

A COMPLEMENTARIST RECONSTRUCTION OF THE DIALECTICS OF HEGEL AND MARX

AGUNBIADE, Saheed Anuoluwapo
Lagos State University
Department of Philosophy
Saheed.agunbiade@Lasu.edu.ng

Abstract

This paper critically examines the Hegelian idealist dialectic in contrast to Marx's materialist dialectic, focusing on the central issue of binary opposition and its limitations. Both philosophies, rooted in the law of excluded middle, present contradictions as mutually exclusive and resolved through synthesis. Through comparative and conceptual analysis methods, this paper argues that dialectics should transcend binary opposition and instead embrace complementarity, providing a more nuanced and holistic understanding of contradictions. Drawing on Jonathan Chimakonam's Ezumezu logic of complementarity, grounded in Igbo philosophy, the paper proposes a trivalent approach to contradictions. This framework synthesizes Hegel's idealism and Marx's materialism, viewing contradictions not as opposing forces but as interdependent and capable of transformation. Basically, the paper advocates for a more flexible and dynamic dialectical framework that acknowledges the coexistence and transformation of contradictions.

Keywords: Binary Opposition, Dialectics, Ezumezu, Logic, Hegel, Marx

Introduction

The concept of dialectics has undergone significant evolution from its early origins in pre-Socratic philosophy to its modern formulations by thinkers like Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx. The notion of dialectics, which broadly refers to the process of development through contradictions, can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Heraclitus famously asserted that "everything flows," emphasizing the role of constant change and conflict in the universe. His idea that opposites are in tension and interdependent marked a foundational insight into the dynamic nature of reality. For Heraclitus, the unity of opposites was not just a feature of thought but a metaphysical principle that governed the natural world (Russell, 1945). This early insight into dialectics was developed further by Plato and Aristotle, who each introduced their own methods of engaging with contradictions. Plato, for example, viewed dialectics primarily as a method of intellectual inquiry aimed at uncovering the truth by resolving contradictions, as seen in *The Republic* (Plato, 2000). Aristotle, on the other hand, focused on logic and the law of non-contradiction, which would later influence the development of formal dialectics in both Western and Hegelian traditions (Metaphysics, Aristotle, 1924).

However, it was Hegel, in the 19th century, who fully systematized dialectical thinking in his idealist philosophy. Hegel's dialectic is grounded in the triadic movement of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, in which every idea (thesis) inevitably generates its opposite (antithesis), and the conflict between the two is resolved in a higher synthesis. This method, central to Hegel's logic, is shaped by the law of excluded middle, where contradictions are seen as mutually exclusive elements to be overcome and transcended through synthesis. Hegel famously argued that “the real is the rational,” and that the unfolding of reality, including human consciousness, happens through the resolution of these contradictions (Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 1813).

Karl Marx, in turn, adapted Hegelian dialectics into his materialist framework, emphasizing the contradictions embedded in the material conditions of society, particularly class struggle. Marx's dialectical materialism builds on Hegel's insights but reinterprets them within the context of real, material conditions rather than abstract ideas. For Marx, historical change is driven by the opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, with the resolution of this class struggle supposed to lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of communism (Marx, 1867). Both Hegel and Marx, however, are bound by a common limitation in their dialectical approaches: they ground their systems in binary opposition, which reduces complex contradictions to mutually exclusive, opposing forces. In Hegel's dialectic, contradictions are resolved by synthesis, while in Marx's framework, the clash of social classes is the engine of historical progress. Although this binary structure offers a coherent method of analysis, it often oversimplifies the complexity and interdependence of the contradictions at play (Omogbe, 2002). This paper, therefore, seeks to critique the problems of binary opposition in both Hegelian and Marxian dialectics by proposing a shift towards a more flexible and dynamic approach. By drawing on Jonathan Chimakonam's *Ezumezu* logic of complementarity, an indigenous Igbo philosophical framework, the paper aims to offer a trivalent model of contradiction (Chimakonam, 2013). Unlike binary opposition, *Ezumezu* logic sees contradictions as interdependent and capable of transformation, providing a more nuanced and holistic understanding of dialectical development. Nonetheless, in order to justify this, the paper will begin with Hegelian dialectics.

