

Dialectic and the Human Nature: Marx's Theory of Inter-Objectivity

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I have recently written two articles about Marx's dialectic and tried to clarify the relationship between Marx's theory and that of other Western philosophers. (Shibata 2020; Shibata 2021) Engels, who did not have enough knowledge to understand Marx's work in the context of Western philosophical history, took on the role of Marx's successor after his death; however, he claimed the dualism of the subject and object, and described the history of philosophy as the confrontation between materialism and idealism, thereby causing a lot of misunderstanding about Marx's theory.

Thus, the question of the relationship between thinking and being, the relation of the spirit to nature—the paramount question of the whole of philosophy—has its roots in the narrow-minded and ignorant notions of savagery similar to any religion. ... The philosophers' answers to this question split them into two great camps. There are those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed creation of the world in some form or other. Among these philosophers, one of whom is Hegel, this creation often becomes more intricate and impossible than in Christian theology and comprises the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belonged to various schools of materialism. (Engels 1990, p. 366)

Sartre knew of Engels' treachery and distortion of Marx's work, and claimed that true positivists displace metaphysics, but that materialists occupy the position of God and thereby command all things:

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What is involved in this surprising text is the elimination of human subjectivity, that “addition foreign to nature.” The materialist thinks that by denying his subjectivity, he has made it disappear. However, the trick is easily exposed. To eliminate subjectivity, the materialist declares that he is an object, that is, the subject matter of science. However, once he has eliminated subjectivity in favor of the object, instead of seeing himself as a thing among other things, buffeted by the physical universe, he makes of himself an objective beholder and claims to contemplate nature as it is, in the absolute. (Sartre 1968, pp. 188–189)

I noted that the most serious drawback of Marxism has been the subject-object dualism. Both Hegel and Marx worked with the ontological problem of the monism of the subject-object beyond such an epistemological paradigm; as such, Engels could be held responsible for the creation of his faulty interpretation of Marxism.

In my recent papers, I have outlined the history of Western philosophy concisely, beginning with Socrates. Socrates defined humans as social animals who depend on society or the community to live, and tried to find a human nature that corresponds to this definition. Hegel criticized Christianity, and tried to verify the human rational ability to reach transcendental human nature, while Socrates pursued and developed a dialectic. After Hegel’s death, the idea of the fixed transhistorical human nature was denied, and the direction of philosophical study changed drastically to produce Marxism and existentialism.

In this paper, I focus on the notion of “society” and “species-being” and clarify what Marxism inherited from the philosophies of and before Hegel.

Chapter 1. Hegel’s Critique of Socrates

Socrates sought the wisdom for humans to live humanely. “Live humanely” meant living according to one’s nature. If we were to rephrase it, we could say, “live well.” Ancient Greeks referred to such human excellence as “virtue [arete].”

Money, property, fame, and social status are objects of human desire and pleasure, which promote private interests and make human cooperation impossible. If everyone pursued only their own desires, it would be impossible for humanity to come together and form a society. As humans are defined as social animals, such a self-serving manner of being would be fatal to humankind. Socrates said:

Just actions and all forms of virtuous activity are beautiful and good. He who knows the beautiful and good will never choose anything else, he who is ignorant of them cannot do them, and even if he tries, will fail. Hence, the wise do what is beautiful and good, the unwise cannot and fail if they try. Therefore, since just

actions and all other forms of beautiful and good activity are virtuous actions, it is clear that Justice and every other form of Virtue is Wisdom. (Xenophon, trans 1923, p. 225)

Since the days of ancient Greece, there have been several attempts to answer why human societies exist. Ancient Greeks notably distinguished themselves from savage people, justifying the distinction by the ability to live in a humane community, and argued that justice is the most important virtue. If people live only for their desires and pursue their own private interests, such a way of living would not distinguish humans from animals. It is the ability to live in the country—in a higher moral and political community—that enables humanity to escape from their direct natural environment, and become conscious of the principles of moral and social life, thereby distinguishing themselves from animals. Therefore, life in the city-state [*polis*] was thought to be the supreme form of human life. Pericles knew it and said as much at a funeral oration:

None of these men set higher value on the continued enjoyment of their wealth and let that turn them coward; none let the poor man's hope, that someday he will escape poverty and grow rich, postpone that fearful moment. For them victory over the enemy was the greater desire. (Thucydides, trans 2009, p. 94)

Socrates and Plato, who argue that humans cannot be happy outside of a formal social setup, believe that the argument of the Sophists negates human nature and paves the way for tyranny. This is because Sophists claim that the pursuit of private property or power is inherent within human nature, and deny the definition of humans as political animals, that is, animals which can live only in community.

