, or really emptiness-form, philosophy<sup>137</sup> rather than a thinghood philosophy, and thought is not separate from being—the two aspects of cognition and form are part of a YinYang relationship that also involves the even more important aspect of consciousness (i.e., consciousness-cognition and form). The core of a form (i.e., being), moreover, always consists of three dimensions of consciousness-cognition (abstractions-concretizations). This consciousness-cognition (the “ideal”) works at every level of form (the “material”), from the molecular to the corporeal (closer and further from the Dao and vice versa), and without form, the consciousness-cognition could not experience the Dao.<sup>138</sup> Finally, the phenomenal world unfolds in the only way possible for the experience of the Dao, and if a person cultivates the individual self, the world does not

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<sup>137</sup> With respect to Daoism as “a process-form philosophy,” the “process” is “emptiness,” which is experiencing itself, so the best characterization of Daoism would be “an emptiness-form philosophy,” or simply an “emptiness philosophy.” The property of “emptiness” defines and strings together each layer of reality.

<sup>138</sup> Consciousness-cognition gives rise to form, but without the form the consciousness-cognition would be pointless. In exercise practices like Taiji and Yoga, cultivating the form also cultivates the consciousness-cognition and vice versa.

appear as unordered, but as a harmonious Whole. Hegel thus was wrong to regard the ideal as principal and imply that it was independent of the material. Because of this mistake, Hegel again could not achieve a complete explanation of reality.

Though Hegel asserted that his theory encompassed both a timeless truth and a related time-dependent truth, his scheme mandates that *a priori* truth and *a posteriori* truth are two separate phenomena. Here, Hegel's difficulty is opposite to Kant's. Kant could not explain how his philosophy, which entailed an assertion of truth as well as reason and the freedom to engage in that reason, could be written at the level of experience, where Kant claimed truth did not exist. Hegel suggests that truth (as well as necessarily both reason and freedom) is also available at the level of experience, but he cannot explain why, amidst the contradiction, truth could exist there. As Daoism explains, truth (as well as both reason and freedom), as a harmonious balance of intuition and logic, is available in the Middle Way, and through this Middle Way truth is both *a priori* and *a posteriori*. As already noted, intuition is circular and immediate while logic is linear and proximate, and intuition is necessarily the higher aspect in this relationship and related directly to the Dao, or the ultimate Truth, itself. In this way, the Dao, though also self-identical, can be directly experienced and known. The Dao is both the Truth and a process of Truth (i.e., the Dao as an Absolute and the Dao as the Middle Way). Hegel was right that truth existed at both the level of experience and as ultimate reality, but he failed to explain why truth would exist at either level and how these two kinds of truth were connected.

As regards an *a priori* truth, Hegel perhaps recognized the limitations of his ultimate True. Hegel identified ultimate reality as the True, but he did not promise that people have or could experience it. In the main, Hegel just describes a process for our cognition, infinitely getting closer to the True. Daoism, as explained, shows how people can and ultimately must experience the larger reality. The second chapter of *Zhuangzi* details how a process-form, such as a person, constantly pivots around the Middle Way, and through the attainment of this Middle Way a person can experience the ultimate reality, what Hegel might call the True. Hegel did think that perhaps culture found its ultimate subjective summations in art, religion, and philosophy, in which as he described it, being, at the terminus of its long progression, is fully assimilated by self-conscious thought. Daoism, however, shows that by according with the Middle Way, the experience of the Dao is possible in every aspect of life, including, as the third chapter of *Zhuangzi* relays, ordinary work like butchering an ox.<sup>139</sup> Hegel's thinking

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<sup>139</sup> See *Zhuangzi*, *supra* note 54, at 21-22 (ch. 3) (relaying the story of the cook butchering an

here appears to have been constricted again by an essentially materialistic and reductionist worldview. After all, why should the True be limited to art, religion, and philosophy? He did not see that even in the mundane, such as in planting and harvesting crops, the experience of the True is possible. As Daoism explains and many martial arts masters have accomplished, the purpose of existence is to accord with the Dao in every aspect and moment of life, and such accordance is not only possible but necessary for a healthy spiritual, mental, and physical existence.