Hegelian Dialectics

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, a prominent German philosopher who lived from 1770 to 1831, made significant contributions to philosophy, particularly with his development of the dialectical method. This method is evident throughout Marx's work and serves as the foundation for Marxism. The core idea of Hegel's dialectical process is that humanity is alienated from the Absolute, and history is the gradual process of human movement toward reunification with this Absolute, which Hegel equates with God. As Wolff explains, alienation occurs when two entities that should be together become separated (2003, 29). In Hegel's view, humanity and the Absolute belong together but are estranged, and the dialectical process is what brings them together over time. The dialectical process facilitates human progress toward the Absolute by diminishing ignorance and increasing self-awareness, gradually replacing flawed perceptions of reality with more accurate ones

(Freedman, 1990: 12). Each transformation in human perception brings one closer to the Absolute. Eventually, this process will reach a point where humanity no longer feels alienated from the Absolute, which Hegel regards as the end of history (Freedman, 1990: 12).

The evolving, more accurate forms of reality that bring humanity closer to the Absolute emerge through the interaction of the thesis and antithesis, which exist in contradiction to one another. The concept of contradiction in dialectics is complex, as it differs from its conventional logical definition (Heilbroner, 1981: 41). In traditional logic, a contradiction refers to opposites, such as the contradiction between being and non-being, or A and not-A (Heilbroner, 1981: 41). However, in dialectics, contradiction has a relational meaning, referring to opposing forces that both depend on and destroy each other (Heilbroner, 1981: 39). For instance, the roles of master and servant are contradictory but interdependent. A master cannot exist without a servant, and a servant cannot exist without a master, with each being defined only in relation to the other (Heilbroner, 1981: 36). Marx applied this concept of contradiction to analyze class struggle, particularly the antagonism between the ruling class and the working class, as I will explore later. The thesis and antithesis represent opposing stages, with the ruling class corresponding to the thesis and the working class to the antithesis. However, the thesis-antithesis dynamic can be applied to various analytical contexts beyond Marx's use. For example, a room may be brightly lit, but this can only be understood in relation to a dark room. This is a dialectical relationship where brightness is the thesis and darkness is the antithesis. These opposites are defined by their relationship to one another. If a person spends their life in a room that is always lit in the same way, they would have no concept of light or darkness. The interaction of light and dark does not lead to a "truer" form of light but rather a compromise, a new synthesis that represents a balance between the two. This synthesis is another stage in the dialectical process. In the dialectical process, the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis play pivotal roles. The thesis and antithesis are in conflict until a critical point is reached, at which the existing thesis is replaced by a synthesis. For example, in the case of light and darkness, their interaction creates a new perception of light that blends both elements. This synthesis, formed from the combination of thesis and antithesis, then becomes the new thesis (Freedman, 1990: 12). The new thesis represents a higher level of development or understanding compared to the previous one. It is considered a more accurate form because the synthesis incorporates the strengths of both the thesis and antithesis, allowing the thesis to benefit from the contradiction. Contradiction, as Elster (1986: 34) notes, is crucial for progress: "You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough."

This newly formed thesis marks another step toward the Absolute (Freedman, 1990: 12). However, this new thesis is not isolated; it is met with another antithesis. The thesis and antithesis will once again interact, leading to a new synthesis, and the process repeats itself. Even as each new thesis brings humanity closer to the Absolute, an antithesis will always exist until the Absolute is fully reached. Every shift from thesis to synthesis represents a small progression toward the Absolute. This cycle will continue until a thesis emerges where no antithesis is needed. When no contradiction remains, the thesis will persist as it

has reconciled humanity with the Absolute and removed alienation. Once this state is achieved, the dialectical process concludes (Freedman, 1990: 12). Therefore, Hegel's dialectic suggests that human perception of reality is in constant flux, driven by the unstable coexistence and eventual resolution of thesis and antithesis (Heilbroner, 1981: 35). With each resolution, a new, improved state of reality emerges, moving humanity closer to the Absolute. This process continues until no contradictions remain, at which point the Absolute is reached and, according to Hegel, history comes to an end (Freedman, 1990: 12). Nonetheless, the next section shall consider the dialectics of Karl Marx before moving on to examine both the positions of Hegel and Marx.