Like all Athenians, Socrates was owed all the good things a lawful order can provide to citizens. Anyone who disapproved of the conditions and laws of Athens could emigrate, but those who decided to remain chose to follow the laws of the state. If they thought something in the law was wrong, the obligation to argue against it was upon them. If they were unable to do so, they would have to respect the applicable law. This was especially true for Socrates because he spent his whole life in Athens, preferring it to anywhere else, including the states he used to compliment. He also demonstrated his agreement with Athenian living conditions by establishing a family there. Socrates could have chosen exile during the trial and left Athens legally. However, he did not do so and claimed that he should accept the death sentence based on the laws of the state of Athens. For him, humans were social animals, and society and state belonged to human nature; human nature should be investigated in its intercourse with members of society in the form of dialogue.

While speaking of Socrates in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel clearly

distinguishes between the Socratic irony and the art of midwifery, both of which he regards as two parts of the Socratic method. Hegel states that Socratic irony is “a particular mode of carrying on intercourse between one person and another” (Hegel 1955, p. 398) and “a manner of speech, a pleasant rallying.” (Hegel 1955, p. 402) He recognizes that Socratic irony is dialectic in nature, as long as it is a manner of speech, that is, the method of dialogue. However, he underestimates it as “only a subjective form of dialectic.” (Hegel 1955, p. 398) He correctly evaluates the art of midwifery and says, “it is the assisting in the world of the thought which is already contained in the consciousness of the individual,” (Hegel 1955, p. 402) but he also characterizes it as “tiresome and tedious.” (Hegel 1955, p. 404) Hegel seems to unnecessarily distinguish between the art of midwifery as dialogue and irony as a manner of speech, and, in the process, undervalues both subjects.

However, Hegel does not entirely lack respect for Socratic irony. The following remark is an example of his thoughts on this matter:

If I say I know what reason, what belief is, these are only quite abstract ideas; it is necessary, in order to become concrete, that they should be explained, and that it should be understood that what they really are, is unknown. The irony of Socrates is this great quality of showing how to make abstract ideas concrete and effect their development, for on that alone depends the bringing of the notion into consciousness. (Hegel 1955, p. 400)

Hegel’s argument about Socrates contains both positive and negative evaluations. He says that “the principle of his [Socrates’] philosophy falls in with the method itself” (Hegel 1955, p. 397) and recognizes the contents of Socratic irony as positive (i.e., “to make abstract ideas concrete”), but he denies the “method itself” as “a manner of speech, a pleasant rallying.”

One of the reasons for this dualistic evaluation is Hegel’s speculative system, which reveals its weakness in his interpretation of Socrates. Hegel asserts, “The philosophy of Socrates is no withdrawal from existence now and here into the free, pure regions of thought, but is in a piece with his life, it does not make a system” (Hegel 1955, p. 396) and “it may actually be said that Socrates knew nothing, for he did not reach the systematic construction of a philosophy.” (Hegel 1955, p. 399) From an opposing standpoint, that is, a Socratic standpoint, the speculative philosophical system of Hegel reaches “the systematic construction of a philosophy.” Therefore, it knows everything (absolute knowledge), but is only an abstract construction in the “free and pure realm of thought,” which is disconnected from real life.

Chapter 2. Hegel's Dialectic

According to Hegel, religion and politics are two of the most important aspects that support humankind. However, they have not contributed to making humanity more humane; on the contrary, they have planted a “disdain for humanity” in people and helped in oppressing humankind. As per this belief, humans must go through the detour of Christianity to achieve happiness despite their moral failures. Hegel argued, however, that the necessity of such a detour makes Christianity an inhumane religion. This detour presumes that human nature is inherently degenerate and that humans are not virtuous. Therefore, Christianity is a religion of disdain for humanity.

