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The logical foundation of Enactivism

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The logical foundation of Enactivism

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Title:

The logical foundation of Enactivism

Thesis-question:

How can Hegelian Idealism provide a framework for the psychological paradigm of Enactivism?

Thesis:

Enactivism needs to ground the psyche in Hegel's self-referential logic of negation for a foundation of Psychology in the groundless ground of infinity.

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Abstract:

Enactivism regards itself as the paradigm of cognitive science that puts an end to Representationalism.

Representationalism conceives of objective reality as independent from, and prior to the mind. The mind is therefore posited as a secondary representation of the primary reality which creates a dualistic divide between ontology and epistemology.

Enactivism conceives of reality and the mind as interdependently arising in unison with each other. The mind is conceived as the activity of the organism in interdependence with its environment. This is how Enactivism believes to end up with a non-dualistic conception of reality that is capable of conceiving of life as evolving autonomously, as opposed to being predetermined by the one objective reality in itself.

Enactivism uses the notion of self-reference in order to make sense of this interdependent becoming of the organism and its environment in a dialectically circular fashion. This dialectics of circularity, though, due to Enactivism's existentialistic philosophical roots, is conceived entirely from within the perspective of life itself. Reality in itself is not addressed due to existentialistic fears of ending up with the presupposition of a deterministic thing-in-itself.

I will show that Enactivism nonetheless ends up with the very same dualistic separation between reality itself and mind that is believed to be the cause of Representationalism, precisely because it avoids answering the question of reality in itself (i.e., reality prior to mind and life). In other words, I will show that Enactivism can only be regarded as logically coherent, once we extend this philosophy of 'becoming' into reality in itself.

Reconstructing Hegel's self-referential logic of negation, which I will prove to be *the* non-dual solution to Representationalism, and thereby dualistic thinking as a whole, I will provide a non-dualistic answer to the conception of reality in itself.

I will thus show how Enactivism, by avoiding to conceive of reality in itself as self-referential, inadvertently falls back upon this Dualism. Enactivism falls short of following through on its principle of self-reference, as it restricts this principle to life itself, as opposed to applying it to all of reality.

The application of the principle of self-reference to the whole of reality will additionally be shown to be not only in line with but also fulfilling all of Enactivism's core desiderata, while also giving logical sense to the Buddhistic philosophy of Non-Dualism and Emptiness that is at the very heart of Enactivism's project of overcoming Representationalism.

The result will be a non-dual understanding of reality as the self-referential becoming of the psyche as subjective (i.e., immaterial) change of the object (i.e., matter). This understanding of the psyche will amount to the foundation of a non-dual science of psychology.

Chapter1: Thesis

What Is Enactivism?

The following chapter defines Enactivism by means of three theses.

The first thesis identifies the concept of self-reference as the essential theoretical characteristic of Enactivism. The second thesis identifies Enactivism's negative definition by means of its opposition to the paradigm Enactivism seeks to overcome – Representationalism. The third thesis identifies the desiderata necessary to achieve the promised paradigm of Enactivism.

1.1 Enactivism is self-reference.

Enactivism is a philosophical position within psychology and cognitive science founded with the intention to achieve a radical paradigm shift in the scientific understanding of consciousness, life, and reality itself (cf., Varela 1976, p.67; 1996a, p.338, p.347; 1984, Thompson, 2007, p.3). Enactivism's core idea lies in its conception of the mind as the living organism's purposeful activity (i.e., 'en-action'). The organism's body amounts to the agglomeration of the habituation of these activities. The body is thus identified with the sum of its perpetually re-enacted habits.

This enaction of the body's habits does crucially not follow pre-ordained structures but is understood to be purposefully guided by the organism's autonomous activity (cf., Thompson, 2007, p.131, p.136ff.; p.146; Varela et al., 2016, p.156; Varela, 1991, p.86). In short, neither the body comes first and directs the mind, nor does the mind direct the body – the two are co-dependently arising by self-referentially relating to each other (c.f., Varela, 1976, 3.1.2.2).

Mind and body are therefore defined in interrelation to each other. The mind is at once the activity that produces the body, while simultaneously depending upon the body as the foundation for this productive activity. Whereas much of traditional and analytic philosophy will see a *circulus vitiosus* in this self-referential definition of mind and body, the founder of Enactivism, Francisco Varela, sees in it a *circulus fructuosus* (c.f., Vörös & Bitbol, 2017, p.33; Varela, 1977). That is, Varela explicitly grounds Enactivism's conception of the organism's life upon this dialectical relation between mind and body which is supposed to explain the purposeful evolution of the organism itself (Varela, 1976, p.64).

The self-referential evolution of the organism expresses a dialectical relation between the body as the agglomeration of the organism's habitual activities, and the mind that is identified with the enaction of novel activities that recursively alter the 'original' body itself. The living organism is thus defined as the perpetual enaction of sensory-motor habits that change and evolve through self-referential activity (Thompson, 2007, p.125).

The organism's activity recursively relates between itself and its environment and thereby purposefully keeps reconstructing the body to bring forth varying types of organisms. The organism's self-referential activity is therefore conceived as leading to emergent life forms. The idea of self-reference is supposed to function as the bridge between the traditionally misconceived gap of body and mind and is thus fundamental to Enactivism (c.f., Varela, 1976, 3.1.2.2). This paradigmatic change of the conception of life brings with it a radical change in the conception of reality itself.

Enactivism intends to bring autonomous action into the center of our understanding of life and thereby bridge the dualistic divide between mind and body (c.f., Thompson, 2007, p.202). Likewise, Enactivism intends to bridge the divide between the body and its environment. Therefore, it conceives of the environment as co-dependently arising together with the evolution of these self-referentially evolving life forms. This interdependence between life and its environment allows Enactivism to conceive of the organism as self-referentially and purposefully guiding its activity, rather than being considered the mere product of external evolutionary pressures (Gamberotto et al., 2022, p.10; Thompson, 2007, p.197).

The organism is thought of as manifesting its own body according to its own needs that are self-constructed in the organism's experientially guided interdependent relationship towards its environment. For this process to be truly interdependent and for the experiential, self-referential activity of the organism to matter, it doesn't suffice for the organism alone to be conceived as evolving. The environment cannot be conceived as fixed or pregiven if the organism ought to be posited as freely evolving. If the environment was fully determined, the interaction between the organism and the environment would one-directionally follow the determination of the fixed environment. The result is the well-known problem of free will in a deterministic conception of reality.

Enactivism's desired solution is that corresponding to the varying organisms, the environments experienced by these organisms are supposed to be conceived as varying, too. The organism and its opposition – reality – are posited as co-dependently arising. That is, objective reality is posited to be something that does not exist independently of the living being's subjective conception, but rather amounts to the living being's life-world itself. This life-world is conceived as evolving hand-in-hand with self-referentially evolving life forms (cf., Thompson, 2007, p.201f.). The bridging of the mind-body Dualism is thus supposed to also bridge the Dualism between the subjective experience of living beings and objective reality by conceiving of their interrelation as a process of interdependent becoming (c.f., Varela, 1999, p.73).

Self-reference thus refers not only to the process of the organism's becoming but rather to that of reality as a whole. The detailed fleshing out of this position of self-reference will have to wait until Chapter3 when we will be ready to show the true significance and depth of the conception of self-reference for Enactivism.

The more specific positive definition of Enactivism will vary depending upon which of Enactivism's multiple varieties we consult, but its negative definition is universally agreed upon¹. Enactivism negatively defines itself through the rejection of the psychological paradigm of Representationalism (cf., Thompson, 2007, p.283; Varela et al, 2016, p.9; 1991, p.98). Hence, before we go on to recount Enactivism's positive desiderata on the quest of defining what Enactivism is, we will have a look at what Enactivism isn't – its critique of the paradigm it is attempting to overthrow.

¹ C.f., Ward, et al. (2017) for an extensive overview of the various branches of Enactivism.

1.2 Enactivism is Anti-Representationalism.

Enactivism identifies Representationalism² as the psychological paradigm that conceives of the mind's activity (i.e., 'cognition' or 'thought') as the construction of representations of the world. The mind, in its attempt to faithfully represent the world, is seen as a mere reconstruction of the world. This, though, implies the earlier named preconception of the world as a fixed entity. The world is conceived as the fixed object of study, whereas the mind amounts to its more or less faithful reconstruction. In relation to a fixed world, the mind could only be conceived as reactively following suit by reconstructing a representation of that which truly is – the fixed world.

The mind is thus conceived as creating a secondary duplicate of reality by attaining information in the form of sense-data from its perception of the world. The mind is the body's knowledge of reality, and this knowledge is conceived as separate, secondary, and thus fundamentally distinct from the world itself (Thompson, 2007, p.201f.). Whereas the mind is conceived as passively being altered, the world is conceived as the rule that alters it. We attain a dualistic distinction between reality itself (i.e., ontology) and the knowledge of this reality (i.e., epistemology).

This separation results in the conception of the mind and the world as opposing pre-given entities (c.f., *ibid.*; Varela et al, 2016, p.9). What is meant by the world and the mind being conceived as 'pre-given' is that the two are conceived as existing independently of each other, and thus as separate entities prior to their interaction – hence their fundamentally dual separation (c.f., Varela et al, 2016, p.221ff.). This presupposition of the Dualism between reality (i.e., ontology) and mind (i.e., epistemology) extends into two further intricately connected dualistic distinctions that Enactivism regards as derivatives of Representationalism.

One is the distinction between mind and body, the other is the distinction between one's own mind and other minds (c.f., Vörös, 2017, p.35). The dualistic separation between mind and reality implies the 'un-reality' of the mind. The mind and its knowledge of the world are implicitly conceived as a mere duplicate of that which truly is – they merely represent the real world within our heads. The denial of the mind as physically real implies the denial of the mind as part of the physical body.

The mind is conceived as an internal head-based software that is unlike anything in the sensory-perceptual realm of the body. Now, if the mind is something separate from physical reality, and we only perceive the world through the information we gather through our physical body, then how can we know other minds but our own? Hence, the mind-other-mind Dualism.

All three of these Dualisms thus have to do with the supposed un-reality of the mind that follows from Representationalism's conception of the mind as a mere representation of reality, as opposed to the mind being conceived as a part of reality itself.

² The proper psychological paradigm is called 'Cognitivism', see below for an explanation of the interchangeability of these terms.

1.3 Enactivism is its Desiderata.

In one of his last writings, Francisco Varela sums up the key points resulting from his many years of research in cognitive science. The four points manifest desiderata for Varela's envisioned future paradigm of Enactivism (cf. 1999, 87ff.). The first three points can be seen as the desired solutions to the three Dualisms of Enactivism. The fourth point amounts to a dialectical logic of self-reference which lies at the heart of the first three key points (cf. 1999, p.86f.).

Embodiment

The first point is called 'Embodiment' and is the answer to the Mind-Body duality. Embodiment is sketched out through the following slogan: "The mind is not in the head" (ibid. p.72). Enactivism conceives of the mind as the activity of the whole body. The mind is not a 'cold' and purely cognitive spectator within the head, it is the interdependent sensory-motor coupling between environment and organism that co-dependently creates the organism's experience and activity (c.f., Varela, 1991, p.99). The mind is not conceived as an 'other' of the body (i.e., in dual opposition to the body). The body is in fact not the focal point of attention for Enactivism at all; instead, the organism is.

In opposition to the merely material body, the organism necessarily needs to be conceived as alive and therefore active, rather than passive. That is, it needs to be conceived as an object (body) and subject (mind) at once. This understanding of the organism as 'Leib' is derived from the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty (c.f., Varela, 1999, p.89; Thompson, 2007, p.231; Merleau-Ponty, 1988, p.197; Petitmengin, 2017, p.107). The mind is as such conceived as the activity of the organism that can also be expressed as the becoming of the organism. Instead of taking the place of a secondary realm as the 'other' of the body, the subjective mind thus takes the place of the 'becoming' or activity of the organism.

The mind being conceived in this way supposes that thought is always embodied. Thought is always sense-making using sensory-motor activity. This also sheds light on how the distinction between thought and feeling is bridged. The experience of feelings, as opposed to thoughts, is supposed to be the foundation for complex propositional thought. 'Thought' is thought of as a more sophisticated step in the evolution of feeling, rather than being something fundamentally divided and distinct from feeling. This idea is summed up in the Life-Mind-Continuity thesis which states that the very foundation of life is the starting point of the mind (c.f., Thompson, 2007, p.127). Enactivism thus realizes the fundamental relation between thought and feeling within sensory-motor experience that spans from the simple perceptions of the bacteria's environment to the complex thoughts of humanity.

Emergence

The point of Emergence is the answer to Representationalism's mind-reality duality. The way towards achieving this desideratum is signalled by the following slogan: "The mind neither exists nor does it not exist (Varela, 1999, p.85)". This slogan is an homage to Nāgārjuna's conclusive proposition of the Middle-way (Mulamadhyamakakarika). Herein, Nāgārjuna illustrates the double-negation that Varela adopts for Enactivism, by claiming that "Nirvana is said to be neither existent nor not existent" (Garfield, 1995, XXV:15).