Like Hegel's mistake about the nature of ordinary truth, where he assumed that truth was available at the level of contradictory experience but then could not explain this assumption, Hegel wrongly presumed that freedom was available at the level of contradictory experience. Hegel argues that the contradictions in slavery as both no freedom for the slaves and relative freedom for the owners is a misconception, because when owners are beholden to slaves for their freedom, they are not free, and, conversely, when the owner needs the slaves for his or her freedom, the slaves have a certain amount of freedom or power over the owner. Daoism, on the other hand, demonstrates the problems with this discordant freedom and how a concordant freedom is available through a harmonious state. As Daoism explains, in a state of contradiction, the two sides, whether owners and slaves or otherwise, constantly contradict, chase, and deplete each other. People are confused, and everyone is an owner of and slave to his or her misconceptions of reality and to reality itself. In a state of complementarity (i.e., harmony), however, people see the world clearly and accord with the transcendent Middle Way. They are free both mentally and physically. In such a state, the world also accords with the individuals. Hegel perhaps needed to posit freedom in his contradictory account of experience for a complete explanation of reality—otherwise, how could he explain his own ability to theorize. However, Hegel was wrong to make this assumption, and as Daoism explains, freedom is not possible in such a contradictory state.

Hegel also does not explain how, given the fundamental property of contradiction, the whole can be both mind-independent and mind-dependent. As Daoism explains, the mind is necessarily the Yang cognitive element, existing on multiple layers with the essential Yin consciousness element. At the layer of everyday reality, consciousness and cognition in a complementary relationship allow for a return to the Whole. The Whole itself is then a transcendent Cognition in relation to the Dao as an ultimate Consciousness. Consequently, the Whole is both mind-independent, a Pure Idea, where reality could be no other way and

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ox).

thus the lower mind is not necessary, and mind-dependent; the transcendent experience could not occur without the mind at the common layer of reality. The ultimate reality of Consciousness, in like manner, might be said to be both mind-independent (i.e., as the ultimate reality independent of Cognition) and mind-dependent (i.e., dependent on Cognition for the experience of itself).

As alluded to in the previous paragraphs, Hegel wrongly implies a hierarchy of needs grounded in the material. Hegel posits a possible freedom in both the narrow sense of controlled contradiction or controlled conflict (among people, as with the owner and the slave) and the transcendental sense of an Absolute Mind (where subjects like art, religion, and philosophy reside). Hegel emphasizes that education can help people reach the higher state without explaining why physical concerns should be primary. In doing so, Hegel is presupposing a hierarchy of needs. Daoism shows that the spiritual and physical aspects exist in a YinYang relationship, with the spiritual, or energetic, as the higher of the two aspects. The physical reality is only for the experience of the spiritual. In a lucid state, people recognize this truth, and through living in harmony with the Middle Way have everything that they need for their “physical” needs. Only in a conflicted state do people regard themselves as separate from one another, experience the physical world as one of scarcity and conflict, and see a conflict between their material and spiritual needs. Again, Hegel seems to have been a product of his times, which were focused largely on an ostensibly fragmented and conflicted material reality. To the extent that Hegel was offering an “ideal” dialectics, as opposed to Marx’s “material” dialectics, however, this error is striking.

In conclusion with respect to Hegel’s dialectics, Hegel’s most significant error stemmed from his adoption of Kant’s sense of an inevitable logic that was confined to contradiction, i.e., dialectics. This dialectic led him to conclude that contradiction was a first principle of known reality. Because of this mistake, Hegel had to argue for the negation of the negation—an infinite negative regression, which he could not then explain. He also had to posit the whole and then that this whole is True, neither of which he could justify. Finally, he had to assume things like truth, reason, and freedom, at the level of a contradictory experience. In the end, Hegel simply posited necessary aspects, like the whole and the True, for a complete theory of reality, but did not actually achieve a coherent explanation of them. Hegel perhaps sensed and wanted life to be meaningful, but mired, in an essentially reductionist worldview, he could not show why it was so. As Daoism indicates, Hegel should have understood that contradiction is but for the experience of complementarity, and that a harmonious Middle Way allows for a transcendence to the Whole. Hegel also should have understood that the

phenomenal world, whether consciousness, cognition, or form, follows a subtle pattern and this pattern is what is important for the experience of the transcendent Wholeness and ultimate Emptiness. Finally, as Daoism demonstrates, Hegel should have understood there is a difference between the ultimate True and the transcendent Artifice, and this important difference plays out and even takes center stage in the phenomenal world as the YinYang relationship. Because of these explanatory gaps, Hegel's dialectics at most has acted as an elevated critical method.

