The legislature, which incorporates both the estates and the government constituting the core of the executive, is "the totality of the political state, and for this very reason its contradiction [is] forced to the surface" (Marx 1975a, p. 91). The legislature is the direct expression of the contradiction, but it is "the self-contradiction of the abstract political state" and "the posited revolt" (Marx 1975a, p. 91). By "posited," Marx means "posited as law," by "posited resolution" "the demand for resolution." By "posited revolt," he means "the demand for revolt", not "the resolution of contradiction itself," or "the revolt itself." The demand for the resolution of contradiction or "posited revolt" which expresses itself in legislature appears most conspicuously in election, which is the very foundation of the legislature.

Marx discusses the significance of the election and the electoral reform as follows.

The election is the actual relation of actual civil society to the civil society of the legislature, to the representative element. Or, the election is the immediate, direct relation of civil society to the political state—a relation that is not merely representative but actually exists. It is therefore self-evident that elections are the chief political interest of actual civil society. Civil society has really raised itself to abstraction from itself, to political being as its true, general, essential mode of being only in elections unlimited both in respect of the franchise and the right to be elected. But the completion of this abstraction is at the same time the transcendence of the abstraction. In actually positing its political existence as its true existence, civil society has simultaneously posited its civil existence, in distinction from its political existence, as inessential; and the fall of one side of the division carries within the abstract political state is its opposite. Electoral reform within the abstract political state is therefore the demand for its dissolution, but also for the dissolution of civil society. (Marx 1975a, p. 121)

In this way, the contradiction of the dualism of state and civil society is compelled to its resolution by means of the voting right. But the resolution will not be achieved, because the contradiction premises the political sphere, which must be extinguished to resolve this contradiction. The contradiction is resolved not in this abstract political state, but outside of it, through its extinction. Put another way, modern civil society accomplishes the resolution through the legislature and election, but in a phony way. In opposition to Hegel, the sublation of the separation of the state and civil society, or the abstract political state is, in fact, the completion of the separation and dualism.

The political state, or the mode of existence of civil society, has been explored above. In sum, we have addressed the identity and substantial identity of social life and political life in the feudalistic middle age, and their separation by political liberalization; their regained, imaginary identity by the meditation of the corporation in civil society and the bureaucracy
in the political state; and the demand for the resolve of the separation in the estates, the legislature, and the election.

But the discussion so far has concentrated on the political state, or the mutual relationship between state and civil society in the modern political state, and the separation of the state and civil society has not yet been sublated. So now, we must turn to the civil society, which establishes the modern political state and is its natural foundation. As a first step, I would like to consider Marx’s theory of democracy, in which he addresses the form and content of the state.

What is democracy for Marx? It is “the genus Constitution,” “content and form,” and “the true unity of the general and the particular” (Marx 1975a, pp. 29–30). “In democracy none of the elements attains a significance other than what is proper to it. Each is in actual fact only an element of the whole demos [people]” (Marx 1975a, p. 29). “Democracy is the solved riddle of all constitutions. Here, not merely implicitly and in essence but existing in reality, the constitution is constantly brought back to its actual basis, the actual human being, the actual people, and established as the people’s own work. The constitution appears as what it is, a free product of man” (Marx 1975a, p. 29).

In accordance with this, what Marx means by democracy is not the particular state form or constitution, but “the genus Constitution,” which has its origin in the Greek demos (people) and kratia (power). Moreover, this “people” (demos) are not the “representation of people” or imaginary people, a notion which is criticized in the theory of representative constitution. Rather, the power (kratia) of the real people is the democracy. 3)

"Hegel starts from the state and makes man the subjectified stage; democracy starts from man and makes the state objectified man. Just as it is not religion which creates man but man who creates religion, so it is not the constitution which creates the people

3) In ancient politics, democracy was rather underestimated. Plato divided government into six forms according to two criteria: the number of rulers and whether the government was law-abiding or law-breaking. So the forms of governments are kingship and dictatorship, aristocracy and oligarchy, and two types of democracy (law-abiding and law-breaking) (Cf. Plato 1995, p. 71). Aristotle followed Plato’s schema, but he called law-abiding democracy “constitution” and law-breaking democracy “democracy”: “Of forms of government in which one rules, we call that which regards the common interest, kingship, that in which more than one, but not many, rule, aristocracy... when the many administer the state for the common interest, the government is called... a constitution...