Marxian Dialectics

Karl Marx was a German philosopher, political theorist, economist, and a revolutionary socialist. He also developed his dialectical idea from the influence Hegel. Although Marx deeply respected Hegel's ideas, he did not fully embrace Hegel's philosophy. Hegel was an idealist, regarded as one of the key figures in German idealism. Idealism holds that reality is shaped by ideas or the mind, exemplified by Descartes' famous assertion, "I think, therefore I am." Marx, however, rejected idealism, criticizing it as the "mystificatory side of the Hegelian dialectic" (Marx, 1990: 102). For Hegel, the interaction of thesis and antithesis occurs in the abstract realm, and humanity's progression toward the Absolute is not rooted in the material world. Marx, on the other hand, believed that this interaction occurs in the real world, driven by human actions rather than abstract ideas. He aimed to "turn Hegel's dialectic on its head" in order to "uncover the rational core within the mystical shell" (Ibid, 1990: 103). Marx agreed with the general structure of Hegel's dialectic but argued that Hegel had misplaced its application, focusing on the realm of ideas rather than human material existence.

In rejecting idealism, Marx grounded his worldview in materialism, which directly opposes idealism. Materialists assert that matter is the only verifiable reality, and that the material world precedes and shapes all consciousness. Marx famously argued, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx & Engels, 1983: 160). For Marx, the Absolute was not God or a supreme idea within human consciousness, but rather the material condition that enables freedom. He believed that alienation would be resolved not through reunification with a divine being, but by achieving true material freedom. Marx's conception of freedom will be explored further later. Marx's materialism, influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach, rejects the existence of anything beyond the material world. Feuerbach argued that religion is a human creation, with God being a projection of human qualities, and that only by rejecting religion can humanity achieve true freedom. Marx shared this view, describing religion as an illusion that alleviates the suffering caused by alienation, but for true happiness, humans must confront and resolve this alienation. Unlike Feuerbach, Marx believed that understanding the causes of religion was not enough; it must be actively eliminated. He criticized Feuerbach's "contemplative materialism" for ignoring the role of human action in changing conditions. Marx argued that to achieve real change, people must actively transform their circumstances rather than merely contemplate them.

Historical materialism posits that economic forces drive human history, with social classes shaping this progression through their interactions ((Marx & Engels, 1983: 160). Humans engage with the material world not through abstract thinking, but through physical labor using tools like shovels and plows. This labor transforms the environment, enabling people to exert more control over it. For example, the introduction of tractors in farming replaced animal-driven plows, enhancing efficiency and further developing economic forces. As these forces evolve, class struggles intensify. These struggles between the ruling and lower classes are the contradictions that fuel the dialectical process in Marx's theory. According to Marx and Engels, the history of society is fundamentally shaped by class conflicts, as seen in the opening line of *The Communist Manifesto*; "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Classes arise from the tensions between economic forces, production relations, and societal structures.

Marx provides his most explicit depiction of the relationships between productive forces, relations of production, and the superstructure in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. He argues that in the course of their social production, individuals form specific relationships that are necessary and beyond their control. These production relations align with a particular stage in the development of their material productive forces. Together, these relations form the economic foundation of society, which in turn supports a legal and political superstructure, accompanied by corresponding forms of social consciousness. The mode of material production shapes the broader social, political, and intellectual life. It is not human consciousness that shapes their existence, but rather, their social existence that shapes their consciousness. When the material productive forces in society reach a certain stage, they clash with existing production relations, or more specifically, with the property relations that had previously facilitated their functioning. These relations, once drivers of development, now become obstacles, initiating a period of social revolution. As the economic base changes, the entire superstructure undergoes a transformation, often rapidly. (Marx and Engels 1983: 159-60) As productive forces improve, existing property relations become a hindrance, preventing further progress. The superstructure; comprising legal, philosophical, religious, and political systems, supports these production relations. Conflict arises between the ruling and lower classes, driven by the tension between improving productive forces and the outdated relations of production. While the forces themselves are constantly evolving, the ruling class seeks to maintain the status quo to preserve their power, preventing the lower class from benefiting from these advancements. This class conflict eventually leads to a social revolution, where the lower class overthrows the ruling class, changes the relations of production, and creates a new superstructure that serves their interests. However, this new system will eventually become incompatible with evolving productive forces, leading to the emergence of a new lower class and beginning the cycle of class struggle again. Each mode of production contains the seeds of its own demise.