In taking dialectics in a materialistic and thus "scientific" direction, Marx was plagued by many of the same explanatory problems that Hegel had faced, and because Marx regarded the larger cosmological and metaphysical questions as irrelevant, his version of dialectics was even more problematic as a complete explanation of reality than Hegel's had been. Whereas Hegel could not connect the ideal mind to a material body, for example, Marx could not connect the material body to an ideal mind and any larger or deeper reality. Without considering and explaining the possibility of complementarity and a transcendent Whole, Marx's materialistic dialectics could only ever provide a biased and misleading description of human socio-economic activity. Daoism shows how Marx's fixation on the material fell far short of not just a full explanation of reality but even a reasonable description of material phenomena.

As previously discussed, just as Hegel could not explain how the ideal, or mind, was related to the material, or body, Marx could not explain how the material, or body, was related to the ideal, or mind. In other words, Marx could not explain how he, as a material being, could reflect on himself and others to develop the theories about society that he did. Daoism shows that while Hegel was wrongly focused on the mind and missed out on the relationship of consciousness to cognition and then consciousness-cognition to form, Marx was wrongly focused on the body and missed out on how this body, or form, was related to consciousness-cognition. Daoism shows how the ostensibly material body, or form, is but a manifestation of an ultimate Consciousness, and always works with an energetic consciousness-cognition. The energetic consciousness-cognition, moreover, is primary, and without this energy the material form could not exist. At the same time, the material, as in Form Three, gives the energetic, as in YinYang Two, the opportunity to experience itself. Marx, perhaps in line with prevailing scientific tendencies, thought he could focus solely or primarily on the material to explain reality, but as Daoism shows, this perspective precluded Marx from seeing the true nature and purpose of the material as well as reality in general.

Without understanding the nature and purpose of form, moreover, Marx was not explaining the body so much as he was providing a limited and misguided description of it.

Adhering to Hegel's central dialectics proposition, Marx wrongly regarded contradiction as fundamental. Whereas Hegel was focused on an idealistic contradiction, Marx of course was focused on a materialistic contradiction. As already explained above, contradiction is not inevitable, not even as a purely material phenomenon, and only ever exists for the experience of complementarity, which facilitates a return to the transcendent One and ultimate Dao. Only when people fall into a disharmonious condition do they consider contradiction or conflict to be a primary aspect of reality. At the same time, the appearance of material contradiction is really a function of a primary energetic contradiction—in other words, contradiction is necessarily an energetic phenomenon before it is a material one. As explained, reality is not simply a matter of either the ideal or the material, and Marx missed the important role of consciousness and cognition in relation to form. The primary YinYang Two energetic consciousness-cognition always works with the secondary Form Three material form. When the energetic consciousness-cognition is contradictory, the material form becomes contradictory. Marx, perhaps following a reductionistic science, considered physical matter as separate from or even superior to energy, but in reducing reality to matter he could not explain either matter or reality in general. In short, Marx seems to have wrongly concluded that the material world was more separate and important than a consistent explanation of reality would warrant. As Daoism explains, the truth of reality is not as simple as Marx described it, and energy is the higher aspect in the energy-matter dynamic.