Of the above-mentioned forms, the perversions are as follows: of kingship, tyranny; of aristocracy, oligarchy; of constitutional government, democracy. For... democracy (has in view the interest) of the needy” (Aristotle 1996, pp. 71–2). As the number of rulers increases it becomes more difficult for them to attain perfection, democracy has no proper administrator or ruling principle and is almost a chaotic mass or material without form. Marx, conversely, sees reality in democracy and fake expressions of reality in other forms of government.
but the people which creates the constitution. In a certain respect, the relation of democracy to all other forms of state is like the relation of Christianity to all other religions. Christianity is the religion κατ᾽ ἐξουσία, the essence of religion—defined man as a particular religion. Similarly, democracy is the essence of all state constitutions—socialised man as a particular state constitution. Democracy stands to the other constitutions as the genus stands to its species; except that here the genus itself appears as an existent, and therefore as one particular species over against the others whose existence does not correspond to their essence." (Marx 1975a, pp. 29–30)

Marx understands democracy as the power of the real nation. He does not posit any ideal state or future society by democracy. He posits democracy, which is the identity of the formal principle (state) and the material principle (people), in order to set the criteria for his critique of existence-modes of the state.

From this criteria (democracy), "Monarchy is one species, and a poor one," and "only a form, but it falsifies the content" (Marx 1975a, p. 29). "The political republic is democracy within the abstract state form" (Marx 1975a, p. 31). But "in democracy the abstract state has ceased to be the dominant factor" (Marx 1975a, p. 31), and it is the non-political, material state that is the dominant factor. So, "the modern state is a compromise between the political and the unpolitical state" (Marx 1975a, p. 31). "Political life in the modern sense is the scholasticism of national life. Monarchy is the perfect expression of this estrangement. The republic is the negation of this estrangement within its own sphere" (Marx 1975a, p. 31). In this way, "the abstraction of the state as such" and "the abstraction of private life" (Marx 1975a, p. 32) are identical and modern products. Marx, in opposition to Hegel and instead of climbing upward from civil society to state, shifts the focus of the argument to the material nation or the human as the "objectified man," and climbs downward from state to civil society. This process inevitably shows Marx's way of sublating the separation and dualism of state and civil society by investigating the existence mode of a material nation and socialized humanity.

The separation and dualism of state and civil society appear in individuals, too. "Hence the citizen of the state is also separated from the citizen as the member of civil society. He must therefore effect a fundamental division with himself. As an actual citizen he finds himself in a twofold organization" (Marx 1975a, p. 77), that is, the organization of state and the organization of civil society. A private person, who is separated from a citizen of the state, is recognized in the modern state as a recipient of human rights. Human rights are "nothing but the rights of a member of civil society, i.e., the rights of egoistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community" (Marx 1975b, p. 162). Man's right to liberty is "the liberty of man as an isolated monad (Marx 1975b, p. 162), and the right to private property is "the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion... without regard to other men, independently of society, the right of self-interest" (Marx
1975b, p. 163). These two rights are the foundation of the civil society. They make “every man see in other men not the realisation of his own freedom, but the barrier to it” (Marx 1975b, p. 163). Each person in civil society believes that he himself is a monad, so “the sole bond holding [people] together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic selves,” and “species-life itself, society, appears as a framework external to the individuals, as a restriction of their original independence” (Marx 1975b, p. 164).

Civil society is therefore the “sole bond” and the “world of need, labour, and private interest,” absolutely different from “species-life itself.” The essential, true human in civil society is bourgeois or a private person whose human rights are recognized. As the principle of civil society is real need and egoism, money is God. Money is “the universal self-established value of all things,” “the estranged essence of man’s work and man’s existence,” and, in civil society, “this alien essence dominates him, and he worships it” (Marx 1975b, p. 172). Accordingly, civil society “separates the objective essence of the human being from him as merely something external, material” (Marx 1975a, p. 81). Civil society as such, the civil society which completely separates itself from the political state and stands in dualism with it, has no chance to sublate this dualism by itself.

Thus, Marx grasps the fundamental limitation of the dualism of state and civil society and thus limitation of the political liberation of humanity. There is indeed a sort of liberation, but not the liberation of humanity itself. The liberation of humanity could be achieved through the sublation of the dualism of state and civil society, but we have not found the fundamental conditions for it either in the political state or in civil society. We must find the resolution for human liberation outside of them.

Chapter 3. Marx’s sublation of the dualism of state and civil society

At the end of On the Jewish Question, the emancipation of humanity is explained as follows.

All emancipation is a reduction of the human world and relationships to man himself.

Political emancipation is the reduction of man, on the one hand, to a member of civil society, to an egoistic, independent individual, and, on the other hand, to a citizen, a juridical person.