This work of Nāgārjuna is regarded as a central Buddhist work and amounts to the logical exposition of non-dual thought that is supposed to reveal the insight of Emptiness. Enactivism sees itself as

participating in a second Renaissance that desires bridging Western and Eastern Philosophy with science by acknowledging precisely this non-dual way of thinking that is believed to be needed to see the world and the mind, as well as thought and action, as united (c.f., Varela et al., 2016, p.22).

Enactivism desires to move “towards an intimate yet universal, non-reductionist, non-dual understanding of the phenomenal world and our place in it (ibid., xiv)”. Enactivism is convinced that to achieve this deed, one would have to move beyond the dual thinking of Western Philosophy and science that is poised to reduce the mind to the intangible and ineffective ‘other’ of subjectivity that is found in the essentialisation of objective physical reality (i.e., physicalism / materialistic objectivism). This is to say that Enactivism critiques Western Philosophy as either assuming an objectivistic monism and thereby reducing the subjective mind to an objectivistic understanding of reality or as conceiving of subjects as dualistically opposed to objective reality, as if subjective minds existed somehow trapped in a secondary realm. This secondary realm, though, will necessarily have to be related to and thus reduced to “the world (which is conceived) as pre-given”. This is so, as “the organism (is conceived) as representing or adapting to it (the physical world) as a dualism (ibid., p.202)”. As we saw in the last sub-chapter on Representationalism, it is precisely from this kind of Dualism that the elimination of the mind from reality follows. Consequentially, the mind and with it the organism’s life is attempted to be reductively explained within Western Science. This is why Enactivism holds that the mind cannot be conceived as real unless it is seen as non-dually related to the world, rather than in dual opposition to it.

Enactivism desires to preserve the autonomous immanent purposiveness of the organism’s activity by moving away from this dualistic perspective in which the mind eventually is reduced to a transcendently pre-given physical world (c.f., Thompson, 2007, p.146). What is meant by denying the transcendental character of the pre-given world is that Enactivism denies the one-sidedness of physicalistic explanations of the organism’s activity as predetermined by the physical world (Thompson, 2007, p.224f.). The alternative Enactivism offers is a view of the world in which the “organism and environment are mutually enfolded... and so what constitutes the world of a given organism is enacted by that organism’s history of structural coupling (Varela et al., 2016, p.202)”. This is to say that the world and the organism are co-determinately becoming in interdependence with each other. This requires conceiving of both, the objective world, and the subjective experience of the organism, as unfixed and emergent rather than independent pre-given entities.

How exactly this is supposed to happen, according to Enactivism, is another matter that will be discussed in Chapter3. For now, it is important to highlight that Enactivism’s desideratum lies in conceiving of the subjective mind, as well as objective reality itself, as emergent rather than as pre-given entities (c.f., Varela et al., 2016, p.9; Varela, 1979, p.275; 1999, p.91).

Intersubjectivity

Enactivism’s third key point Intersubjectivity is the answer to Representationalism’s problem of other minds (cf. Thompson, 2006, p.233f.; Varela, 1999, p.82). Its slogan ‘This mind is that mind’ is supposed to convey the idea that minds are not individual and separate entities within our heads, but rather intersubjective to the core. Intersubjectivity is supposed to mean that our subjective experience of reality is fundamentally linked to the experience of other minds (cf. Varela, 1999, p.82). The negative implication of this insight boils down to denying the representationalistic identification of the mind with the ability to formulate and understand propositions about other people’s beliefs. This developmental step in human phylo- and ontogenesis is called ‘theory of mind’. Instead, the mind is identified with the whole of life’s sensory-motor experience and activity.

The enactive literature frames the mind as essentially intersubjective in two distinct but interrelated ways. The more simple and obvious way refers to the scientifically evidenced necessity of life's empathic exchange with other lives for its survival (c.f., Varela, p.82f.). The mind is in this way straightforwardly posited to be in contact with other minds by interacting with other organisms. The more complex way in which intersubjectivity is supposed to be essential is philosophical and is intricately related to the philosophy of Non-Dualism. The openness to other minds is herein posited to be an apriori fact of the nature of the mind itself (Thompson, 2006, p.385). The mind essentially being emergent (i.e., neither existing nor non-existing) makes it essentially open and connected to other minds (ibid, 36, 385). The next point of 'Circularity' is supposed to make it clearer how this openness, and with it the relation between the three separate points we have so far introduced, is to be understood.

Circularity

Circularity is the fourth and arguably most important of Varela's key points for Enactivism. It is central to understanding the notion of self-reference and the logic of Non-Dualism (Varela, 1976, 3.1.2.2, 1991, 100; Varela et al., (2016, xiv). As such, understanding this point of circularity is the underlying key to eliminating all kinds of Dualisms and to conceiving of all of reality as fundamentally emergent (i.e., becoming) (cf., Varela, 1976, 2.3, 1999, p.91; Thompson, 2007, p.36).

Varela understands this notion of circularity as a "reciprocal co-determination" between the "two extremes" opposed in any of the presented Dualisms. This circularity is supposed to be the ground of this entire vision of Enactivism, yet this ground is described in the self-contradictory terminology of a "ground of groundlessness" (1999, p.91). This notion is to suggest that this circular non-dual logic is supposed to reach into the very foundation of reality itself i.e., ontology, rather than just being part of our interpretation of reality i.e., epistemology (c.f., 1979, p.275; 1999, p.92).

This acceptance of the very ground on which we are standing (i.e., objectivity) as itself essentially groundless, rather than presenting the objective ground as some pre-given entity, is equated with the Buddhist idea of Emptiness (ibid. p.91f., 2016, p.225). Emptiness, in turn, is understood as 'generative' or a 'force of movement' (c.f., 1999, p.91f.; Thompson, 2007, p.36);³ In opposition to the conception of a complete pre-given reality that predetermines and thus reduces our lived experience, the solution to this non-dual logic is expected to provide a conception of reality as "an ongoing, self-correcting narrative" that allows for subjectivity as immanently creative within time (c.f., Thompson, 2019).

Although Varela recognizes that it is central to develop a proper methodology that describes this basic structure of non-dual logic (c.f., 1999, p.87; 1976, Epilog), he remains searching for it up to his last years⁴. Varela's most serious attempt of explicating such a non-dual logic can be found in his early work 'Not One, Not Two (1976) "which can be used as a metonym for his thought altogether" (Thompson, 2017, 40)⁵. Herein, Varela maintains that the solution lies in "a change in...the logic with which to consider dualities and dialectics" (1976, Epilog).

³ "A net chopped into trees that generate the net by infinite branching" (1976, 3.1.2.1)

⁴ "Is there a homology between these methods? Is there such a thing as a basic structure shared by these various pragmatics of experiencing?" (1999, p.87)

⁵ The three founders of Enactivism, Varela, Thompson, and Rosch have attempted a similar project through their interpretation of Nāgārjuna in the founding work of Enactivism called 'The Embodied Mind' (2016). We will consider this interpretation in Chapter 3.

Varela's alternative logic is supposed to provide us with "a built-in injunction (heuristic, recipe, guidance) that can tell us how to go from duality to trinity" (0.2). "By trinity" Varela means "the contemplation of the ways in which pairs (poles, extremes, modes, sides) are related and yet remain distinct" (0.1). The initial duality is supposed to distinguish between "a thing 'it' and the process leading to 'it'" (0.2). The third moment is the consideration of "both the it and the process leading to it". This way, reality can be conceived as "a net chopped into trees that generate the net by infinite branching" (3.1.2.1). In other words, reality can be conceived as the unification of the duality between the complete object – "Being" – and its process – "Becoming" (c.f., 2.2). Correspondingly, the process of Becoming infinitely generates Being, "by infinite branching". As such, we can add that the paradox of the groundless ground is supposed to refer to the infinite becoming of reality as its own ground.

Beyond this, Varela recognizes that his vision "requires a considerable reformulation of logic" but admits that this is "at present, only partially achieved" (1.5.1.1). The following chapter will apply Hegel's logic to achieve the herein merely sketched out desideratum of a non-dual and trinitarian logic that will be able to make sense of Enactivism's desiderata in the final chapter.

Chapter 2: Anti-Thesis

What is Hegel's self-referential logic of negation?

In the following chapter, I will introduce Hegelian Idealism to work out the notion of self-reference that aligns with and completes Enactivism. The first part of the chapter will show that, just like Enactivism, Hegel conceives of Dualism and Representationalism as the flaw in our thinking that needs to be corrected. We will thus see how Hegel defines philosophy in opposition to Dualism and Representationalism. The second part of the chapter will show us how this Dualism, and the three potential options of dogmatism it implies, follow from a 'bad' understanding of infinity. The third part of the chapter will provide the non-dual conception of infinity that amounts to the foundation of Hegel's philosophy. This foundation is the non-dual and trinitarian logic that not only corrects dualistic and representational thought but also amounts to a logic of self-reference.

2.1 Hegelian Idealism is Non-Dualism.

This section will provide a reading of Hegel's philosophy as amounting to the very definition of Non-Dualism. With the purpose of dissolving the absolute distinction between the dual opposition of being and nothing, we will see that it is Representationalism that Hegel, too, needs to overcome to arrive at Non-Dualism.

"The proposition that the finite is ideal makes Idealism...All philosophy is essentially Idealism. The opposition between Realism and Idealism is therefore without meaning. A philosophy which assigns true, last, and absolute Being to the finite Being as such doesn't deserve the name of philosophy" (WdL, p.245).

In this quote Hegel defines Idealism, and indeed philosophy as a whole, in opposition to finitude. All finitude is only to be regarded as ideal – it is not to be assigned "true, last, and absolute Being". This opposition between conceiving the absolute as finite or infinite will be shown to correspond to the difference between the dualistic Representationalism, which 'doesn't deserve the name of philosophy', and Hegel's Non-Dualism which correspondingly plainly *is* Philosophy. By coming to this conclusion, we will also understand why Idealism consequentially just amounts to Realism. Let us therefore have a look at Hegel's definitions of finitude and infinity.

"It is the definition of finite things that their notion and being are distinct; notion and reality, soul and body are separable, they are therefore fleeting and mortal. The abstract definition of God, in turn, is just this, that its notion and its being are undistinguished and undistinguishable" (WdL, p.117).

Now, although this distinction between the finite and infinite may initially sound like it refers to the distinction between the immanently experienced empirical world of finite subjectivity, and the infinite, transcendental, and objective thing-in-itself that we identified as central to Representationalism in the last chapter, this is explicitly not Hegel's intention (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §92). On the contrary, this dualistic distinction between the empirical world that we – as finite beings – experience, and the transcendental 'thing in itself' posited as absolute, is exactly the dogmatic

distinction that is supposed to be sublated by Hegel's philosophy (c.f., WdL, 216f.). The dualistic philosophy of Representationalism will thus be revealed to be the essential problem of philosophy⁶.

"Just as the essence of dogmatism lies in positing a finite Being, something connected to an opposition (e.g., a pure subject, a pure object, or the duality of Dualism as opposed to its identity), as absolute, so does reason show this supposedly absolute to have a relation to that which is excluded by it, and that it (that which is posited as absolute) is only due to the relation to, and only in the relation with the excluded – and is as such not (separately) absolute" (Jaener Schriften, p.311f.).

For the sake of clarity, it needs to be stated that throughout Hegel's philosophy, 'the absolute', 'reason', 'god' and 'the idea', are all varying notions for the one truth of reality philosophy is after – the highest 'notion' itself (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §82). Hegel uses the German term 'Begriff', translated as 'notion', as a translation of the Greek term 'logos' that refers to 'god's divine word' (i.e., the reason for reality's being). Therefore, it is the logical notion upon which reality itself is founded, that is sought by Hegel (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §160; WdL, p.26f.).

For Hegel, all these notions are multiple names signifying infinity – the true subject matter of philosophy (c.f., WdL, p.1549; Enzyklopädie, §160, §44). This is why philosophy is in the above quote defined in opposition to the misconception of reality as finite. That which 'doesn't deserve the name of philosophy' is called Dogmatism and is defined as conceiving of the finite as absolute (i.e., misconceiving the one true notion of infinity as finite).

What this dogmatism involves, according to Hegel, is the act of separating "something connected to an opposition" and positing either one of its two parts or both (the pure subject or the pure object) as the absolute. There is a third way in which one can arrive at Dogmatism according to the above quote, and this is by conceiving of these two parts as an absolutely distinguished duality, as opposed to conceiving them as fundamentally identical.

This identity of oppositions Hegel is referring to here refers to infinity itself – the goal of true philosophy. Infinity is thus conceived as being constituted of two opposite parts that are to be identified as absolute only, if the two parts are recognized as identical rather than taken to be in dualistic opposition to each other. Dogmatism, in opposition, is this conception of the two parts as dualistically opposed to each other, with either of the parts, or the two as absolutely distinguished from each other being identified with the absolute (i.e., object and subject).