Partly following another one of Hegel's dialectical conclusions, Marx mistakenly thought that the material contradiction would consummate in the whole of human society. Though in focusing on the material Marx was not worried about a transcendent reality, his dialectical theory still had to posit some sort of a "whole." In Marx's version of dialectics, material contradiction thus consummated in human society. As Daoism shows and as already explained above with respect to Hegel's sense of contradiction and the Whole, contradiction can never consummate in a meaningful Whole. Contradiction is always negative-sum, and there is no possibility of even a zero-sum outcome as in so many discrete parts combined in an artificial whole. The only possible Whole requires the opposing considerations to complement each other, thereby transcending their individual selves. In a similar vein, with respect to Marx's conclusion of contradiction consummating in the whole, Daoism demonstrates how the whole could never be a subset of reality, such as human society, but instead must be the totality of existence, i.e., the transcendent One. Only a transcendent

Whole would be a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts and thus a positive-sum result. Moreover, again as Daoism explains, every part of reality is connected to every other part of reality, and thus it is incorrect, for example, to regard the environment as irrelevant to human society. Human beings alter the natural environment, and the natural environment in turn affects human beings. Focused on the material, Marx's sense of human society, like his sense of contradiction as elementary, was misguided. Marx may have thought that contradictory human individuals—again emphasizing the individual mind-body model—could consummate in a whole of human society, but as Daoism shows, contradiction within a society or with a natural environment is never sustainable.

Like Hegel, Marx also mistakes the negation of a negation as leading to a progression. As already noted, just as contradiction does not lead to a whole, the negation of a negation does not lead to a progression. Instead, the negation of a negation always results in a negative-sum outcome. Even if the process and goal are purely material, as Marx presupposed them to be, the result is still negative-sum. Any supposedly material “good” achieved is accompanied by an even greater material “harm.” As Daoism explains, the energetic and the material exist both within an individual and in relation to the “other,” and the harm may manifest as either an internal harm, such as a physical or mental illness, or an external harm, such as a negligent accident or intentional violence. The harm may also manifest on a scale larger than the individual, such as if man-made environmental disasters or climate change in turn threaten human survival. Because all of reality, from the molecular to the planetary, is related and exists for the purpose of attaining the Middle Way, the contradiction and negation always manifest in one way or another. The harmful effects may not be readily apparent, especially if one is only looking at a limited subset of reality, such as material production, but the harmful effects always occur and in one way or another affect the person or persons who were acting from the contradictory position. Finally, with respect to material negation of a negation and material progression, contradictory production methods, which Marx's theory necessarily entails, always result in a negative-sum outcome. Again, contradiction and negation are a regression, because reality, including the material, is a process of realizing the ultimate reality of Emptiness. Only through a Middle Way approach, where the collective and individual interests exist in a harmonious balance, can a positive-sum productive result be achieved. Daoist metaphysics further demonstrates how this positive-sum approach is available and preferable, even from a purely material standpoint. The energetic and material are related, and according with the Middle Way brings about material abundance as it facilitates an ideal consciousness and cognition. As his thinking indicates, Marx was stuck in

a reductionist and materialistic worldview, and this wayward perspective prevented him from seeing the ideal aspect of even material reality.

To the extent that Marx adopted Hegel's sense of gradual change leading to crisis points where one force overcomes its opposing force, he was mistaken about quantitative change leading to qualitative change. With Marx's emphasis on material social transformation, this axiom was perhaps even more definite and thus controversial than Hegel's ideal version had been. As already explained, the qualitative and the quantitative exist in a subtle YinYang relationship. Change is primarily qualitative (a never-ending experience of the Dao, whether among species or within species), and the quantitative is only for that experience. Crisis points, moreover, do not lead to progress, for the same reason that negation does not lead to a progression. For positive-sum change, there must be a harmonious balance between the consciousness-cognition and form. Only in this way can a higher state of the energy-matter dynamic and thus a true breakthrough be achieved. Extreme discord may lead to harmony, but only because people realize that the discord is counterproductive and turn to a harmonious approach as an alternative possibility. As already discussed, the Middle Way acts like a pivot, and the farther people deviate from it, the more they feel pulled back to it. Marx was, again, too focused on material bodies and could not see that phenomena involve primarily the energetic consciousness-cognition and eventually a transcendent Whole and ultimate Emptiness.