Only when the real, individual man re-absorbs in himself the abstract citizen, and as an individual human being has become a species-being in his everyday life, in his particular work, and in his particular situation, only when man has recognised and organised his ‘forces propres’ as social forces, and consequently no longer separates social power from himself in the shape of political power, only then will human
emancipation have been accomplished. (Marx 1975b, p. 168)

These sentences summarize the sublation of the state-civil society dualism. This sublation is precisely opposite to that of Hegel, which is the sublation of civil society to state: perfect political power absorbs social power. This is the core of Marx’s criticism against Hegel’s inversion. But some words in the citation above, for example, “the real, individual man,” “everyday life,” and “social power” are not explained in detail and we can only roughly understand their meaning from what Marx clearly says about the sublation of dualism. Then, our task must take a new form: an investigation of the leading force for human emancipation.

This leading force is the proletariat, which Marx asserts in Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law. Introduction. But what is important is not how it was found, but its location and significance in the dualism of the state-civil society. Regarding the discovery of the proletariat, Marx himself says, “Lack of property and the estate of direct labour, of concrete labour, form not so much an estate of civil society as the ground upon which its circles rest and move” (Marx 1975a, p. 80). Therefore, we must give adequate attention to how Marx situates “the estate of direct labour, of concrete labour.”

In Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law. Introduction, Marx begins investigating the significance of proletariat, saying, “Revolutions require a passive element, a material basis” (Marx 1975c, p. 183). The proletariat is “a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society… a sphere which has a universal character by its universal suffering and claims no particular right because no particular wrong but wrong generally is perpetrated against it; ... a sphere... which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating all other spheres of society and thereby emancipating all other spheres of society” (Marx 1975c, p. 186). It also is “the class which implements social freedom no longer on the basis of certain conditions lying outside man and yet created by human society, but rather organises all conditions of human existence on the presupposition of social freedom” (Marx 1975c, p. 186). So the social revolution is when “philosophy finds material weapons in the proletariat,” and “the proletariat finds its spiritual weapons in philosophy” (Marx 1975c, p. 187). This is how Marx situates the proletariat in Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law. Introduction.

The weavers’ revolt in Silesia (1844) provided the opportunity for Marx to develop his argument about the significance of the proletariat. He published Critical Marginal Notes on the Article “the King of Prussia and Social Reform by a Prussian,” and criticized Arnold Ruge, who dealt with the proletarian problem as an object of social policy and emphasized the need to educate the masses. Marx unveiled the true relationship between the proletariat and the state, and developed seriously his theory of sublation for the first time.

Marx’s starting point is to question whether the state can resolve poverty, which is the factual side of the proletarian problem. Marx writes, “The state... will never see in ‘the
state and the system of society’ the source of social maladies. Where political parties exist, each party sees the root of every evil in the fact that instead of itself an opposing party stands at the helm of the state. Even radical and revolutionary politicians seek the root of the evil not in the essential nature of the state, but in a different state form, which they wish to replace by a different state form” (Marx 1975d, p. 197). From the essence of state it is apparent that, “insofar as the state admits the existence of social defects, it sees their cause either in the laws of nature, which no human power can command, or in private life, which does not depend on the state, or in the inexpedient activity of the administration, which does not depend on it... The mightier the state, and the more political therefore a country is, the less is it inclined to grasp the general principle of social maladies and to seek their basis in the principle of the state, hence in the present structure of society, the active, conscious and official expression of which is the state. The political mind is a political mind precisely because it thinks within the framework of politics. The keener and more lively it is, the more incapable is it of understanding social ills” (Marx 1975d, pp. 197–9). The argument about the limitation of the abstract, political state, as we have seen, is more seriously developed here as the argument about the limit of the state against social maladies. The administration cannot intervene in the self-movement of civil society and must limit itself to “a formal and negative activity,” all the more so because the foundation of the state is “the contradiction between public and private life... the contradiction between general and private interests” (Marx 1975d, p. 198). Moreover, “this fragmentation, this baseness, this slavery of civil society is the natural foundation on which the modern state rests” (Marx 1975d, p. 198). So, if a state wants to make administration a substantive and vital activity, it must abolish this civil society or “the private life today” (Marx 1975d, p. 198), and it must abolish itself to abolish the private life. By this means, Marx demonstrates how helpless the dualism of the state-civil society is in the face of social maladies, and reveals that the emergence of these social maladies and the poverty problem demand the sublation of the dualism of the state-civil society from an historical viewpoint.