Dogmatism is supposed to finitise infinity by conceiving the finite as absolute. What has this talk of infinity to do with the distinction between the two parts – object and subject – that are supposed to be seen as one? For Hegel, the task of philosophy as a whole is to reconcile the opposition between object and subject and conceive of them as one higher identity – true infinity (c.f., Pöggeler, 1963, p.290; Hegel, WdL, p.41). Infinity, instead of being either object or subject or the duality between the two, is correctly conceived as the identity between the two. Having so far laid out Hegel's assertions about the difference between finitude and infinity, let us now take this insight back into the discourse about Representationalism.

Hegel shows why the opposition between finitude and infinity cannot, as is the case in Representationalism, be conceived as absolute. This absolute, and thus dogmatic, distinction is supposed to happen with the dualistic positing of the world as that which is represented by the mind. Hegel understands Representationalism as the stage of human logic in which the dualistic opposition between one's own subjective experience of the world, and the objective world perceived, are seen as being in absolute opposition to each other (c.f., WdL., p.39, Jaener p.317). From this perceived

⁶ C.f. Enzyklopädie §378ff, §444f; Jaener Schriften; p.317, p.333; WdL, p.44 for Hegel's explicit discussions of Representationalism.

opposition, that makes us dogmatically divide object from subject, the need for philosophy arises in the first place. Philosophy then is the answer to the question of how the two are related (WdL., p.41). In relation to the dogmatic distinction between the two, philosophy is the answer to how this duality is to be conceived as identity (c.f., WdL, p.109).

Within dualistic logic, the objective world, as opposed to our subjective experience of this world, is at first supposed to be the infinity to which our finite existence is contrasted. That is, the objective world is the whole (i.e., absolute), whereas we merely experience subjective parts of it (c.f. WdL, p.39). With regard to Hegel's earlier quoted three characterizations of Dogmatism, this refers to the absolutizing of the pure object. If infinity amounts to the objective external world, and finitude is its subjective opposition, then the objective reality amounts to everything, while subjectivity amounts to its counterpart – nothing. Hegel thus arrives at the same conclusion as Enactivism – Representationalism leads to an absolutization of the object at the price of the nihilation of the subject.

Assuming this absolute difference between 'object' and 'subject' amounts to conceiving of the two as being related to each other as 'Being' and 'Nothing' (c.f., WDL, p.112). If the two were to be conceived to be in contact with each other as these absolute opposites, the reality of the finite subject would be "annihilated by the infinite" (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §95). That is, as already explained in the last chapter, subjectivity would have to be conceived as a mere epiphenomenon of objective reality – it would be a mere illusion in contrast to the absolute object, and reality would thus have to be reduced to pure objectivity. This is to say that according to Hegel, the duality of Dualism derives from the impossibility to conceive of the supposedly finite subject as part of the supposedly infinite object. We can thus see that Representationalism's dualistic way of thinking derives from the presupposition of the object as absolute.

The philosophy of Dualism thus posits an absolute difference between our finite and subjective experience of reality, and the infinity of objective reality, to save subjectivity in light of the definition of infinity as the absolute object of the thing-in-itself. In other words, to save subjectivity in light of the infinity of objectivity, subjectivity needs to be added to reality, as if from the outside. There is the objective world – full stop – and also there is subjectivity.

The two are consequentially presupposed as two independent, pregiven, absolute realities – we arrive at the dogmatically assumed distinction that defines Dualism (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §95). The resulting 'Dualism' is as such the assumption of the contradiction between the two parts as fundamental to reality – (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §95). This position is anti-philosophical because of its dogmatic positing of the contradictory opposition to which no justification or foundation can be given (i.e., it is necessarily incomprehensible, c.f., WdL, p.145).

In other words, the dogmatism of this position lies in the notional impossibility of justifying the contradiction of object and subject – therefore they have to be merely assumed. The object that is conceived as 'Being' is opposed to the subject that somehow *is* 'Nothing'. While the object amounts to all there is, the subject must '*be*' in a secondary way to 'Being' – two essentially different 'Beings' are postulated.

We then need to ask ourselves why, out of the two, it is the object which is posited as infinity, while the subject amounts to finitude. The answer lies in the objective thing-in-itself being conceived as absolute within the doctrine of Representationalism. Objective reality (i.e., 'Being') is conceived as that true thing-in-itself which is outside of us, and to which we have only limited access through our Representations of 'it' – our sensory perception of the-thing-in-itself. This fundamental division between the true reality and us – its partial conceivers trapped within the realm of mere appearances – leads to a conception of the world as outside of our reach (i.e., transcendental to ourselves).

From this transcendental outside position, this thing-in-itself is conceived as the source of our subjective experiences – their objective transcendental cause (c.f., WDL, p.41; WdL, 216)⁷. In this framework, our finite, subjective conceptions can never amount to and thus be in contact with the true or ‘absolute’ reality. To picture this inherent contradiction, imagine what it would take for a finite, subjective perceiver to experience the infinite thing-in-itself. There is an infinite, and thus per definition unreachable number of finite experiences needed to arrive at the absolute – the ‘thing-in-itself’. Our knowledge of objective reality is per definition lacking, as objective reality is conceived as the absolute infinity outside of ourselves. It is thus here, at this distinction between object and subject, that we can find the foundational logic of Representationalism.

Whereas our empirical experiences are conceived as mere appearances, the real reality is placed outside the grasp of our empirical experience of reality (c.f., WdL., p.41). The absolute is merely conceived as an object, as opposed to being conceived as both object and subject and thus excludes our subjective experience from the realm of the absolute. Following Hegel’s earlier quote, this separation of object from subject within Representationalism means that the absolute is conceived as finite.

We know now that the reason for this conception of the absolute i.e., infinity, as finite, is the exclusion of the subject from infinity, conceived as the transcendental thing-in-itself within dualistic Representationalism. Hegel’s task is thus to conceive of the absolute as subject, as well as object, for a correct understanding of infinity (Phänomenologie, Vorrede, 20). Before we see how Hegel achieves this, it remains to be seen why Hegel conceives of this representational understanding of infinity as truly finite i.e., as a bad/dogmatic conception of infinity. We thus need to examine ‘bad infinity’ before we can define, in contrast to it, the good infinity of Non-Dualism.

2.2 Hegelian Idealism is neither One, nor None, nor Both (Two).

The title of this section is a reference to the earlier cited paper by Varela in which he establishes the desiderata for a non-dual logic. The paper is titled ‘Not one, Not two’, which is supposed to refer to the refutation of both, Objectivistic Monism (i.e., ‘Not one’), and Dualism (i.e., ‘Not two’). Besides the obvious omission of an affirmative solution despite the prophecy of and desire for a trinitarian logic, the position of the ‘None’ is also omitted. This may have to do with the obvious untenability of a ‘nihilism’ and yet it is important to highlight that Enactivism, too, like Hegel in his earlier cited quote, conceives of the dualistic dogma as the choice between the ‘One’ of objectivism and the ‘None’ of nihilism (c.f., Varela et. al., 2016, p.140). Unlike Enactivism, as we saw in 2.1, Hegel explains the trinity of these dualistic choices, ‘One’, ‘None’, and ‘Two’, as a necessary consequence of a ‘bad’ conception of infinity (c.f., WdL, p.237f, p.434). Let us first understand this ‘bad infinity’ from the position of the ‘One’ absolutized object, to see how the other two positions follow from it.

⁷ C.f., the etymological origin of ‘transcend’: “escape inclusion in; lie beyond the scope of” (“Etymonline,” n.d.)).

The bad infinity of the 'One'

Hegel conceives of 'bad infinity' as an infinite regress (c.f., *Enzyклоädie*, p.197, *WdL*, p.237). This means that the infinity of the absolute object or thing-in-itself is analogous to an infinite series (c.f., *WdL*, p.431). The thing-in-itself can be conceived as a rule outside of empirical reality (i.e., transcendental) that rules upon empirical reality itself. If we conceive of reality as a series of empirical events/phenomena, and conceive of the transcendental thing-in-itself as a law, we will attain an example of what Hegel means by a bad infinity.

Series1: '1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-etc.,'; Formalization: ' $X=n$ '

Take for instance the simple formalization ' $X=n$ ' to construct an infinite number-series that follows its rule as portrayed in 'Series1' above this paragraph. 'X' here represents the value of each number 'n' which stands for a specific moment within the infinite number-series. For every determinate moment 'n' (i.e., individual number of the number-series) within the infinitely spanning empirical reality (i.e., the imaginary whole of the series), represented by 'Series1', there is a corresponding calculatable value (X) that is determined by the absolute thing-in-itself (represented by the formula ' $X=N$ '). The value (X) at any given moment (n) amounts to a specific phenomenal appearance of empirical reality. All of phenomenal reality (i.e., the appearing numbers of the infinite number-series), is determined by and reduced to the external, and unreachable (i.e., transcendental), thing-in-itself (i.e., the formula ' $X=N$ ') (c.f., *WdL*, p.233).

Empirical reality is absolutely determined by the absolute object. Empirical reality is nothing for itself – i.e., it is merely the momentary subjective appearance (i.e., any individual number or finite accumulation of numbers) of the eternal objective thing-in-itself. At moment $n=1$, empirical reality has the value $X=1$, at moment $n=2$, empirical reality has the value $X=2$, etc., ad infinitum. We thus attain the difference between the infinitely determining noumenal thing-in-itself (i.e., ' $X=n$ ') and the finite phenomena that are determined by it (i.e., '1', '2', '3', '123'...etc.). This distinction portrays the duality between absolute and empirical reality – the objectivity of an eternally existing and objective thing-in-itself as opposed to merely fleeting subjective appearances.

Although the phenomena of empirical reality continuously change, as the series progresses infinitely, the series in itself (i.e., the thing-in-itself) eternally stays the same (c.f., *ibid*). This difference between the noumenal essence of reality and its appearance within empirical reality is what Hegel calls the difference between 'Being' and 'Existence' (*Enzyklopädie*, §193, c.f., *WdL*, p.123). The verb 'to be' here signifies two different 'beings' – one that is independent and one that is dependent, the former is 'in itself' (Orig: 'an sich sein') the latter is existence (Orig: 'Dasein') (c.f., *WdL*, p.127). The independent being is the absolute thing-in-itself (i.e., ' $X=n$ '). Everything is fundamentally it – 'being in itself' is as such the abstract notion of reality (c.f., *WdL*, p.268). In our number-series this notion is represented by the formula – i.e., the name of the series. This notion is conceived as independent of its concrete existence within (i.e., immanent to) the number-series.

The particular phenomenal existences of the notion, on the other hand (i.e., the infinite numbers 'n'), are only phenomenal appearances of the 'One' absolute being, and thus only exist as dependent upon it. Phenomenal reality is as such nothing in itself. Relative to the infinitely same formula of the thing-in-itself the single phenomena are merely fleeting (i.e., finite) appearances, and thus absolutely speaking nothing (c.f., *WdL*, p.216f.). We thus attain, in this conception of infinity, two worlds, that of the transcendental, absolute, and infinite being, and that of the immanent, contingent, and finite existence/nothing (c.f., *WdL*, p.218).

The heart of the problem is identified to be the objectivistic assumption of an absolute object which is conceived as determining the merely passively conceived subjectivity (i.e., experience of empirical reality) (c.f., *WdL*, p.268). To understand this in relation to the object-subject-distinction, consider the infinity of the formula in relation to the subjective and fleeting decision to conceive of mere parts of

this infinite series, that is, we could, in theory, keep imaginatively (i.e., subjectively) extending this series forever, but at any given moment of imagining it, we only imagine a limited amount of the whole (i.e., objective) series. The subject is as such conceived as a merely arbitrary and reducible part of this eternal series.

These two worlds correspond to the two conceptions of 'Being' inherent to Dualism. Hegel calls these two abstract determinations of being ('Being' and 'Nothing') the empty things of our mind's understanding (c.f., WdL, p.112). They are in this conception of infinity conceived as absolutely distinct from each other, two independent substances, and this separation is what Hegel identifies as the 'bad infinity' (c.f., WdL, p.218). This 'bad infinity' is characterized by its absolute contradiction between object and subject, infinite and finite – being and nothing (c.f., *ibid.*). The term 'Absolute contradiction' refers to the obvious interdependence between the two abstract opposites (i.e., the necessity of both) that are nonetheless posited as absolutely independent of each other within this Dualism.

The 'interdependence' between 'Being' and 'Nothing' within this bad infinity refers to the fact that the abstract notion of being as a noumenal formula (i.e., ' $X=n$ ') does not exist without finite, concrete, empirical appearances manifesting it. Nonetheless, its notion (i.e., ' $X=n$ ') and its existence (i.e., '1'-'2'-'3'-...etc.) are conceived as absolutely distinct. Hence, the bad conception of infinity merely assumes this absolute contradiction, leaving no hope for the explanation of their obvious interdependence (c.f., WdL, p.145).