Focused on material progression and perhaps following a scientific approach, Marx also was wrong to resurrect the misguided triadic of thesis-antithesis-synthesis to explain his theory. As already explained with respect to Kant's use of the synthetic method, the two sides of this formula need not contradict each other, and for progress to be achieved they must complement each other. At the same time, as Daoism instructs, the hidden negative, or Yin, precedes the apparent positive, or Yang, and this negative-positive arrangement is necessary for a complete explanation of reality. In a complementary state, the two aspects could be known as truth and idea, akin to intuition and logic, with the secondary aspect of idea or logic complementing the primary aspect of truth or intuition. Only in a contradictory state does thesis versus antithesis arise. Putting the "thesis" first, moreover, would require an obvious first mover, which could not be accounted for. Finally, as Daoism explains and even Kant recognized, this negative synthetic process, even in a dynamic state, is incapable of achieving any truth. It results only in endless contradictions (i.e., an infinite series of assertions and refutations). Marx's use of the synthetic method may have seemed plausible in a reductionist system, and in his use of it Marx perhaps accorded with emerging scientific practices, but as

Daoism illustrates, reality is neither so diametric nor so linear. When the two sides are in discord, they only perpetuate a regressive state.

As with his mistake about negation leading to progression, Marx wrongly concluded that contradiction could settle into a non-contradictory social whole. As just noted, contradiction leads to a negative-sum result and not a whole, and in any case, the whole can never be reduced to a phenomenon like human society. A non-contradictory social whole, as in controlled contradiction is not the same thing as the transcendent Whole or Oneness, and in such a state, as already noted, the individual parts and society overall are regressing, even if they may appear to be moving forward. Furthermore, contradiction cannot even lead to its opposite of complementarity without a shift in consciousness and mental recognition that contradiction is futile and only complementarity can lead to a progressive result. At the same time, this transformation is not primarily material or attainable through cognitive training. Instead, this evolution involves the deepening of consciousness, which results in a person becoming aware of the power of consciousness as well as the connection between the self and the other and the possibility of a complementary existence and attaining something greater, as in the transcendent Whole and ultimate reality of Emptiness. Focusing on the material and contradiction, Marx perhaps could not realize how his theoretical emphasis on contradiction confined himself and others to a degenerating state and that such an existence could never lead to a sustainable social arrangement.

Because of his mistaken assumptions about contradiction, negation, progression, and non-contradiction, Marx wrongly focused on historical contradictions and regarded them as constituting a progression and ultimately consummating in a non-contradictory whole. First, Marx was wrong to focus on discordant historical times, such as slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, and ignore concordant historical times. Similarly, Marx could not envision how capitalist industrial societies could ever become confirmative, rather than simply non-contradictory. As Daoism explains, complementarity and contradiction are both part of phenomenal existence and have been integral parts of human evolution and history. In harmonious times, people could and have sought to live in harmony with each other as well as with nature, and through such a harmonious existence achieve some transcendent whole, if not an ultimate reality. Such times, as Daoism indicates, were also when true progress was achieved, on the levels of both consciousness-cognition and form. Marx was fixated on contradiction and living in a period wrought with conflict, so in some respects it's not surprising he would have overlooked balanced periods and their contributions to human

development. A full explanation of history, however, must account for the important element of complementarity.

Second and as just noted, Marx was wrong to regard these contradictory historical times as resulting in a progression as opposed to a continuation in conflict with regression. As already discussed, Daoism shows why contradiction, material or otherwise, can never lead to a positive-sum result, even though such contradiction may appear, from a narrow perspective, to do so. Contradictory societies, whether for example capitalistic or socialistic, are inherently unstable and insecure (self-destructive), and even if one contradictory society—say a capitalist society, overtakes another contradictory society—say a socialist one, the result is still a society that is self-conflicted, in the process of regressing, and ultimately unsustainable. At the same time, Marx did not understand that ongoing human development is not simply a material pursuit, but an energetic-materialistic pursuit with the energetic as the higher of the two aspects. As already explained, the energetic of consciousness, along with cognition, drives change, in either a positive or a negative direction. In other words, the material (as in Form Three), which Marx emphasized, is really but for the underlying energy (as in the YinYang Two), and history is primarily about the progress of this energetic: when the energy is in harmony the material also advances.