Arnold Ruge says that if social distress produces political understanding, then it is "symptoms of a great revolution," and that "all uprisings which break out in this disastrous isolation of people from the community, and of their thoughts from social principles, will be smothered in blood and incomprehension" (Marx 1975d, p. 203). But Marx criticized Ruge for his "community," which is merely "political community," and mocks his ignorance and small-minded political spirit saying, "Do not all uprisings, without exception, break out in a disastrous isolation of man from the community?" (Marx 1975d, p. 204). Marx comes to the core of the problem: workers are isolated from a community. But this community is "a community the real character and scope of which is quite different from that of the political community" (Marx 1975d, p. 204). "The community from which the worker is isolated by his own labour is life itself, physical and mental life, human morality, human activity, human enjoyment, human nature. Human nature is the true community of men. The
disastrous isolation from this essential nature is incomparably more universal, more intolerable, more dreadful, and more contradictory, than isolation from the political community” (Marx 1975d, pp. 204–5). The foundation of the abstract and limited political community is civil society— which is the sphere for abstract private life, and the deepest foundation of the state-civil society dualism— is the true human community as life itself. The proletariat has no need for uprisings, if it is isolated only from the political community or civil society. But the proletariat cannot tolerate isolation from life itself (das Leben selbst) or human morality (die menschliche Sittlichkeit). So it is the proletarian uprisings that will resolve the isolation from human morality, and this is the basis for the sublation of the dualism of the state-civil society.

It is worth noting that Marx calls the true community of men living life itself “human morality,” or Sittlichkeit. Human morality originates with Hegel and he wanted it to be realized in the state, but Marx locates it in life itself. This is the ultimate reason Marx and Hegel take opposite directions in their attempts to sublate the dualism of the state-civil society. In Hegel’s case, the sublation means the ideological development from family through civil society to state. As long as the sublation of contradiction is ideal, the dualism remains real. On the other hand, Marx contrasts the state-civil society with life itself and proposes practical steps to sublate this contradiction. This is his true intention for human emancipation described at the end of On the Jewish Question: creating a society which no longer separates social power from itself in the shape of political power, and in which “the real, individual man” means a man in this true community of men (life itself), not in civil society.

In conclusion, I would like to examine the first plan for the proletarian revolution, that is, Marx’s plan for the sublation of the dualism of the state-civil society. Human life itself is infinitely broader than political life, as mentioned above, “however partial the uprising of the industrial workers may be, it contains within itself a universal soul; however universal a political uprising may be, it conceals even in its most grandiose form a narrow-minded spirit” (Marx 1975d, p. 205). Thus, the difference between social revolution and political revolution can defined as follows. “A social revolution is found to have the point of view of the whole because— even if it were to occur in only one factory district— it represents man’s protest against a dehumanised life, because it starts out from the point of view of a separate real individual” (Marx 1975d, p. 205). On the other hand, “the political soul of revolution... consists in the tendency of classes having no political influence to abolish their isolation from statehood and rule. Its point of view is that of state, of an abstract whole, which exists only through separation from real life, and which is inconceivable without the organized contradiction between the universal idea of man and the individual existence of man. Hence, too, a revolution with a political soul, in accordance with the limited and dichotomous nature of this soul, organizes a ruling stratum in society at the expense of society itself” (Marx 1975d, p. 205).
In the comparison of social and political revolutions, Marx describes the former as only the basis for the proletarian revolution without referring to the sublation of the dualism of the state-civil society. We must not understand what Marx says about the latter as characteristic of historical bourgeois revolutions alone. It holds true for all revolutions that do not have any real basis or practical direction to abolish state: the “social revolution with a political soul” of Ruge. Marx defines the social revolution above more closely as “a political revolution with a social soul”: “Revolution in general— the overthrow of the existing power and dissolution of the old relationships— is a political act insofar as it needs destruction and dissolution. But where its organising actively begins, where its proper object, its soul, comes to the fore— there socialism throws off the political cloak” (Marx 1975d, p. 206).

Marx’s attempt to sublate the dualism of the state-civil society resulted in “a political revolution with a social soul,” and then his investigation concentrated on the criticism of economics, which has its basis in criticism of civil society from the viewpoint of the true community of men, life itself, and human morality, and was completed in Capital (Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, first appeared in 1867–1894). This is not simply a criticism of civil society, or the formation of economics. Although the proletariat, which is separated from life itself and isolated, appears in Marx’s criticism of economics as being absorbed in civil society (as wage labor), it must—as the material foundation and subject of the sublation of the dualism— make itself the subject and class of social revolution. Therefore, Marx’s task is dualistic: it entails the simultaneous critique of both politics and economics.

Conclusion

In previous articles, I have examined Marx’s arguments on the formation process of money and clarified the origin of commodity and money fetishism (Shibata 2012). I then have argued the conditions necessary for the sustainable and stable existence of money in relation to labor and the private property system (Shibata 2013). But Marx’s criticism of economics reveals its true value when it is related with his criticism of politics and state, and that value is the expansion and deepening of the critical analysis of the material foundation for social revolution.

In his analysis, Marx overturned some fundamental aspects of philosophy, which influenced Hegel also: the superiority of state over democracy originated with ancient politics, and the superiority of form over material originated with ancient metaphysics. This is the basis of materialism and we can understand more the significance of Marx’s criticism of economics or Engels’ end of philosophy from this viewpoint.

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Univ. Press.


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