The Problem of Binary Opposition in Hegel's and Marx's Dialectics

Binary opposition is a concept that has gained significant importance in philosophy,

linguistics, anthropology, and social theory. It refers to the structuring of concepts into pairs of opposites that are typically understood as being in contrast or conflict with one another. Examples of binary oppositions include pairs like good/evil, life/death, male/female, and truth/falsehood. These opposites are not just mutually exclusive; they often structure how we understand the world and form the basis for philosophical and cultural systems. The idea of binary oppositions can be traced back to ancient Greek philosophy, particularly in the thought of Heraclitus. These early philosophers viewed opposites as essential to understanding the world and human existence. Heraclitus is known for his doctrine of the unity of opposites, which posits that all things are defined and made meaningful through their opposition. For example, he famously stated, “strife is justice,” highlighting the idea that conflict and contrast are inherent to the universe (Kirk, 1957). Plato, in his Theory of Forms, introduced a form of dualism that established a clear opposition between the world of appearances (material world) and the world of Forms (ideal world). Plato's metaphysical system established an enduring opposition between the sensible (material, changing) and the intelligible (ideal, unchanging), a key dichotomy that would influence later philosophical systems, particularly dialectics (Plato, Book VI). In these early thinkers, the opposites were often hierarchical, with one side being privileged over the other; such as Plato's ideal Forms being superior to the material world. This dualism laid the foundation for later philosophical engagements with binary oppositions (Kirk, 1957). Nevertheless, The formalization of binary opposition as a key concept in modern philosophy began in the 20th century with structuralism, a movement that sought to understand how meaning is constructed through differences and oppositions within systems. For instance, Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, was one of the key figures in this development. He proposed that meaning in language is derived from difference, not from any intrinsic connection between words and objects in the world. In his view, words are defined by their opposition to other words. For example, “cat” gains meaning because it is different from “dog” or “fish.” This reliance on oppositions became central to structuralist linguistics, and it has broader implications for how we understand culture, identity, and knowledge (Saussure, 1916). Also, Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, extended this idea of binary opposition to the study of myth and culture. He argued that many cultural myths are structured around pairs of opposites, such as life/death, man/woman, and nature/culture. These oppositions, according to Lévi-Strauss, reflect the underlying mental structures of human societies and their ways of making sense of the world (Lévi-Strauss, 1963).

However, the key logical principle closely associated with binary opposition is the law of excluded middle. This principle asserts that for any proposition, either that proposition is true or its negation is true, but no middle ground exists (Lloyd, 2004). The law of excluded middle is a fundamental principle in classical logic that asserts that for any statement P, either P is true or not-P (its negation) is true. This law is one of the three laws of thought in classical logic, along with the law of identity and the law of non-contradiction. The law of excluded middle holds that there are no intermediate possibilities between a proposition and its negation. That is, there is no “middle ground” between truth and falsehood (Copi, 2002). In other words, the law of excluded middle presents a stark dichotomy; something is either true or false, and no third possibility is allowed. This logical framework has profound

implications, particularly in systems of thought that prioritize duality or binary structures in understanding reality. It emphasizes the irreconcilability of opposing terms and thus supports the idea of binary opposition in philosophical and cultural terms. Therefore, from the discussion so far, the law of excluded middle functions as the logical underpinning of binary opposition. In binary opposition, there is a clear division: either one term holds, or the other holds, but not both. This division is absolute; either truth or falsehood can be true, but not both, and the truth cannot be located somewhere in between. There is no middle ground between opposites in this logical schema.