However, Hegel affirmed the deterioration of human nature. The “degeneracy of humanity” means that “the virtue of publicness” disappears and that human interest converges mainly on private matters. Private matters come first because of the concept of private property. Hegel criticized Christianity as a private religion and saw it through the lens of Christian attachments to private property. The dominance of assets (property) made humans private people and changed the nature of humanity. Hegel regarded the individualization of the human spirit as the objective foundation of Christianity.

Hegel later realized the historical necessity of modern civil society. He understood civil society as a system of property and rights, and concentrated on investigating the fate of modern society to determine the historical necessity and inner principles of this development.

To grasp the substance of civil society, Hegel had to study political economy as a system produced by property and labor. He studied James Denham Steuart's *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Economy*, (Steuart 1767) and felt that he could transform the negative perception of modern civil society into a positive one. Property was no longer made up of inanimate objects, but rather the products of human labor. Hegel got a glimpse of the identity of the principles of civil society, that is, private interest and property—low-order human desires—and understood that he could envision modern civil society as a system composed of property and rights.

Hegel defined modern European culture after Descartes as a reflective culture, characterized by the conflict of dualistic concepts. According to Hegel, such a culture characterized by divisions reached a peak in his time:

Antitheses such as spirit and matter, soul and body, faith and intellect, freedom and necessity, etc. used to be important; and in more limited spheres, they appeared in a variety of other guises. The whole weight of human interests hung upon them. With the progress of culture, they have passed over into such forms as the antithesis of Reason and sensibility, intelligence and nature, and, with respect to the universal

concept, of absolute subjectivity and absolute objectivity. (Hegel 1977a, p. 90)

The peak of the reflective or divided culture was, according to Hegel, at the same time, the eve of the reestablishment of the totality of culture:

When the might of union vanishes from the life of men and the antitheses lose their living connection and reciprocity and gain independence, the need of philosophy arises. (Hegel 1977a, p. 91)

In the preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel described the historical development of the emergence of the dualistic cultural situation in three steps:

- 1) Formerly, they [men were] adorned with a vast wealth of thoughts and imagery. The meaning of all that is hung on the thread of light by which it was linked to that heaven. Instead of dwelling in this worldly existence, men looked beyond it, following this thread to an other-worldly presence, so to speak. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

- 2) The eye of the Spirit had to be forcibly turned and held fast to the things of this world, and it has taken a long time before the lucidity... could... [bring] attention to what has been called “experience,” an interesting and valid enterprise. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

- 3) Now we seem to need just the opposite: sense is so fast rooted in earthly things that it requires just as much force to raise it above them. The Spirit shows itself as so impoverished that, like a wanderer in the desert craving for a mere mouthful of water, it seems to crave for its refreshment only the bare feeling of the divine in general. (Hegel 1977b, p. 5)

Here, there is a conflict between romanticism and enlightenment. Enlightenment takes earthly, experiential, and finite things as the absolute, seeks truth in them, and pushes the divine and infinite things out of human cognition. Conversely, romanticism transcends the realm of the unclean experiential world to grasp divine and infinite things through intuition or inspiration. However, enlightenment and romanticism presuppose each other, as both assume the divided situation of the reflective culture. Hegel felt that it was his responsibility to overcome such a situation.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel proceeds from the most direct consciousness—that is, the consciousness of sense—through various forms of consciousness, and finally reaches absolute knowledge. (Cf. Shibata 2020)

Chapter 3. Marx's Critique of Hegel and Species-being

In *Private Property and Communism* in the *Third Manuscript of Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx writes that “the sublation of self-estrangement follows the same course as self-estrangement,” and outlines how this development led to communism.

Private property is first considered only by its objective aspect, but with labor as its essence. Its form of existence is therefore *capital*, which is to be annulled “as such” (Proudhon). Alternatively, a *particular form* of labor—labor leveled down, fragmented, and therefore unfree—is conceived as the source of private property’s *perniciousness* and of its existence in estrangement from men. For instance, *Fourier*, who, like the Physiocrats, also conceives *agricultural labor* to be at least the *exemplary* type, while *Saint-Simon* declares in contrast to *industrial labor* as such is the essence, and accordingly aspires to the *exclusive* rule of industrialists and the improvement of the workers’ condition. Finally, *communism* is the *positive* expression of annulled private property—at first as *a universal* private property. (Marx 1975, p. 294)

In this way, Marx describes communism as “the *positive* expression of annulled private property,” and explains its historical significance.