Mathematically, this absolute contradiction means that bad infinity's notion and its existence can never be fully equated (i.e., ' $X=n$ ' = '1'-'2'-'3'-'4'-...etc.; or: $1/9 = 0,11111...$ etc.). Although the equation between the formula (i.e., 'essence') and the infinite expression of the formula (i.e. its 'existence') are notionally true (i.e., they correspond to each other), the two terms are not identical (c.f., WdL, p.216). This is so as the latter terms are infinitely in becoming – i.e., in existence, whereas the former are finitely determined. The former is the notion of the latter, whereas the latter is the former's existence. Absolute and contingent reality are not merely opposed to each other, they include their opposition within themselves (WdL, p.146f.). What this means is that the absolute notion is only infinite through its progression of contingent immanent reality (i.e., the number-series). Likewise, the finite phenomena of contingent reality can only exist if they are prescribed by the infinite law of the notion.

They need each other – are interdependent – yet reality's 'notion' lies outside of its own 'existence'. Likewise, from the perspective of the finite series, the infinite is merely a limit that the series infinitely approximates without ever reaching it. The infinite is unreachable and thus outside of existence (c.f., WdL, p.431). Hence, just like the realm of the infinite limits the finite, the finite limits infinity (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §95). The two – 'One' and 'None' are conceived as outside of each other, and yet they are necessary for each other – this is their absolute contradiction.

The two terms for 'Being' are revealed to be interdependent – akin to the non-existence of the north-pole of a magnetic field without a south-pole. This is what it means for the two to be conceived as merely empty abstract determinations by themselves – they simply *are not* independent of each other. The form of Being – its notional formalization – and its phenomenal content cannot be conceived as absolutely opposed to each other, for they are both empty without each other. This way, the infinite is itself dependent upon the finite.

Infinity's notion 'in itself' is determined, and thus finite (c.f., WdL, p.197; p.216). This is to say that it is formalizable like in the example of our number-series (i.e., ' $X=n$ '). The flaw of this conception of infinity can also be seen if we consider what this limitation means for infinity. Infinity is not actually the whole, as it is dependent upon its limit – finitude. Infinity is thus put on a par with finitude, it is conceived as limited and is as such the opposite of what it is supposed to be according to its name – finite (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §94).

This, then confirms Hegel's above definition of Dogmatism. It is the "positing (of) a finite Being, something connected to an opposition...as absolute". We have herein demonstrated how reason, in contrast, does "show this supposedly absolute to have a relation to that which is excluded by it, and that it (that which is posited as absolute) is only due to the relation to, and only in the relation with the excluded – and is as such not (separately) absolute" (Jaener Schriften, p.311f.).

An infinity that is limited by finitude is not the 'true' or 'right' conception of infinity – it is not 'separately absolute'. What's lacking is thus that the notion of the infinite being itself progresses into infinity – that it progresses 'for itself'. Bad infinity is reliant upon its excluded other, its opposition, for its progression. The notion of reality does not itself infinitely progress, it does not progress for itself, but it is its other, its negation, that is, existence, that progresses in the bad conception of infinity (c.f., WdL, p.222f.). The notion for itself is not infinite, it is formalized and thus excluded from change – it is finitely determinable i.e., through the exemplary formula of ' $X=n$ ' (c.f., WdL, p.223).

In other words, the progression of infinity happens only in the repetitive, finite, and thus foreseeable, way of the infinite regress that excludes true change, and true infinity from happening (Enzyklopädie, p.198, WdL, p.222f.). The creative force of the notion is formalized and thus absolutized by putting it into the otherworldly thing-in-itself, and as a result, subjective existence is explained as changing repetitively and predictably. The subject's empirical reality is reduced to the strict following of the transcendental world. What defines true infinity for Hegel, is thus the creative force of change that is lacking in the transcendental conception of the thing-in-itself.

This absolute contradiction amounts to the very essence of Dualism that posits the 'One' true reality to be split in 'Two'. Infinity is thereby put on equal footing with finitude – infinity is limited by its border to the finite (c.f., *ibid.*). This is so, as the bad infinity's 'in itself', its notion, doesn't include its being in the world – its existence (i.e., the series' continuation) (c.f., *ibid.*; WdL, p.216). Remember, this was Hegel's definition of the finite in the above-given quote. Hegel defined finitude as "notion and being (being) distinct; notion and reality, soul and body are separable (WdL, p.117)".

This shortcoming is thus due to the dual logic that divides the objective world as infinite from the finite mind, as if the two were fundamentally opposed and as such independent of each other (c.f., WdL, p.39; Jaener Schriften, p.303f.). Hegel uses the metaphor of light and darkness to exemplify the absurdity of this dualistic distinction between being and nothing (c.f., WdL, p.123f.). Being, that which truly is (i.e., infinity), is here conceived as absolute light and distinguished from absolute darkness (i.e., nothing, finitude). Hegel explains that both of these absolute determinations are independently empty. One can see just as little in pure light, as one can see in the pure absence of light (i.e., darkness) (c.f. *ibid.*). In other words, whereas absolute being (i.e., white light) theoretically includes 'everything', it also expresses 'nothing' (i.e., no color) no specific part of the whole (spectrum) – hence, being and nothing, light, and darkness, necessarily fall together (c.f., WdL, p.145.).

Both positions, that of 'One' and that of 'None' are thus included in the dualistic position of the 'Two'. Conceiving of 'being' and 'nothingness' as fundamentally opposed substances ('Two') leads to both, the affirmation of a monistic objectivism ('One'), and the nihilistic subjectivism that opposes its opposite by denying the presence of a 'One' rule and thereby positing pure nothingness ('None'). Both sides of the equation are needed to conceive of this bad infinity. The transcendental truth of the 'One' cannot be without the empirical truth of the subjective perceiver that nonetheless counts for nothing (i.e., 'None').

The bad infinity of the 'None'

The only way to affirm the subject in relation to the all-surmounting object is to turn the tables and deny the rule of objectivity. If the rule of objectivity is denied, though, within this Dualism, the subject's pure nothingness – the 'None' of nihilism follows (c.f., Jaener Schriften, p.303f.). That is, whereas the subjectively experienced empirical reality is within this nihilism conceived as 'everything there is' – objective reality is thereby conceived as being 'nothing' – this amounts to nihilism's denial of there being an objective truth.

This position turns around the attribution of infinity and finitude and thereby affirms subjectivity as the realm of the infinite. This affirmation of subjectivity as infinity amounts to the absolute affirmation of subjectivity itself. Objects are reduced to appearances – that which is experienceable (c.f., Jaener, p.314). What *is*, once the objectivity of reality is denied, *is* the subject to whom these experiences appear.

The transcendental truth of an objective thing-in-itself is exchanged for the transcendental subject creating merely subjectively appearing experiences. Each of these experiences by themselves is still finite. It merely appears to the subject without having any objective truth and is as such meaningless in relation to the infinity of experiences producible by the transcendental subject. Therefore, objectivity is negated as a whole – i.e., there is 'None'. For the sake of the setting of subjectivity as absolute, objectivity has to be denied altogether.

The paradoxical consequence of this denial of objectivity is that this worldview affirms a supposed truth of 'nihilism' while claiming the non-existence of objective truth (c.f., Jaener, p.315). Hegel thus identifies this nihilism with the position of modern dogmatic skepticism (c.f., Jaener, p.295, 305). That is, in contrast to the rule of a transcendental notion, the absence of such a rule and thus, pure lawlessness is affirmed – hence the skepticism about objective reality altogether (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192f., p.374, *WdL*, 1475f.).

Just as the transcendental thing-in-itself is to be conceived as beyond the empirical realm of subjective experience, and is thereby unaffected by the latter, so are the finite products of subjectivity (i.e., appearances) outside of the realm of pure subjectivity – they are not capable of influencing the subjective experiencer in creating its experiences (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192f; Jaener Schriften, p.314). Objectivity is as such eliminated from this solipsistic worldview in which the subject is absolutized (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192f.).

When subjectivity is identified with the individuality of the living subject, it leads to an understanding of reality as the 'abstract freedom' of a plurality of subjects that independently create their worlds (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §145Z; *WdL*, p.275-281). This, though, leads to the problem of the relationship between these worlds – how, if there is no objectivity, are these plural worlds/subjects connected to each other (c.f., *WdL*, p.258)? The claimed lack of objectivity prevents the subject from being in touch with anything outside its subjective experience, including other subjects (c.f., *WdL*, 271-275; p.703; *Phänomenologie*, p.192f.).

Reality is as such posited as the multitude of solipsistic and freely willed subjective imaginations – we end up with a purely subjective idealism (c.f. *WdL*, p.275; *Phänomenologie*, p.192f.; 374). The subject's lack of objectivity prevents it from having any order. Whereas the position of absolute objectivity affirmed a strictly defined order that was pre-given by the 'One' transcendental thing-in-itself, this position is the affirmation of pure chaos (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §145Z; *WdL*, p.275-281 *Phänomenologie*, p.192f., 374).

Hence, this negation of the 'One' by a 'None' does not get us far enough – it remains within the dualistic perspective that supposes either object or subject (or both) as independent substances. Consequentially, the mirror-image of the earlier portrayed bad infinity is formed. The infinity of

purely subjective creation is opposed to the finitude of the ‘objects’ created by these subjects. Still, the two are interdependent, and yet they do not relate to each other (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.193).

Hegel opposes this bad infinity that absolutizes the subject to the ‘One’ that absolutizes the objective thing-in-itself, by calling it ‘the sensuous bad infinity’ (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192). We can exemplify this bad infinity by the overthrowal of the order that was represented by Series1. Whereas Series1 is explicable by the thing-in-itself that rules the empirical realm of the number-series by ascribing a transcendental form to empirical reality represented by the number-series (i.e., ‘ $X=n$ ’), Series2 amounts to the breaking of the objective rule by affirming pure subjectivity (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §44; §128, §145Z).

Series1: ‘1-2-3-...,’
Series2: ‘1-2-3-**5**...?’

Formalization: ‘ $X=N$ ’
Formalization: None/Mistake

This breaking of the rule is what amounts to the negation of the absolutized object of Series1 by its dogmatic opposition of the absolutized subject. The order of the thing-in-itself is given up in favour of purely subjective chaos (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §145Z). In our number-series, this opposition between rule and chaos is translated into the breaking of the order of Series1 by the appearance of a ‘random’, as in purely subjective, mistake within Series2⁸. Whereas Series1 followed the notion ‘ $X=n$ ’ (i.e., ‘1-2-3’...etc.), Series2 is characterized by its breaking with the notion of ‘ $X=n$ ’ (i.e., ‘1-2-3-**5**’ instead of the notionally appropriate ‘1-2-3-4’). The purely subjective is opposed to objective reality of the thing-in-itself as a mistake is to the rule – as non-being is to being (c.f., *WdL*, p.127, p.191, p.213ff.).

This, then, is the affirmation of infinity as absolute subjectivity. This absolute subject is conceived as an infinitely creative ‘spirit’-substance (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §378). The object of knowledge – ontology – is denied in favor of pure subjective knowing – epistemology (c.f., *WdL*, p.1475f.; *Jeaner*, p.303). This position amounts to the affirmation of reality as contingent appearance, as opposed to a rational pre-determined thing-in-itself. The aim of this position is as such the liberation of the subject from the rule of the rationalistic thing-in-itself, which in turn has to be destroyed (c.f., *WdL*, p.44ff.). Hegel thus also calls this position that of absolute empiricism (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192f.). The appearance of reality, which is affirmed as our only source of knowledge, is here understood as reality itself – the things themselves are understood as consisting of no additional substance other than their finite empirical appearance (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, p.122; *Phänomenologie*, p.192f.).

This translates into our updated number-series (i.e., Series2) as the admission of no underlying rule to the formation of the series itself. If you want, from the perspective of Series2, the apparent order of Series1 is itself explained as merely coincidental. There was no order, to begin with, it was merely added by the subjective knower that wanted to see order within it – the order is so to speak placed within the arbitrary will of the subject (c.f., *WdL*, p.886f., 1475f.; *Enzyklopädie* §145Z; *Phänomenologie*, p.374).

Consequently, just like the ‘One’ thing-in-itself needs to be dogmatically presupposed as the infinity which just does contain or create the absolute truth – so does the subjective experiencer need to be conceived as creating its experiences out of itself, arbitrarily willing them out of nothing (i.e., ‘None’) that is, without the influence of any-‘thing’ – i.e., any object (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §145Z; *WdL*, p.275-28, p.886; *Phänomenologie*, p.374). This is what it means for the dogmatic transcendental thing-in-itself to be replaced by the transcendental subject (cf., *WdL*, 887). Just as the positing of the object as absolute turned out to imply the dogmatic positing of a finite object, so does the positing of the subject as absolute.

⁸ C.f. *Enzyklopädie*, §145Z; *WdL*, p.281; *Phänomenologie*, p.374, for Hegel’s explication of abstract freedom of subjectivity as ‘chaos’ (Orig: ‘Willkür’).