From the above views, it can be argued that Binary opposition is a critical aspect of both Hegelian dialectics and Marxist theory. Both thinkers, despite their philosophical differences, utilize a dialectical framework that hinges on the antagonistic relationships between opposing forces, or thesis and antithesis; Hegel and Marx both employ this dialectical model in which opposites cannot coexist and must be resolved through a higher synthesis or negation. Hegel's philosophy is the idea of contradiction as a driving force of change. In his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel argues that history, thought, and reality unfold through a process of contradictions; opposing terms (thesis and antithesis)—which are resolved in a higher synthesis (Hegel, 1807). This process is dialectical because it moves from opposition to reconciliation through the sublation of contradictions. For Hegel, contradictions are not simply opposites that need to be resolved; they are inherent to the nature of reality and drive progress. The law of excluded middle plays a crucial role in this system. In Hegelian dialectics, the law of excluded middle is reflected in the idea that opposites cannot coexist in their pure form and must be negated and integrated into a higher unity. Hegel's famous master-slave dialectic serves as a clear example of this process. The relationship between the master and the slave represents a binary opposition, with each figure defined in opposition to the other. However, this binary is ultimately transcended as the slave attains self-consciousness and overcomes the contradiction, moving towards freedom (Hegel, 1807, § 178–183). Hegel's system is thus structured on binary oppositions, but with the critical distinction that these oppositions are dynamic, evolving, and ultimately reconciled in a higher form. The law of excluded middle plays an important role here, as the opposites cannot coexist in their initial forms without violating the logical principle; instead, one must negate the other, leading to a synthesis. As Hegel writes, “what is negative is not merely negative; it is only by the negation of the negation that the dialectical process is completed” (Hegel, 1813: 210).

On the other hand, In Marxist thought, the binary opposition takes the form of class struggle, specifically between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx's materialist conception of history is predicated on the idea that societal progress occurs through the resolution of contradictions inherent in the economic structure. The binary opposition between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, like the opposition in Hegel's dialectics, is seen as an antagonistic relationship, with each class defined in opposition to the other.

Marx's approach to class struggle aligns with the law of excluded middle because the two classes cannot coexist peacefully in a capitalist society. The law of excluded middle dictates that either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat must emerge victorious. Marx foresees

the ultimate negation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a classless society, or communism, which would eliminate class distinctions altogether. Marx argues that “The history of all hitherto societies is the history of class struggles” (Marx, 1848: 47). In this sense, the binary opposition between the bourgeoisie and proletariat is central to the dialectical unfolding of history. For Marx, this opposition leads to revolution, where the proletariat (antithesis) will overthrow the bourgeoisie (thesis), resulting in a synthesis; a classless society. The law of excluded middle is reflected in this binary because, according to Marx, there is no room for a “middle class” or a peaceful coexistence between the two opposing classes in capitalist society. For example, Marx's prediction of the proletarian revolution reflects the binary opposition between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The capitalist system's contradictions, particularly the exploitation of labor, will ultimately lead to an insurrection by the proletariat, who will overthrow the bourgeoisie and establish a classless society. This conflict is a direct application of the law of excluded middle, as Marx envisioned that the contradiction between these two classes could only be resolved through revolution; the negation of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (Marx, 1867). Therefore, both Hegel and Marx construct their dialectical systems around binary opposition, and the law of excluded middle plays a defining role in these systems. For both thinkers, contradictions between opposing forces are resolved through the negation of one term in favor of the other. In Hegel's system, this leads to a sublation (*Aufhebung*), where the thesis and antithesis are not merely eliminated but transformed into a higher unity. In Marx's system, the opposition between classes is resolved through revolution, where the ruling class is overthrown and replaced by a new order. However, this binary framework presents limitations. The dialectics of both Hegel and Marx assume that contradictions must ultimately be resolved through the negation of one term, leading to an either-or scenario. The law of excluded middle dictates that there is no middle ground between opposites—either one side wins or the other. This stark dichotomy raises questions about the nature of contradictions in reality. Is it truly necessary for oppositions to be resolved in this binary manner, or can contradictions coexist in a more nuanced or dynamic fashion? It is on the basis of this, *ezumezu* logic will be considered in the section as a theoretical framework to the problem of the binary dichotomy.