Lastly with respect to a progression, when the consciousness-cognition exists in harmony along with the form (i.e., body), progress occurs, but such progress will not necessarily continue forever. At a higher stage, human beings again become both further from the Dao and closer to it, and it is possible for human beings to thus fall again into a discordant state, sometimes with even more dire consequences (such as with the possibilities of the current nuclear age). This decline, ironically, may start with human pride and an emphasis on the individual self. Before long, however, this decline also involves a feeling of alienation and insecurity. These sensations result when the Middle Way is lost and people lose a sense of connection to each other and the world. Only when people undergo another change in consciousness or hit rock bottom do they transform and again pursue the Middle Way. In this way, the path of progress resembles a spiral rather than a line. Marx failed to realize that human beings are an indivisible part of a much larger reality, and not simply material beings. This overall reality, moreover, entails continuous change, a Middle Way around which all things pivot, and the possible experience of a transcendent Oneness and the indescribable ultimate reality.

Finally, as discussed with respect to material contradiction consummating in a non-contradictory whole, Marx wrongly projected history as culminating in a non-contradictory

world order. Marx thought this kind of whole, which he called “communism,” would appear after the last stages of capitalism. As already noted, the contradictions themselves cannot result in a non-contradictory Whole; controlled conflict is not the same as the transcendent Whole and there is no lesser whole. Such a state is inherently unstable and destructive. Because he thought contradiction was inevitable and primary, Marx also could not envision an industrial productive system or later system where harmony might prevail and society really advance, not just materially but, even more importantly, energetically. As already indicated, the common weal may exist in a harmonious relationship with individual pursuits, and this condition is even preferable for individual enterprise from not just a consciousness-cognition aspect, but also from a form aspect. Such harmonious periods have occurred in the past with peaceful hunting and gathering groups, nomadic tribes, and homesteaders. As Daoist metaphysics indicates, such a harmonious experience is also available in the present electronic age and is in fact essential for human advancement. At the highest level of attainment, people may accord perfectly with the Middle Way, and experience both the transcendent Oneness and an ultimate Emptiness. This stage is not communism as Marx envisioned it, but a harmonious balance between the individual and the communal. Marx’s thinking with respect to the highest state of history was corrupted by his sense of a material world in conflict.

In short, Marx endorsed the scientific emphasis on the material and logical contradiction and tried to use Hegel’s dialectical framework to provide a complete explanation of material phenomena. His theory, however, failed for many of the same reasons that Hegel’s theory failed, and his attempt at a full scientific explanation also revealed many of the fundamental problems with the modern scientific approach. In many respects, Marx, as with reductionist science in general, provided a theoretical framework that prevents a complete explanation and constricts human capacity. A contradictory society may seem to achieve breakthroughs, but as the holistic metaphysics demonstrates, the truth is otherwise. Marx failed to recognize the importance of complementarity as a fundamental principle and driving force in human history. He also failed to see the importance of a totality as in the One and ultimate reality of Emptiness. Finally and for these reasons, Marx could not see that contradiction could never lead to a non-contradictory state, nor how the final economic stage of history would involve a more harmonious existence.

Because Marx was focused on the material, in some respects his dialectical quest was more modest than Hegel’s project; Marx did not seek to explain all of reality. Kant had

forewarned that a contradictory logic (i.e., dialectics) was unhelpful,<sup>140</sup> and Hegel's attempt at a dynamic dialectical theory might also have served as a further warning to Marx. In some respects, because Marx abandoned Hegel's conceptual vigor and went in a materialistic direction—that not just Hegel but also Kant would have rejected, he may be the least well-regarded of the three dialectical philosophers. On the other hand, Marx is the closest of the three thinkers to the science to which modern society has become accustomed. This disconnect between Marx's reputation and the import of his work perhaps reveals an insufficiently practical Western philosophy as well as an insufficiently theoretical modern science.