The starting point of the absolute subject is affirmed for the cost of eliminating its other – the object. This other, in turn, is necessary to ground the subject and yet it is posited as inexistent. That is, we need to refer to an ‘other’ – something the subject is not – to answer why the subject creates its reality the way it does. To apply this to our number-series, the object is needed to answer why the subject ‘chose’ to instantiate the first number of Series2 as ‘1’, rather than starting with any other arbitrary number such as ‘6’. The subject needs, in the total absence of the object, to be dogmatically assumed to be this way rather than another. In strict analogy to the object of the bad infinity of the ‘1’, the subject is here dogmatically posited to plainly be the way it is and this is what makes it ‘finite’ in opposition to the infinite appearances it creates. We attain the mirror-image of the ‘One’ absolutized object.

In terms of the number-series this absolute contradiction of the absolutized subject is implied in the pure arbitrariness of the series itself. The denial of the rule of the transcendental thing-in-itself has come at the cost of yet another thing-in-itself that is divergent from its counterpart only by being postulated from the very start to be ruleless, and therefore inherently self-contradictory (c.f., *Phänomenologie*, p.192f., p.374). That is, an objective truth of reality is denied at the cost of claiming that the truth is that there is no truth altogether. The absolute contradiction is thus most apparent in this sensuous conception of the bad infinity (c.f., *ibid*; *WdL*, p.242).

The bad infinity of the ‘Two’

Whereas the positing of the one-sided object or subject as infinity has hereby been shown to lead to the absolute contradiction, Dualism is itself this absolute contradiction, as it is the affirmation of both, a substance of objectivity (the ‘One’ transcendental thing-in-itself), and a substance of subjectivity – a soul-like mystical entity that is particular to each individual subject, posited to be the supposed cause of our individuality. I have intentionally waited to introduce the term ‘substance’ into this paper up to this conclusive moment of the final critique of Dualism. What is meant to be said by using the term ‘substance’, is that some final ground (and simultaneous starting-point) that subsists all of reality is identified⁹.

The full meaning of the ‘counting’ from ‘One’ to ‘Two’ we have been engaging in is herein revealed. When we posit the one-sided object as infinity, we are claiming that the thing-in-itself is the ultimate source of all of reality, its unconditioned unmoved mover (c.f., *WdL*, p.127). When we posit the one-sided subject as infinity, we are claiming that it is from our subjective minds, souls, consciousnesses, or ‘nothing’ that all of reality ultimately arises (cf., *WdL*, 886f.). The absolute contradiction of Dualism, of course, is the simultaneous claim for a co-existence of both (i.e., ‘Two’) substances without the possibility of their unification. The contradiction is itself posited as a necessity – it is dogmatically affirmed as the absolute starting point (c.f., *Jenaer Schriften*, p.315). The back and forth of the contradiction between objectivism and subjectivism, which follows from this metaphysical assumption of Dualism, is as such the bad infinity of Dualism.

The insight of Idealism we will arrive at in the following subchapter, then, is this, that neither an absolute object nor an absolute subject could contain infinity, as this would limit infinity itself. Instead, reality is the good infinity which is the interdependent identity between the object and the subject within the ‘neither nor’ of becoming. Enter Hegel’s non-dual logic of negation.

⁹ See for Hegel’s usage of ‘Substanz’ (i.e., *WdL*, p.127; *Enzyklopädie*, §378Z, §440Z)

2.3 Hegelian Idealism is ‘Three’.

The good infinity we are now looking to explicate is not merely opposed to bad infinity, as that would lead to just another Dualism (c.f., WdL, p.237ff., p.242). Instead, bad infinity’s dualistic opposition between finitude and infinity is supposed to be regarded as united in its relation to attain the true infinity (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §82; WdL, p.239f., p.452, p.783; *Jeaner Schriften*, p.313; 317).

Bad infinity therefore needs to be included within true infinity (c.f., WdL, p.237ff., p.783). For this reason, the bad infinity of the number-series can be made use of to arrive at a notional understanding of true infinity by sublating the dualistic opposition between finite and infinite into the third moment that signifies their identity in the process of becoming (c.f., WdL, p.222f., 1475f.). This third moment is of course the solution to our sought non-dual logic – the “infinitely important form of triplicity” (WdL, p.577). Hegel expands the Kantian triplicity of ‘thesis’, ‘anti-thesis’, and ‘synthesis’ to infinity, to show how it amounts to the pure and necessary form of reality per se – true infinity is as such the notion of reality itself (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §160; WdL, p.58, p.239f.).

To show how true infinity is achieved, we start, once again, with the position of the absolutized object (i.e., Series1), showing how, together with its opposition (Series2), it can be synthesized into the true infinity (c.f., WdL, p.227, p.237ff., 1475f.).

Series1:

Thesis: ‘1-2-3-...etc.,’

Formalization: ‘ $X=n$ ’

Moment: ‘One’

The name ‘thesis’ is fitting to the position of the absolutized object for the multitude of its connotations. It doesn’t only set out an initial starting position (c.f., Latin Orig.: *dhe* – to set, put, position), but also suggests the incapability of change (i.e., staying put) characteristic to the finitude of the ‘One’ thing-in-itself (c.f., WdL, p.46, p.268f.; Enzyklopädie, §44). This finitude of the thing-in-itself is intricately connected with the most important connotation of the thesis – opposition. It suggests a dualistic opposition between a position and its opposition – its anti-thesis.

The notional thing-in-itself was earlier formalized through the formula ‘ $X=n$ ’, and the corresponding existence of our series amounted to the infinite regress of the series ‘1-2-3...etc.,’. The notion of reality in this conception is determined and as such finite. That is, whereas the series infinitely progresses (i.e., ‘1-2-3-4...etc.’), its notion is set in stone – it is finitely determined. As such, the movement of the number-series that, remember, stands in for empirical reality, is itself determined. Although the number-series does indeed progress infinitely, the progression is finitely determined by the objective notion. No matter how far we extend the series, it will always follow the same predictable rule – Hegel thus also dubs this bad infinity a ‘boring’ conception of infinity (c.f., WdL, p.395).

The missing link between the notion of reality and its existence within empirical reality (i.e., their duality) is as such the reason for the finitude of both terms within Dualism. The missing relation between the two hinders them from interdependently progressing. This is also the reason why the assumption of the absolutized object leads to the eliminative reduction of the subjective realm of experience. If objective reality is itself enough to explain empirical reality, then assuming subjectivity is superfluous. Subjectivity just doesn’t need to exist, as it doesn’t ‘do’ (i.e., ‘cause’) anything – it doesn’t *matter*. The subjective experience/knowledge of reality, as opposed to the ‘things of reality’, follows to be ‘no-thing’.

We can now most clearly see why the ‘two’ positions of Dualism, which seemed to be dualistically opposed, are necessary complements of each other. The position of the ‘One’ implies the position of the ‘None’. The anti-thesis of Series2 follows the thesis in assuming subjectivity to be ‘nothing’. The

anti-thesis merely disagrees with the thesis in simultaneously trying to maintain that this nothing is everything – i.e., absolutizing the subject (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §384Z). That is, it takes on board the arbitrariness of subjectivity, while simultaneously denying the rule of objectivity. From this follows the absolute skepticism of this position that affirms pure chaos as the only rule.

Series2:

Anti-Thesis: ‘1-2-3-**5**...?’

Formalization: ‘None’/Chaos

Moment: ‘0’

We have just seen why this anti-thesis is relevant. The finitude of the notion demands correction. Within the dualistic opposition of the bad infinity, this anti-thesis is to be conceived as a second-beginning – the affirmation of a second (i.e., alternative) substance of the soul, in addition, or counter-position to that of the thing-in-itself. From the one extreme of purely formal transcendental rule we jump into the other by affirming pure chaos (c.f. Enzyklopädie, §145Z; WdL, p.281; Phänomenologie, p.374.).

To the beginning that posited the ‘One’ absolute substance as pure object, a second beginning, that posits the absolute as pure subject – pure nothing – is posited (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §384Z; WdL, p.127, p.215; Jenaer Schriften, p.303). Chaos is opposed to order – infinity to finitude – with the varying designations of the term ‘infinity’ that nonetheless result in the same outcome. Infinity either stands for the affirmation of reality as the absolutized object or the absolutized subject, but the outcome is always a finite conception of infinity (c.f., WdL, 232). How do we overcome this bad infinity?

As the reason for the finitude of Dualism’s bad infinity is the missing link between the notional object and the empirical realm of subjectivity, its transition into infinity must lie in synthesizing the objective notion with the empirical realm of the infinitely progressing series (WdL, p.1476f.). If it was the empirical realm itself – the content of reality – that determined its own form – the notion, then the notion could be seen as infinitely expanding in a ‘good’ way (WdL, p.59, p.1476). We can finally see this synthesis happening in the third moment illustrated in Series3.

Series3:

Synthesis: 1-2-3-**5**-6-7-8-**10**-...

Formalization: ‘ $X=n+[n/4]$ ’

Moment: ‘ $1^1-0-1^2/3$ ’

Instead of remaining with the opposition between objective rule (i.e., ‘ $X=n$ ’) and subjective chaos (i.e., Series2’s coincidental structure of reality), the subjective element of Series2 is considered not merely as chaos but as the becoming of the notion itself (c.f., WdL, p.1475f.). How did it come to this?

This progression is only conceivable if one manages to overcome the duality by thinking of its two parts as an interdependent relationship (c.f., WdL, p.239, p. 1416, p.1477). The interdependence of the object and the subject means to say that just as the subject, the anti-thesis, can be seen as dependent on the object as a prior notion that it negates, so is the object’s notion itself to be understood as a manifestation of the subject (c.f., WdL, p.238f., p.1416, p.1476). That is, just as the subject is the negation of the object, so is the object the ‘negation of the negation’ – the third moment of becoming (c.f., WdL, p.239, p.403, p.167f.).

As the anti-thesis, the subjective moment was considered the mere mistake of putting the number ‘5’ into the fourth slot of the number-series. This stood in opposition to the regular continuation of the series with the number ‘4’, which is in accordance with the objective notion of the thesis ‘ $X=n$ ’. The anti-thesis becomes part of the notion itself when the thesis and anti-thesis are synthesized in the negation of the negation. That is, the negation ‘i.e., 5’, as a merely non-objective and unlawful outlier, is objectified once again – the negation is negated. Whereas the subject was merely regarded as an opposition to the thesis, it is now the moment of mediation that leads to the progression of the notion itself. The subject is reinterpreted to mean ‘progression’ instead of ‘mistake’ (c.f., WdL, p.197).

That is, the objective notion itself progresses through the subjective moment of the negation when the opposition between rule and chaos is reconciled in a higher unity between the two – the third moment that is itself the higher notion uniting object and subject (c.f., WdL, p.84). In our exemplary Series3, this higher notion is represented by the second objective manifestation of the notion – the formula ' $X=n+[n/4]$ '. This return of the object in a new form is what the designation '1-0-1²' expresses. Whereas the subject is the '0' i.e., the 'None' in relation to the 'One' (i.e., '1¹') objective notion, the synthesis leads to a second objective notion (i.e., '1²').

This second notion has to be regarded as a normalization of the mistake. The subjective act of negating the notion of ' $X=n$ ' through the mistake of inserting '5' instead of '4' is reinterpreted into an objective notion. That is, after deviating from the formula ' $X=n$ ' in the anti-thesis, the synthesis of the first object and its subjective negation results in a second object – a second objective notion. This second notion explains the deviation of the anti-thesis and so to speak normalizes, and therefore objectifies the subjective deviation.

The formula ' $X=n+[n/4]$ ' is once again just one of many formulas that could play this role. The example is merely to signify the returning notional form of the newly synthesized object. Instead of assigning the same value (x) to every following number (n) of the number-series, as the formula ' $X=n$ ' does, this formula normalizes the jump from '3' to '5' instead of '4' by adding the value of one to every fourth number of the number-series. Just as at $n=4$, the series jumped from the notionally appropriate '4', to '5', so does it again at the 8th position (i.e., from '9' to '10'). Therefore, regarding the new formula, the subjective mistake of the anti-thesis is no longer a mistake, it is the moment of origination of the new formula within which the subject is part of the objective notion itself (c.f., WdL, p.1475, p.1544).

One ought to be careful with the interpretation of this Series3, though, as wrongly read, it can easily lead back into the Dualism of the bad infinity (c.f., WdL, p.1541). The distinction between the first and the second formula is not to be misinterpreted as the subject's epistemological limitation (WdL, p.1475). The synthesis is not to be merely read as replacing the 'thesis' with a new 'thesis' that was merely inconceivable from the subject's limited position, as that would amount to just the same Dualism of the 'bad infinity' that we found in 'Series1' (c.f., WdL, p.220, 1541).