A Complementarist Reconstruction of Hegel/Marx's Dialectics: The response of Ezumezu Logic

Ezumezu logic, developed by Jonathan Chimakonam (2019), draws from the cultural and intellectual traditions of the Igbo people of Nigeria. The term itself translates to “the collective whole, the sum of all that is most viable, potent, and powerful” (Orizu, 1994; Chimakonam, 2019; Besong, 2021). Although this system is rooted in Igbo concepts, Chimakonam argues that it is not limited by culture and can be universally applied. He developed *Ezumezu* logic in response to critiques of African philosophy, which is often seen as merely a reworking of Western philosophical thought by African scholars (Ofuasia & Ogbonnaya, 2022). Chimakonam rejects this view, instead advocating for the development of a logic system that reflects African worldviews and experiences. While Emmanuel Ofuasia (2024) has offered revisions to Chimakonam's version of *Ezumezu*, this discussion will focus on Chimakonam's original formulation.

Ezumezu logic consists of two primary methods of reasoning: *Arumaristics* and

Ohakaristics. *Arumaristics* begins at the periphery and moves toward the center, emphasizing inclusion and complementarity, where peripheral truths support central truths (Chimakonam, 2019). In contrast, *Ohakaristics* starts from the center and extends outward, highlighting context and individual identity, with the truth of the whole supporting the truth of its parts (Chimakonam, 2019). Additionally, *Ezumezu* incorporates three truth values: *Ezu* (truth), *Izu* (falsehood), and *Ezumezu* (complemented truth), which is denoted as “C” (Ofuasia & Ogbonnaya, 2022). This differs from the Western logical tradition, which uses only two values—true (T) and false (F) (Besong, 2021). Besong (2021) argues that this framework allows reality to be interpreted through three perspectives: the physical, the non-physical, and a combination of both. It highlights the complementarity between these dimensions, challenging the Western binary of truth and falsehood, which does not account for the complexities of reality. By introducing a third truth value, *Ezumezu* logic suggests that something can simultaneously be both true and false, emphasizing the complementarity between these two states. This approach allows for context-dependent evaluations of truth and falsity, permitting propositions to be true in one context and false in another. Thus, *Ezumezu* logic offers a framework where seemingly contradictory elements can coexist interdependently, reflecting their intrinsic complementarities.

Chimakonam also introduces three supplementary laws in *Ezumezu* logic: *Njikoka*, *Nmekoko*, and *Onana-etiti*, which replace the three classical laws of Aristotelian logic. *Njikoka* asserts that a proposition is only true when accompanied by another variable, emphasizing the relational context (Chimakonam, 2019). *Nmekoko* introduces the third truth value “C” to complement the traditional truth values, signifying the collective power that emerges from the convergence of individual elements. *Onana-etiti* departs from Aristotle's law of excluded middle by permitting propositions to be both true and false, depending on the context (Chimakonam, 2019). These laws offer a more flexible approach to logic, moving from a bivalent to a trivalent system, accommodating the relational and dynamic nature of truth (Chimakonam, 2019). Chimakonam contends that *Ezumezu* epistemology prioritizes lived experience, intuition, and embodied knowledge, acknowledging the limitations of strictly rational thought in capturing the richness of human understanding. This epistemology emphasizes the importance of direct experience and relationality in understanding the world.

The unique aspect of *Ezumezu* logic lies in its recognition of complementarity, which builds on traditional logical laws while incorporating new principles such as *Njikoka*, *Nmekoko*, and *Onana-etiti*. These principles provide a formal foundation for African logic that is both flexible and dynamic. While some critics argue that *Ezumezu* logic is culturally specific to the Igbo people and, therefore, limited in scope, supporters assert that it transcends cultural boundaries and can be applied universally. Its versatility has been demonstrated in addressing a range of global issues, such as gender inequality (Besong, 2021). Chimakonam's vision is to position *Ezumezu* logic as a globally applicable system, which has been supported by scholars like Amara Esther Ani (2019). Emmanuel Ofuasia (2019) also draws parallels between *Ezumezu* and process philosophy, which emphasizes dynamic, interconnected processes over static entities. However, in a more recent

publication, Ofuasia (2024) has offered revisions to Chimakonam's logic, suggesting that synthesis should be contextual and that traditional laws may need to be adjusted to suit specific metaphysical goals. Ofuasia argues that synthesis is not contrary to *Ezumezu* but essential to understanding reality, particularly in the context of subatomic particles (Ofuasia, 2024: 80).