Communism is the *positive* transcendence of *private property* as *human self-estrangement*, and therefore as the real *appropriation* of the *human* essence by and for man, communism, therefore, is the complete return of man to himself as a *social* (i.e., human) being—a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism, it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it is known that it is this solution.

The entire movement of history, just as its [communism’s] *actual* act of genesis—the birth act of its empirical existence—is for its thinking consciousness therefore, the *comprehended* and *known* process of its *becoming*. (Marx 1975, pp. 296–297)

It is worth mentioning that naturalism here refers to the “natural historical process” in

the prologue of *Capital* Marx; he does not let his imagination loose here, but he describes—while linking his description to history—only the results of his critical investigation of national economics, a branch of modern science. Following this citation, he presents the first formula, so to speak, of materialism.

It is easy to see that the entire revolutionary movement necessarily finds both its empirical and theoretical basis in the movement of *private property*—more precisely, in that of the economy.

This *material*, immediately *perceptible* private property, is the material perceptible expression of *estranged human* life. Its movement—production and consumption—is the *perceptible* revelation of the movement of all production until now, that is, the realization or reality of man. Religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular* modes of production and fall under its general law. The positive transcendence of *private property* as the appropriation of *human* life is therefore the positive transcendence of all estrangement—that is to say, the return of man from religion, family, state, etc., to his *human*, that is, *social* existence. Religious estrangement as such occurs only in the realm of *consciousness*, of man's inner life, but economic estrangement is that of *real life*; its transcendence, therefore, embraces both aspects. (Marx 1975, p. 297)

The so-called formula of materialism was, in the past, vigorously accused of propounding economic determinism. However, as demonstrated in the citation given above, Marx does not intend to make such a trivial observation. He argues that as long as the movement of *private property* forms the basis of human existence—production and consumption, it is “the *perceptible* revelation of the movement of all production until now, that is, the realization or the reality of man.” We must understand precisely what Marx means by the word production. As discussed in his first manuscript titled “Estranged Labour,” production is “life-engendering life,” that is, the “creation of a *world of objects* [*Das praktische Erzeugen einer gegenständlichen Welt*] by his practical activity.”

Marx delves deeper into the idea of “society” in the above citations: “a *social* (i.e., human) being,” or “his *human*, i.e., *social*, existence,” and offers the following elaboration:

We have seen how, on the assumption of a positively annulled private property [or “communism as the *positive* expression of annulled private property”], man produces man—himself and the other man; how the object, being the direct manifestation of his individuality, is simultaneously his own existence for the other man, the existence of the other man, and that existence for him. Likewise, both labor and man as the subject, are points of departure as well as the result of this movement (they must constitute the *point of departure*, which underlies the historical *necessity* of private

property). Thus, the *social* character is the general character of the whole movement: *just as society itself produces man as man, so is society produced by him*. Activity and enjoyment, both in terms of their content and their *mode of existence*, are *social*, that is, they constitute *social* activity and *social* enjoyment. The *human* aspect of nature exists only for the *social* man; for only then does nature exist for him as a *bond* with *man*—as his existence for the other and the other’s existence for him—and as the life-element of human reality. Only then does nature exist as the *foundation* of his own *human* existence. Only here does his *natural* existence become his *human* existence, and nature becomes man for him. Thus, *society* is the complete unity of man with nature, that is, the true resurrection of nature and the consistent naturalism of man and the consistent humanism of nature.