The story to avoid could go as follows. The true 'One' transcendental thing-in-itself was always already contained in the notion of ' $X=n+[n/4]$ '. What stopped the series from being conceived in this way was merely the subject's limited empirical standpoint within the series. The subject 'represented' reality as ' $X=n$ ' from within its limited perspective, and with the affirmation of ' $X=n+[n/4]$ ' it realized it to be different. This story can even be extended to contain another error of the subject, followed by another correction – we recognize in this conception the boredom of bad infinity's pseudo-becoming that separates the subject's knowledge from the thing-in-itself that is the determinate, and hence finite transcendental object (c.f., WdL, p.229f., 1475).

What is essential to turn this conception of infinity into a true infinity, is that the notion is not conceived as predetermined and transcendently outside of empirical reality (i.e., as a foreseeable infinity), but rather as emerging within empirical reality itself i.e., immanently to empirical reality (c.f., WdL, p.84, p.233, p.1476). The subject's negation of the notion is to be interpreted as ontological – i.e., pertaining to reality itself, not merely its epistemological conception (c.f., WdL, c.f., p.1476).

The opposition between the existence exemplified through the infinitely regressing series (i.e., 1,2,3...etc.), and its notion (' $X=n$ '), is not conceived as a fixed opposition (i.e., duality) anymore, but rather as united in the interdependent co- and re-creation of the two opposites. The notion is no longer just the objective 'in itself' outside of reality but also the notion of empirical reality's immanent becoming 'for itself' (c.f., WdL, p.236, p.1416). By adapting the notion to the infinitely progressing empirical reality, the notion itself becomes immanent to empirical reality – it becomes the notion of (infinite) becoming itself (c.f., WdL, p.239, p.1475ff.).

In other words, the subjective conception of reality – epistemology – is to be conceived not as opposed to the object it conceives, but rather as itself constitutive of the object (c.f., WdL, p.1476). The exception of the subject leads to the rule of the object. That is, once the dualism between object and subject is overcome in the negation of the negation, we realize the emergence of objectivity out of subjectivity, just as subjectivity emerged out of the object it presupposed (c.f., WdL, p.230, p.1475ff.). Epistemology is ontologized to achieve true infinity.

The subject's breaking of the finite notion is now seen as a necessary step in the progression of the infinitely becoming notion – it is itself the notion of reality that allows all of the finite determinations of reality to arise. The finite, objective form of reality (i.e., ' $X=n$ ') is only in relation to its other – the exception from within which change arises (i.e., '5' instead of '4' in Series2). This subjective moment is what leads to the change of the notion into another form – the negation of the negation i.e., the new object ' $X=n+[n/4]$ ' (c.f., WdL, p.234).

This co- and re-creation of the object and the subject, the finite and the infinite, is the infinity of their interchanging progression as an interdependently becoming whole (c.f., WdL, p.213, p.217; p.1476). From within this insight of the object and the subject being united in infinity, it already follows that the latest form of the notion is itself subject to change – or better, it is itself the subject of change (i.e., true infinity is unforeseeable).

It is this necessity of reality being conceived as the seemingly contradictory unity between object and subject within a higher subject-object that Hegel refers to when claiming that “the absolute is the identity between identity and non-identity (c.f., 1801, 95; 1971, p.100; 1996, 244, 492)”. Hegel's logic is as such a logic of negation, as it shows how all things (as well as dogmatic philosophical positions) are negated, and this negation itself is the driving force of infinity (c.f., WdL, p.242, *Enzyklopädie*, §81).

The negation of the negation is the duplication of the subject and the object at once. The duplication of the subject is signified by the term negation of the negation, while the duplication of the object is signified by the second objective form the notion takes – they are truly one. The moment of the synthesis, as the negation of the negation, is as such not only the negation of the subject but the negation of the very opposition between object and subject i.e., the negation of Dualism (c.f., WdL, p.243).

True infinity is thus conceived as containing bad infinity, in which finitude is opposed to infinity. Within this infinity, the dualistic distinction between the finite subject and object has been dissolved and what's more, the two have been reunited (c.f., WdL, p.239; p.1416). Their dualistic distinction is sublated into a higher identity – a higher notion of infinity that is itself regarded as infinitely becoming.

The implication of reality amounting to an infinitely becoming infinity is that the notion is no longer transcendental to empirical reality, but it is empirical reality itself in its becoming (c.f., WdL, p.233, 1544). Philosophy doesn't describe some ideal entity, but rather the real reality – there is no distinction between idealism and realism (c.f., WdL, p.245). Reality is both ' $X=n$ ' and ' $X=n+[n/4]$ ', and due to the notion itself being that of infinite becoming, it is speculatively predictable, that it necessarily will take another form after ' $X=n+[n/4]$ ' and has had another form before ' $X=n$ ' (c.f., *Enzyklopädie*, §82).

The true infinity thus includes the finite i.e., bad infinity of the limited subject that is attached to a limited object as its negation. The two are finite precisely because they need to be negated again for new finite determinations – new objects and their negations (subjects) to arise. The distinction between object and subject thus remains, but it is no longer conceived as absolute, as the absolute is merely the non-dual progression of this dual opposition (c.f., WdL, p.243). The distinction between them is now relative, as it always relates to one determinate object (i.e., ' $X=n$ ') being negated by the

appearance of one determinate subject 'i.e., '5' (c.f., WdL, p.133/4). Both of these terms, though, are finite particulars within the infinite progression of reality itself.

Reality is as such not to be conceived as finite – the finite (formalization of reality) is ideal (c.f., WdL, p.245). This is to say that any finite conception of reality is merely an ideal formalization that is not reality itself, as reality is infinite (c.f., WdL, p.242). Still, at any given point in time, reality is fully objective, there is no dualistic opposition between objective and subjective substances needed – the subject is merely the becoming of any finite object that reality as a whole is at any given point in time. The absolute, as the notion of reality's infinite becoming, is 'one' object, as all that is within reality (i.e., Being), is interconnected – all is 'one'. The 'oneness' that signifies unity is not to be conflated with the 'One'-ness of finitude, for which the transcendental thing-in-itself stands. Despite being united as one whole at any given point in time, rather than being a manifold of distinct entities, reality is not to be conceived as complete i.e., finite.

Reality is not finite, but essentially a becoming subject, in addition to its having an objective form that provides unity. Reality is thus conceived as one whole that infinitely keeps becoming by self-referentially negating itself into varying objective forms. It is itself this movement away from itself through its subjectivity, and the negation of this negation, back into the unity of the object. This subject-object is conceived as the notion itself that defines reality as the one truth of the becoming of self-reference (c.f., WdL, p.1574, Enzyklopädie, §74). Whereas there are infinitely many finite forms the negation of the negation takes – infinite objects it instantiates – there is only one absolute truth of infinite becoming that is necessary for the manifold of the finite to be. This is the notion of true infinity as the identity of self-reference that conceives within itself all of reality (c.f., WdL, p.236, p.1546).

This absolute identity of reality, conceived as nothing but the empty form of reality's infinitely self-relating becoming itself, is what Hegel sees in the "infinitely important form of triplicity" (c.f., WdL, p.227, p.577, 1547). This is the reason why metaphysically reality is to be regarded as 'three'. Although there are uncountable objective forms of reality, the number three now stands for the formalization of reality as the necessary progression of the dualistic distinction between object and subject within itself i.e., self-referentially (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §79). The notion is the pure form of the infinite becoming of this opposition – reality's rhythm of change (WdL, p.59, 1574). We will now see how this logic of self-reference provides the foundation that is capable of elevating Enactivism into the last of many psychological paradigms.

Chapter3: Synthesis

What is the logical foundation of Enactivism?

The following chapter amounts to the synthesis of Enactivism and Hegelian Idealism. This synthesis is reached by applying Hegel's self-referential logic of negation to Varela's desiderata for Enactivism to prove Enactivism's desiderata fulfilled by the adaptation of Hegel's logic.

A synthesis of Enactivism with Hegelian Idealism may seem inconceivable to many Enactivists. The irreconcilability between Hegel's position and Enactivism in the Enactivist tradition is partially due to Varela's own doing. In Chapter1 I used Varela's paper 'not one, not two' (1976) extensively to set up the desideratum of circularity, as it is Varela's most serious attempt at explicating his trinitarian logic of self-reference upon which Enactivism is supposed to be grounded. This paper is rightly praised, by co-founder of the movement Evan Thompson, as the paper "which can be used as a metonym for his (Varela's) thought altogether" (2017, 40).

Unfortunately, though, Varela complicated the way for a dialogue between Hegel and Enactivism by setting up the desiderata of his trinitarian logic in opposition to what he believed to be Hegel's dualistic position. "In what I call the classic, or Hegelian paradigm, the notion of dualities is tied to the idea of polarity, a clash of opposites" (3.1.1). "In our... post-hegelian paradigm, dualities are adequately represented by imbrication of levels, where one term of the pair emerges from the other" (c.f., 3.1.2).

The 'Thesis' of Enactivism we put forward in Chapter1 is as such conceived as opposed to the Anti-Thesis of Hegelian logic that we explicated in Chapter2. I will now proceed to synthesize Varela's desideratum of circularity with Hegel's logic of negation to show that the logic of self-reference Varela was trying to develop to ground Enactivism is indeed Hegel's logic¹⁰. Let us therefore look at the desideratum of circularity again, with new eyes.

3.1 Circularity

Varela's desired logic is supposed to overcome Dualism (1976, 2.3). This is supposed to be achieved by relating the dualistic positions into a third moment that synthesizes their opposition into a "second-order whole" (ibid). The form this logic is supposed to take is therefore that of a 'trinity' (c.f. 1976, 0.1). This trinity is supposed to relate the dualistic pairs and yet allow them "to remain distinct" (ibid.).

¹⁰ The mischaracterization of Hegel's logic as dualistic most likely stems from Varela's second-hand knowledge of Hegel, as according to his former PhD-student and co-worker Andreas Weber, Varela had at least not read Hegel up to the time of writing this paper (personal correspondence, Mind and Life event ESRI2022).

“The nerve of the logic behind this dialectics is self-reference: pairs of the form: *it/ processes* leading to it” (1976, 3.1.2.2). Without difficulty we detect herein the self-referential movement of becoming between the first moment – ‘it’ – a ‘thing’, and it’s becoming – the ‘processes leading to it’. The object and the subject are kept separate and are yet unified in a third moment which represents a “second-order whole” (2.3). To see the equivalence, remember how the re-establishment of the objective notion in the third moment of our number-series ‘ $X=n+[n/4]$ ’ was represented as the second-order object ‘ 1^1-0-1^2 ’. Whereas the ‘0’ here stands for the subject as negation, the ‘1’ stands for the object. The first object and its becoming (i.e., processes) have re-established the object in a second-order. What does this second-order establish, though, what exactly is the meaning behind the ‘three’? We will in the following see that, in contrast to Hegel, it is the metaphysical interpretation of this third moment that Varela is missing to arrive at his desiderata (c.f., Zaslowski, 2018, p.44).

As we can see, Varela understands the necessity of a “considerable reformulation of logic”, but admits that this is “at present, only partially achieved” (c.f., 1.5.1.1, Epilog). Varela kept searching for this “basic structure shared by these various pragmatics of experiencing” until the last years of his life (1999, 87). The closest Varela believes to have come to understanding this trinitarian logic is through “the law of the three in the sufi tradition or the buddhist doctrine of the middle way” (1976, 2.3.1.1). Varela keeps using the latter of these two doctrines in his later work and understands it through the exposition of the middle-way by Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (c.f., Varela et. al, 2016, p.219). The depth of Varela’s logical exposition can be said to have been reached at this point, but his intuition can be affirmed by showing, in short, how Nāgārjuna’s dialectical logic of negation, properly read, amounts to Hegel’s. From there we will move on to examine how our herein laid out logic is capable of fulfilling Varela’s remaining desiderata for Enactivism.

Nāgārjuna’s logic is demonstrated as the unfolding of four positions called the tetralemma. The first three positions, which will be in the following shown to correspond to Hegel’s three dogmatic positions of positing the finite as absolute, are denied, whereas the fourth position will be shown to be equivalent to Hegel’s conception of infinity, conceived in the form of triplicity.

Nāgārjuna’s exposition starts with the first position that states reality to be ‘One’ thing – ‘A’.

Nāgārjuna calls this position the affirmation of an essence (svabhāva) intrinsic to reality – i.e., the reduction of reality to the ‘One’ thing-in-itself in the thesis (c.f., Bhattacharya, 1978, I:13).

Nāgārjuna’s argument for denying this position in short is that “if the things were (essential) by their own nature (svabhāvatah), they would be even without the aggregate of causes and conditions (pratyākhyāyāpi)” (Bhattacharya, 1978, XXII). We can herein identify Hegel’s point of denying the transcendental thing for its exclusion of immanent empirical reality (c.f., (Garfield, 1995, XXIV:16.;17.). “If there is essence, the whole world will be unarising, unceasing, and static. The entire phenomenal world would be immutable (Garfield, 1995, XXIV:38.)”.