## V. CONCLUSION

Daoism, with the YinYang as its central feature, is captured in picture by the black and white Taiji diagram. This circle with two swirling halves represents the Daoist sense of a complementary logic as opposed to the Aristotelian sense of a contradictory logic. In the Taiji symbol, the Yin aspect contains the “eye” of the Yang aspect and vice versa—there is no Law of Identity. At the same time, the Yin and Yang aspects may become each other and in harmony are One, so there is no Law of the Excluded Middle. Finally, the Yin and Yang aspects, rather than contradicting each other, complement each other, allowing for the return to the Whole and eventually the Dao. To explain his holistic dialectic, Hegel also adopted a circle, which of course circles back on itself, creating the appearance of a whole.<sup>141</sup> Within Hegel's dialectics, however, Aristotle's three laws of logic remain, and thus it is impossible for his dialectics to ever result in such a holistic rendezvous. The *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi* both critique this limitation of dialectics.<sup>142</sup> Though Hegel's dialectics shares some

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<sup>140</sup> Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, *supra* note 6, at 193-195.

<sup>141</sup> Hegel, Science of Logic, *supra* note 18, at 71. *See also* Tom Rockmore, Hegel's Circular Epistemology (1986).

<sup>142</sup> The *Dao De Jing* specifically warns against the dialectical (辯). *See* Tao Te Ching, *supra* note 54, at 143 (ch. 81). The *Dao De Jing* differentiates between this lower dialectics (bian 辯) and a higher dialectic (dabian 大辯), the latter of which is akin to discernment and necessary for distinguishing between complementarity and opposition as well as complementarity and contradiction. For the higher dialectic, *see id.*, *supra* note 54, at 106 (ch. 45). The *Zhuangzi* in its second chapter uses identical language to critique dialectics, in a long passage emphasizing that the lower dialectical (bian 辯), or disputatious, exchanges are really pointless, and the higher dialectic (dabian 大辯) leads to a both/and unity where even language—necessarily either/or—ends. For one English translation of this section from the *Zhuangzi*, *see* Zhuangzi, *supra* note 54, at 12-14 (Ch. 2).

such similarities with Daoism, such as recognizing a need for ultimate reality as Nothingness and a larger whole as something True, Hegel came to these conclusions not in the logically consistent manner that Daoism does, but simply in a positive way, concluding that they were necessary for a full explanation of reality.

Unfortunately, because of these shortcomings, Hegelian dialectics can only be a cautionary critical method in either/or logical studies, while Marxist dialectics is limited to a critique of modern capitalistic economic systems and call for controlled contradiction. Kant, meanwhile, drew some profound, albeit ultimately unhelpful, theoretical conclusions. From the perspective of Daoism, dialectics is an example of how thought can be crippled by a discordant consciousness and cognition. In such a state, it is hard to grasp an alternative approach based on complementarity and the transcendent Middle Way; it is hard to escape reductionist tendencies to instead think in terms of a true Totality. Neither Hegel nor Marx could appreciate that their basic assumptions were unsupported and misguided and could never lead to a full or even useful explanation of reality. The Chinese Daoist sages over 2,500 years ago certainly also encountered such challenges, but coming from an Eastern perspective, found a simple and elegant solution to them.

The Eastern wisdom tradition of Daoism does offer an alternative to dialectics and reductionist thinking in general, and though its metaphysical details have been overlooked even in its home country of China for much of the past two millennia, it's principles, like the Dao and the YinYang, have been practiced in Traditional Chinese Medicine and are otherwise central to much of Chinese culture. In a way, Daoism is the realization of the dialectical quest, and offers a guide for the world to advance to a stable and secure (harmonious and balanced) state, and as such it warrants modern scholarly attention. The transformation involves not just the mind, as Hegel and even Marx may have thought, but even more importantly, consciousness, resulting in an integrated dynamic between consciousness-cognition and form where people are conscious of their connection to one another and the larger world, and also recognize the possibility of a harmonious Middle Way, the transcendent Whole, and the ultimate Emptiness. In this way, Daoism shows that existence is meaningful. As the Daoist wisdom explains, moreover, a conflict-oriented world is unsustainable. If humankind doesn't consciously transition to such an integrated vision and practice, modern society will, in a matter of time, be forced to do so.