Before concluding, it is important to address the connection between complementarity and *Ezumezu* logic, particularly with regard to their trivalent approach. While the similarities are generally clear, the nuanced differences would require further exploration in another context. However, it is worth showing that both complementarity and *Ezumezu* logic stress that difference does not always signify conflict or opposition, as is often assumed in much Western thought. Instead, they suggest that there can be moments of mediation and reconciliation, where the imperfection of one aspect is enhanced, or at least significantly improved, by the complementarity of another. Of course, there are instances where differences are so profound that a decisive resolution is necessary, and contact may actually complicate rather than improve the situation. The important point is that nothing is absolute or predetermined, and ongoing critical engagement with phenomena allows us to uncover the various possibilities within each situation or interaction. This approach has important implications for understanding human nature and social dynamics, whether from an epistemic, normative, psychological, or sociological perspective.

Therefore, the *Ezumezu* logic of complementarity offers a framework that emphasizes interdependence rather than negation. Its foundational belief is that contradictions are not inherently oppositional but complementary, allowing for a more dynamic and inclusive understanding of reality. *Ezumezu's* approach to dialectics does not rely on the law of excluded middle, which demands a strict either-or stance. Instead, it embraces a third value; often denoted as “C,” which allows for contradictions to coexist and interact in a complementary manner. This third value represents complementarity and acknowledges that seemingly contradictory elements can reinforce each other or exist together in a productive tension.

This form of dialectics is more flexible than the Hegelian and Marxian models. By rejecting the binary opposition and the law of excluded middle, *Ezumezu* logic allows for a more nuanced understanding of contradictions. It emphasizes that the truth of one element does not necessarily negate the truth of another, but that they can interact and produce new insights. In this sense, *Ezumezu* offers a more inclusive and holistic way to understand the development of contradictions, one that transcends the rigid structure of binary oppositions. For instance, Hegel's dialectics could be reconstructed using the framework of *Ezumezu* logic to view contradictions not as oppositional entities that must be resolved through the negation of one element, but as complementary forces that exist in a dynamic relationship. Hegel's dialectical process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis could be viewed not as a linear progression where opposites are necessarily overcome, but as an interactive process where the contradiction itself fosters the emergence of new forms or higher states of being through its interaction. Similarly, Marx's materialist dialectic, which sees class

struggle as a binary opposition between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, could also benefit from the complementary approach. In this context, the struggle is not merely a zero-sum game where one class must defeat the other for the dialectic to resolve. Instead, the contradiction can be viewed as part of a process of transformation where both classes contribute to the restructuring of society in ways that preserve elements of both, leading to a new synthesis that incorporates aspects of the old structure in a reimagined form.

Thus, *Ezumezu* logic opens up the possibility of a dialectical reconciliation that does not depend on the rigid negation of opposites but instead fosters a greater interconnection and interdependence between seemingly contradictory elements. This approach offers a more holistic, inclusive, and potentially more accurate framework for understanding the contradictions inherent in both idealist and materialist systems of dialectics.

Conclusion

From the discussion so far, it can be argued that this paper has analyzed the Hegelian and Marxian dialectics, noting their shared reliance on binary opposition and the law of excluded middle, which restrict their capacity to fully address contradictions. Hegel's idealism focuses on the evolution of ideas through thesis and antithesis, while Marx's materialism centers on class struggle as the driver of historical change. Both frameworks, however, adhere to a binary conflict-resolution model that overlooks the complementary nature of contradictions. In contrast, *Ezumezu* logic, with its trivalent structure and focus on complementary contradictions, offers a more dynamic and inclusive approach to understanding reality. This logic allows contradictions to coexist and interact productively, offering a more nuanced view of development. Rather than resolving contradictions through negation and final synthesis, *Ezumezu* logic emphasizes the interdependence of opposing forces, presenting a flexible, less dogmatic view of contradictions in social, philosophical, and material contexts. Hegel and Marx, while foundational to dialectical thinking, could benefit from this more fluid, context-sensitive approach. *Ezumezu's* focus on complementarity challenges the binary framework of both Hegelian idealism and Marxian materialism, suggesting contradictions are not final or mutually exclusive but part of a continuum that transforms through interaction. By adopting this inclusive framework, we open up new possibilities for understanding dialectical movement and rethinking philosophical, social, and political change.

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