This position’s denial dialectically leads to the position of nihilism – the affirmation of pure nothingness as the anti-thesis (i.e., ‘Not-A’) (c.f., Bhattacharya, XXII). Just as in our exposition of Hegel, this position is criticized for affirming subjectivity without objective truth (c.f., Bhattacharya, 1978 XL,f.). Epistemology, “the means of true cognition (pramāṇas)” is affirmed, “independently of the objects of true cognition (prameyān) (Bhattacharya, 1978, XL)”. Nāgārjuna thus denies this second position for the same nihilistic consequences as Hegel.

The third position arises as a consequence of the denial of the first two. As both positions are denied separately, their affirmation in unison – Dualism – is the next logical position in line (i.e., ‘A and Not-A’). Both, at once, the object and the subject are thus maintained to have an essential nature (svabhāva). That is, the object and the subject are here both conceived as permanent (i.e., Hegel’s finitude) (c.f., Bhattacharya, 1978, LV). The difficulty with this position, just as in Hegel, lies in explaining how the two essential natures of permanent object and subject relate to each other (c.f., Bhattacharya, 1978, XXXIII). Nāgārjuna in a nutshell explicates how a relationship between the two would suppose one of the two essences to be more fundamental than the other. The problem then reduces to the position of either ‘A’ or ‘Not-A’ and is as such discarded for the reasons corresponding to these two positions (c.f., Bhattacharya, 1978, XXXIII; XXXIX). The ‘two’ of Dualism is thus

shown to be merely dogmatically presupposed within this third position – just as in our explication of Hegel’s Dualism.

Finally, the solution is given in the form of the denial of both, ‘A’ and ‘Not-A’ – the affirmation of ‘Not-A and Not-Not-A’. We can once again see the double-negation in this final proposition of Nāgārjuna. This proposition then denies the essential nature of both, ‘A’ and ‘Not-A’, object and subject. Neither of the two are posited as absolutes, they are both caused and as such dependent upon one another for their origination i.e., they are co-dependently arising. Furthermore, they are posited as finite – they arise and they are destructed (cf., Bhattacharya, 1978, LVI). All objects and subjects are thus merely finite. Does this then amount to the denial of an absolute as such?

Nāgārjuna’s Buddhism affirms two truths “a truth of worldly convention and an Absolute Truth (c.f., Garfield, 1995, XXIV:8)”. The middle-way of the double-negation consists in understanding the two as interdependent. This corresponds to Hegel’s affirmation of the notion as immanent to empirical reality. The absolute truth is not the thing-in-itself that is transcendental to reality, instead, it is the progression of the fleeting empirical reality itself.

“Whatever is dependently co-arisen,
That is explained to be emptiness.
That being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way”. (Garfield, 1995, XXIV:18)

The absolute, just as in Hegel, is of course the necessity of the arising and ceasing of all empirical things themselves – the emptiness of an essential nature of all finite things is the absolute. When a human has had this enlightening insight of emptiness, they are said to have achieved ‘Nirvana’.

“That which comes and goes
Is dependent and changing
That, when it is not dependent and changing,
Is taught to be Nirvana”. (Garfield, 1995, XXV:9)

The flux of fleeting phenomena, when conceived as not dependent and changing, ‘is taught to be Nirvana’. The absolute truth of Emptiness (i.e., attaining the position of Nirvana) amounts to conceiving of *the flux itself* as permanent (c.f., Garfield, 1995, XXV:9; Bhattacharya, 1978, LV). In other words, the flux of dependent and changing phenomena is itself to be conceived as *permanently impermanent* (i.e., Hegel’s identity between identity and non-identity). Due to the necessity of the impermanence of the phenomena themselves, the flux as a whole is infinitely becoming – i.e., permanently itself: pure/empty infinity (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §81, §82).

We once again arrive at a conception of the absolute of change – empty infinity – as that which instantiates all empirical phenomena. Emptiness is itself that which is absolute and thus uncaused and permanent (c.f., Garfield, 1995, XXV:9; Bhattacharya, 1978, LV; WdL, p.91). Its permanence, though, is to be conceived as the permanence of infinite becoming that instantiates the eternal flux of dependently co-arisen objects and subjects.

Emptiness is as such the negation itself, that creates both, object and subject, and is yet neither the essential nature of the object nor the subject – ‘Not-A’ and ‘Not-Not-A’. The double-negation is the affirmation of the absolute subject-object – the negation of the negation is the emptiness of becoming itself that alone is absolute – i.e., infinity (c.f., WdL, p.1416). The ontological notion of the ‘one’ whole of reality, is no longer merely a transcendental entity but rather the immanent becoming of empirical reality itself. Nāgārjuna expresses this insight by claiming that the absolute state of “Nirvana is neither existent nor non-existent”, that is, it *is not* to be understood as the ‘One’ objective absolute thing that determines everything, *nor is it, not* the absolute (c.f., Garfield, 1995, XXV:17). Nirvana is the absolute conceived as object and subject alike.

The absolute's permanence amounts to its being the one unifying object of all of reality that is infinitely in the subjective state of becoming. Therefore, the dualistic gap between the metaphysically transcendental reality and the conventional empirical reality has been bridged. "There is not the slightest difference between cyclic existence and nirvana" (Garfield, 1995, XXV:19). If you want, the only permanence of reality is the impermanence of reality that this absolute notion *itself* prescribes to *itself* in order to *be itself – be becoming*.

Reality's plurality of objective appearances emerge due to this same one reason, only this form of change itself, that just is reason, is not emergent but rather eternal. To say it in Heraclitus' words "While changing, it rests" (Heraclitus, Fragment 84a). This is then the notion of the absolute that unifies absolute and immanent reality in both, Nāgārjuna's Buddhism and Hegelian Idealism.

This empty, trinitarian, self-referential, *and* Hegelian form of infinity is what Varela tries to get at with his desideratum of 'Circularity'. This is supposed to be the 'empty' foundation of Enactivism – it's *groundless (i.e., infinite)* ground (Varela, 1999, 91). Let us apply this to the remaining desiderata to see how we can make sense of them with our trinitarian logic.

3.2 Emergence and Embodiment

This groundless ground of Emptiness is expressed with the slogan with which Varela sums up the desideratum of 'Emergence'. "The mind neither exists nor does it not exist (1999, p.85)". With the help of our trinitarian logic, this paradoxically sounding proposition can be made meaningful. Nāgārjuna's fourth proposition 'Not-A and Not-Not-A' moves beyond a dualistic understanding of the subjective mind as the essential nature of the individual living being that is conceived as being opposed to the objective body. There is no essential nature to the individual living being's mind that differentiates one mind from another. No object can be found that is identifiable with an individual's mind – 'Not-A'. Neither is there no such thing as a mind at all – 'Not-Not-A'. Let us now see how Enactivism's position on the emergent and embodied mind can be understood with the help of this trinitarian logic.

In Chapter1 we summed up Enactivism's idea of the mind as the purposeful activity (i.e., 'en-action') of the living organism's body. The body, in contrast, was characterized as the habitual sensory-motor processes of the organism. The separation between the dualistic opposition is maintained and yet bridged through the idea of autopoiesis (c.f., Latin Orig., 'self' and 'making'). Autopoiesis refers to the organism's internal 'en-action' of its own body following internally constructed meaning.

The idea of autopoiesis or 'self-making' of the organism is supposed to differentiate this conception of the evolution of living beings from that of a purely externally guided becoming of the body (c.f., Varela et al., 2016, Chapter 9). That is, the organism is not supposed to blindly follow the pre-ordained rule of the objective outside world to which it is forced to passively adapt. Enactivism, in contrast, understands the organism as an "adaptively autonomous dynamical system: it actively generates and maintains its own coherent and meaningful patterns of activity" (Varela et al., 2016, xxvi). In short, Enactivism desires to bring autonomous freedom back into our understanding of the organism (c.f., *ibid.*, p.234).

The organism is as such understood as the synthesis of the body and the mind. To put it in Varela's earlier logical terms, we got the 'it' of the body, and the mind's activity that can be identified with

‘the processes leading to it’. Simultaneously, the organism is supposed to be in a dialectical relationship to its environment. The ‘it’, as the organism’s body, is as such not only opposed to the internal meaning-making of the organism – the internal world of the mind – but also to its environment. Varela distinguishes between these two notions by calling the former the organism’s world, and the latter its environment (c.f. 1991, p.86).

The difference between the two is that whereas the environment stands for the objective circumstances surrounding the organism, the organism’s world is the subjective perspective with which this environment is tainted – the meaning given to the environment from within. The by-now-famous example of the bacterium swimming towards sucrose in its environment is used to illustrate this difference. “There is no food significance in sucrose except when a bacterium swims upgradient and its metabolism uses the molecule in a way that allows its identity to continue” (1991, p.86). This is to say that sucrose is not inherently meaningful as a nutrient in and by itself.

The environment containing sucrose only becomes meaningful in relation to an organism that subjectively perceives sucrose as meaningful for itself. The organism adds the subjective ‘surplus’ of meaning to the objective environment perceived (Varela, 1991, p.86). The organism thus doesn’t just perceive an objective environment but rather perceives it in synthesis with the internal world of its mind. The non-dual nature of the mind conceived ‘as the processes leading to it’ (i.e., the becoming of the body) is as such revealed to be the interdependent arising of the organism’s internal world together with its external environment – subject and object.

This, then, is how the mind does not exist as an essential nature in and for itself. The mind is not the secondary immaterial thing within the material body ‘i.e., Not-A’, and yet it neither does not exist ‘i.e., Not-Not-A’ – it is instead shown to be the interdependent arising between body and the environment. The mind is thus conceived as emergence.

The organism is as such conceived as the self-referential trinity of body ‘it¹’, mind ‘the processes leading to it’ by which the body is in contact with its environment, and the circular feedback of this process upon the body ‘it²’ – its self-referential alteration of itself into a new form. The mind is embodied, and the body is enlivened. The body is not merely a dead material object, but a living organism (i.e., subject-object).

We have thus satisfyingly conceived of the organism as emerging and embodied and therefore bridged the mind-body Dualism. Remember, whereas this was the point of the desideratum of ‘Embodiment’, the desideratum of ‘Emergence’ was to additionally bridge the mind-reality Dualism by showing reality and the mind to be essentially the same – emergent. What we are missing from this conception of emergence, then, is an idea of how life¹¹ could have emerged from reality, and ultimately, how reality itself is supposed to be conceived as emergent.

That is, as we established in Chapter1, the emergence of the organism is dependent upon a conception of reality itself as emergent. As long as reality itself is conceived as a fixed, finite or to put it in Varela’s terminology pre-given entity, the mind will hardly amount to more than a representation of this ‘One’ thing-in-itself (c.f., Varela et al., 2016, p.9, Varela, 1979, p.275). In the absence of a conception of reality as emergent the organism will, just as everything else within reality, be conceived as pre-determined by the ‘One’ reality itself (c.f., Thompson, 2006, 151f.). The emergent mind of the organism will be reduced to the ‘Oneness’ of the thing-in-itself.

¹¹ As the mind and the body arise together as two moments sublated within the organism according to the strong life-mind continuity thesis discussed in Chapter1, the emergence of the mind coincides with the emergence of life itself.

The mind-reality Dualism could be conceived as being bridged at once with the mind-body Dualism, as the relation between organism and reality is posited as a process of interdependent becoming that is interrelated with the organism's own becoming (Varela et al., 2016, p. 172ff.).

The problem with this view of the interdependence of mind and reality is that it suggests a bidirectional dependency relationship between organismic life and reality which seems to carry hugely counterintuitive implications. That is, this view of interdependence seems to imply the necessity of life for the existence of the world itself. Conceiving the mind as necessarily arising interdependently to reality is one thing, but is reality's emergence also dependent upon the living organism? There are three ways to go for Enactivism from here.

Enactivism's first option is to deny ontological consequences for reality itself, addressing only 'reality for the organism.' Going this way would mean failing to answer the ontological question about reality as a whole and leads to a dualistic split between ontology and epistemology. The focus on the epistemological question of the organism's 'life-world' as opposed to the ontological 'world itself' serves to dodge the ontological question about 'the world itself', instead of answering it.. As long as there is no alternative explanation of objective reality to that of the thing-in-itself, positing the organism's autonomous becoming merely amounts to a desired conjecture. This conception thus remains within the dualistic split between world-itself (i.e., ontology) and world for the subject (epistemology), and therefore doesn't suffice to vindicate the autonomous becoming of the organism.

The second option is to embrace the counterintuitive idea of reality co-dependently arising with life, resulting in a relativism about objective reality. Enactivism would consequentially commit itself to the position that there is no objective reality per se – reality always only *is* in relation to the very minds that perceive it. There are times in which Varela himself seems to suggest a conception of reality of this kind:

“Hence, this world of ours, no matter how we structure it, no matter how well we manage to keep it stable with permanent objects and recurrent interactions, is by definition a world codependent with our experience, and not the ontological reality of which philosophers and scientists alike have dreamed. All of this boils down, actually, to a realization that although the world does look solid and regular, when we come to examine it there is no fixed point of reference to which it can be pinned down; it is nowhere substantial or solid. The whole of experience reveals the codependent and relative quality of our knowledge, truly a reflection of our individual and collective actions” (Varela, 1979, p.275).

This position about reality justifies itself through the limitation inherent to humanity's epistemological perspectives, suggesting that the limit of our experience of reality is at once the limit of reality itself. According to this relativistic position about reality, there is no objective reality as reality appears only in relation to a subjective observer. The counterintuitive consequence of this position is that life can, due to its interdependence with reality, not be conceived as having emerged from within reality, as life is conceived as a presupposition of reality per se. The problem with this conception of reality then is that it is both fundamentally ahistorical and at odds with our naturalistic science. It follows from this position that there is no reality prior to life, hence nothing from which life could have emerged. Therefore, life must be held to have existed at the very beginning of reality itself and cannot be explained to arise. We will spare ourselves the naturalistic contestation of this position and continue with our philosophical enterprise of negating this position by relating it to our trinitarian logic.

This third way proposes a conception of reality's emergence that relies upon rethinking subjectivity. The key idea is to separate subjectivity from the mind and identify it as an ontological quality of reality itself. This subjectivity, liberated from being a quality of life, only, is to be conceived as fundamentally interdependent with objectivity, representing reality's self-referential becoming. Subjectivity, seen as the essence of becoming itself, predates the living mind and is intrinsic to pre-organismic reality. This non-organismo-centric conception of subjectivity grounds the autopoietic nature of self-referential becoming in Enactivism, offering an emergent perspective on reality itself. It

asserts that reality's origin lies in its nature of being infinitely self-referentially becoming. Reality's own self-referential nature, then, provides the source of life's self-reference.

The mistake in previous enactivistic approaches, then, lies in equating subjectivity with the living organism's mind, limiting emptiness to life. Hence, reality is limited to reality relative to the organism (i.e., relativism). Reality is replaced with the environment – there is no question of reality's ontological status in itself (c.f., Varela et al., 2016, p.217). The groundless ground is equated with the mind, rather than actually being the grounding notion of reality itself. Therefore, we attain the above dilemma between the first two options that either lead to a conception of reality as changing only in an epistemological sense – relative to our knowledge (i.e., we end up with Dualism once again) or life (i.e., the mind) is itself eternalized, which leads to the counterfactual consequence of life emerging at once with reality¹².

Our middle-way then, conceives of reality as the infinity of becoming itself. Reality is to be conceived as the relation between any objective form of reality¹ and its sublation into another objective form of reality² (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §81). This way, the emergence of radically new life-forms, as well as life itself is explained to be a consequence of the essentially subjective nature of reality as the self-referential becoming of infinity (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §82).

The living organism that emerges from reality is still 'one' with reality, as it is 'Not-Not-A', it is not not 'real', yet it is reality in a new form 'A²' relative to the old form of reality in which there was no life and therefore no mind 'A¹' (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §337). Simultaneously, this self-referential structure of reality provides us with a way to formalize the relation between different kinds of organisms that build on top of each other as sublations of each other. That is, for instance, single cellular life can be seen as object 'A¹' in relation to object 'A²' which amounts to multicellular life. This provides empirical science with a logical way of expressing the hierarchical relations between different evolutionary life-forms. All this requires is accepting the notion of self-reference as the foundation of reality itself.

We have so far seen how not only life but also reality itself can be conceived as self-referentially evolving. We will now see how the two, life and reality, can be conceived as a part of one intersubjective whole.

¹² Besides the lack of the explicit trinitary logic herein developed, the reason for Enactivism's emphasis on the living organism may stem from its phenomenological roots via Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty, although strongly influenced by Hegel, misinterpreted Hegel's term 'absolute knowledge' as a fallback into the metaphysics of a static thing-in-itself (Merleau-Ponty, 1963a, p.48; 1964a, p.64). Therefore, he chose to put Hegel on his head and put Hegel's phenomenology over his logic, restricting reality to personal experience (Merleau-Ponty 1964b, p. 81). Enactivism, building on this, reduces reality to that which is perceived by the organism – the environment – and therefore sees it as emerging with life. This makes Enactivism overlook the speculative insight that reality itself must emerge before life, in order for life to emerge out of reality in the first place. It is merely the knowledge of this continuity between the human and reality's becoming that Hegel's term of absolute knowledge refers to, and that is supposed to make us see this absolute movement of becoming as the spirit of all of reality in which humanity is identical and thus realigned with reality itself. Absolute knowledge merely signifies this recognition of the identity between reality and life.

3.3 Intersubjectivity

Varela's key point of intersubjectivity posits that 'this mind is that mind' (Varela 1999, p.82). The nature of mind is hereby claimed to be essentially the one-same for all minds. In Chapter 1's presentation of this desideratum we concluded that the openness of 'this mind' to other minds is posited as an a priori fact of the nature of the mind itself (Thompson, 2006, 385). Due to the explication of our non-dual logic we are now capable of making sense of this postulation by extending the meaning of the aforementioned 'a priori'.

The mind as the empty subject of negation is no longer identified with any limited extension like that of the living body. Instead, the 'mind' is identified with the a priori necessity of creation itself – the spirit of becoming that is essential not merely to the nature of the mind, and hence life, but to the nature of reality per se (c.f., WdL, p.1087f.).

The individual being's spirit is as such truly 'nothing' in relation to its determined body, but it is simultaneously the 'everything' of the creative element of all reality, including the becoming body. The 'emptiness' of our logic, which pertains to its pure form as the definition of being itself, amounts to the fullness of all reality.

This is why 'this mind is that mind' or better, why 'this spirit is that spirit'. All of reality, including its diverse living organisms, is fundamentally united by its participation in the notion of becoming itself. Thereby, we are not only related to all living beings as part of an evolutionary 'tree of life', but likewise are all living beings essentially connected to the essence of reality itself – the empty form of the absolute spirit. As Varela foresaw in 'not one, not two' (1976), reality itself has to be conceived as an infinitely branching tree (c.f., 3.1.2.1).

Subjectivity, although standing for no-'thing' specific, stands for the empty form of becoming in which all of reality is participating and through which all of reality is united. All of objective reality is united by this subjectivity, and yet subjectivity also stands for the dialectically logical strive between objectivity and subjectivity that allows for the becoming of the 'one' whole of reality into a different whole (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §82). Reality is as such conceived as one united being, yet this unity is incomplete, and thus not the 'One' of the thing-in-itself. To highlight this ambiguity between these two different conceptions of 'one'-ness, one could say that the notion of reality amounts to an incomplete unity or even better, a 'Non-One-One'.

This dialectical relation between unity and strive allows for the split between different beings as separate wholes, while maintaining their unity with the notion. Although fundamentally united by its participation in the 'body' of physical reality that amounts to the whole of objective reality, life amounts to the re-doubling of the notion within the notion – a second-order notion within the notion (c.f., WdL, p.1076, Phänomenologie, p.146ff.). The living organism is the 'second-order' of the notion of reality (c.f., Varela, 1976, 2.3). The self-referential whole of a living being, which according to the enactivist perspective amounts to life, is the redoubling of the self-referential whole of being per se.

The body of the whole which just amounts to objective reality per se, while maintaining its unity, is split, as parts of the whole (living organisms) become independent beings *for themselves*, while still being part of the whole i.e., interdependent with the whole of reality (c.f., Enzyklopädie, §83, WdL, p.1082f., Phänomenologie, p.146f.). The whole of infinity recreates itself as a finite (i.e., mortal) infinity within itself (ibid).

Reality before life is already self-referentially evolving infinity.

What we encounter in life, then, is the redoubling and the simultaneous splitting up (i.e., 'Entzweien') of the notion of self-reference (c.f. WdL, p.1076, p.1082f., p.1424; Phänomenologie, p.146ff.).

Life is no longer merely ‘being in itself’ (i.e., ‘Sein’), as is ‘dead’ reality (c.f., WdL, p.1414, p.1416). Take for instance the emergence of multicellular life out of singular cellular life. Although the evolution of life indeed amounts to the emergence of a new objective state of the whole of reality (i.e., of reality in itself), it equally amounts to an evolution of life for itself (c.f. WdL, p.1427, *Phänomenologie*, p.146f.).

This also solves the problem of free will and provides Enactivism with an understanding of how the individual organism can act autonomously, while the mind is conceived as empty. The Dualism between God (i.e., the physical law of nature) and humanity is overcome within the proper understanding of the psyche. Our logic conceives of the organism as both, part of the whole of reality via its participation in infinity, as well as part of its own subjective world, by means of identification with its conception of itself as limited to its body (i.e., the ego). The former allows humanity to conceive of itself as part of the whole, and thus as absolute freedom, whereas the latter perspective explains humanity’s restriction to the living body.

As this non-dual logic doesn’t conceive of the absolute and empirical reality as dualistically divided, the living organism is conceived as more than just its objective body, that is, it is also this body’s subjective becoming – its enaction (i.e., the mind). As the mind is nothing but the absolute, within the restricted body, it is free to evolve depending upon its enaction of itself.

This unity of nature and life within the notion of infinity understood as the absolute spirit of the trinitary logic is what the metaphor of humanity as a mirror-image of God stands for (c.f., WdL, p.1076). True intersubjectivity is only possible if all of reality essentially amounts to the one notion of infinity. The creative power is now neither only ascribed to a transcendental source, nor imagined as originating within the individual human mind. Instead, creativity is the eternal source i.e., the soul/psyche of reality itself and therefore within all of reality (c.f., WdL, p.1460).

This enables living beings, as mirrors of reality, to absorb (i.e., represent), just as well as recreate reality, rather than merely either passively representing it or purely creating it in our solipsistic minds (c.f., WdL, p.1079). We intersubjectively interact with reality as a whole, as reality is itself in the state of permanent becoming, as well as we interact with other organismic beings. The notion of representation can therefore be maintained, while being understood in the context of self-reference. The idea of self-reference brings across both, the living organism’s creativity, as well as the priority of nature to the living organism. Reality can therefore be represented without it needing to amount to a pregiven entity, nor us having to amount to mere representations of this one reality. This, then amounts to a synthesis of Representationalism, which cannot conceive of life as creative, and Enactivism before its alliance with Hegelian logic, as it could not conceive of nature as preexisting prior to the living organism without falling into the trap of the ‘thing in itself’.

This notion of the psyche has so far been shown to be capable of metaphysically grounding Enactivism’s understanding of life and its relationship to reality in itself. Its implications, though, reach much further and claim its original title of queen of all sciences for the foundation of psychology, which properly understood just amounts to the herein laid out non-dual philosophy.

3.4 Beyond the Thesis

The herein laid out non-dual logic of negation has been shown to be an adequate framework for Varela's intended revolution of Psychology through the paradigm of Enactivism. The understanding of the psyche as the trinitary structure of reality has been shown to be capable of solving the various age-old philosophical problems of metaphysics that relate to the mind-body Dualism. It is this very Dualism that made it hard for Psychology, the science of the subjective mind, to manifest itself as a proper science within a scientific worldview that prescribes purely objective science. This framework makes it possible to understand the subjective and objective reality in evolving unison with each other and therefore serve to understand not only the human psyche and its potential for development, but also the history of the primitive animalistic psyche and its relation to humanity in iterative self-referential circles of becoming that relate one life-form to another. That is, Enactivism's desire to understand evolution in a self-referential and purposeful way has been grounded upon a solid logical foundation that is capable of sketching the development between different life-forms and therefore connecting all life into one interrelated tree of life.

Moreover, Varela and Hegel shared the goal of achieving a research project that encompasses and bridges not merely the whole of life, but all of science (i.e., reality; c.f. Zahavi 2017, p.164). To achieve this result, the herein worked-out logic must be applied not only to gain an active perspective on the evolution of life, but needs to serve as a framework for our empirical observations of physical reality as a whole (i.e., physics). The application of the herein laid out philosophy to physics would lead to a radical shift in our perspective on the physical laws themselves. This framework predicts the very laws of physics to be in evolution and therefore merely relative existences, rather than absolute givens. This is in line with the latest conception of physics by Thomas Hertog and Steven Hawking (Hertog, 2023) who propose an evolutionary perspective on physics itself (c.f., *ibid*, Preface).

Last, but not least, I want to comment on the herein presented interpretation of Hegel's logic. In the context of this thesis there will not be space to comment on the various academically discussed options of interpreting Hegel as a whole, let alone interpretations of his various individual works. The success in providing a foundation for psychology that follows from this interpretation of Hegel's logic, as well as sources from various works of Hegel matching with each other to form this interpretation, suffices as a defense of this interpretation all by itself. Afterall, Hegel's omnipresent focus on attaining a conception of the absolute as a true infinity cannot be doubted by anyone familiar with any of his works and it is thus in this goal that all his efforts are repeatedly confirmed to culminate. This Thesis is as such not an explanation of Hegel's detailed process of getting to the absolute, but rather it is an application of the results of this process to the modern field of psychology.

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