Social activity and social enjoyment do not exist *only* in the form of *direct* communal activity and *direct communal* enjoyment, although *communal* activity and *communal* enjoyment—that is, activity and enjoyment that are manifested and directly revealed in *real association* with other men—will occur wherever such a *direct* expression of sociability stems from the true character of the activity’s content and is appropriate to the nature of the enjoyment. (Marx 1975, pp. 297–298)

Marx’s “society” here apparently originates from the species-being described in the third determination of estranged labor in the *First Manuscript about Feuerbach* (Marx 1976). It refers to the human being who has retrieved his estranged species-being. According to Marx, a human being is a profoundly social being, and the relationship between society and the individual is completely different from that portrayed by Ferdinand Tönnies, who distinguished between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*. (Tönnies 1963) Marx says:

When I am active *scientifically*, etc.—an activity that I can seldom perform in direct community with others—then my activity is *social*, because I perform it as a *man*. Not only is the material of my activity given to me as a social product (as is even the language in which the thinker is active): my *own* existence *is* social activity, and therefore that which I make of myself, I make of myself for society and with the consciousness of myself as a social being.

My *general* consciousness is only the *theoretical* shape of that of which the *living* shape is the *real* community, the social fabric, although in the present-day *general* consciousness is an abstraction from real life and as such confronts it with hostility. The *activity* of my general consciousness, as an activity, is therefore also my *theoretical* existence as a social being.

Above all, we must avoid postulating “society” again as an abstraction vis-à-vis the individual. The individual *is the social being*. His manifestations of life—even if they may not appear in the direct form of *communal* manifestations of life carried out in

association with others—are, therefore, an expression and confirmation of *social life*. Man's individual and species-life are not *different*; however, much—and this is inevitable—the mode of existence of the individual is a more *particular* or more *general* mode of the life of the species, or the life of the species is a more *particular* or more *general* individual life.

In his *consciousness of species*, man confirms his real *social life* and simply repeats his real existence in thought, just as conversely the being of the species confirms itself in species consciousness and exists for itself in its generality as a thinking being.

Man, much as he may therefore be a *particular* individual (and it is precisely his particularity which makes him an individual, and a real *individual* social being), is just as much the *totality*—the ideal totality—the subjective existence of imagined and experienced society for itself, just as he exists in the real world both as awareness and real enjoyment of social existence, and as a totality of the human manifestation of life.

Thinking and being are thus certainly *distinct*, but at the same time, they are in *unity*.

Death seems to be a harsh victory for the species over a *particular* individual, and to contradict their unity. However, the particular individual is only a *particular species-being*, and as such, mortal. (Marx 1975, pp. 298–299)

How did Marx reach the standpoint described thus far? It was by performing a fundamental critique of the political economy. Marx sees in “the connection between this whole estrangement and the *money* system” (Marx 1975, p. 271) the most important problem of the modern economy, and begins his investigation by observing that labor is part of private property. He delineates the four features of estranged labor: estrangement from the products of labor, estrangement from labor itself, estrangement from the species-being, and estrangement from men.

Next, I will review how Marx understands the relationship between private property and estranged labor.

Private property thus results by analysis of the concept of *alienated labor*, that is, of *alienated man*, estranged labor, estranged life, and *estranged* man.

True, as a result of the *movement of private property*, we have obtained the concept of *alienated labor* (*of alienated life*) in the political economy. However, on analysis of this concept, it becomes clear that although private property appears to be the reason, the cause, of alienated labor, it is rather its consequence, just as the gods are *originally* not the cause but the effect of man's intellectual confusion. Later, this relationship became reciprocal. (Marx 1975, pp. 279–280)

Marx's understanding of private property, therefore, is founded on estranged labor, and he acquired his view of so-called historical materialism, that is, the materialistic understanding of history, in the process of investigating estranged labor. The third feature of estranged labor is described clearly as follows:

We still have a third aspect of *estranged labor* to deduce apart from the two already considered.

Man is a species-being, not only because in practice and in theory, he adopts the species (his own as well as those of other things) as his object, but also because this is only another way of expressing it—also because he treats himself as the actual, living species, because he treats himself as a *universal* and therefore a free being.

The life of the species, both in humans and animals, consists physically in the fact that man (like the animal) lives on organic nature; and the more universal man (or the animal) is, the more universal is the sphere of inorganic nature on which he lives. Just as plants, animals, stones, air, light, etc., constitute a part of human consciousness, partly as objects of natural science, partly as objects of art—his spiritual inorganic nature, spiritual nourishment that he must first prepare to make palatable and digestible—so also in the realm of practice they constitute a part of human life and human activity. Physically, humans live only on these products of nature, whether they appear in the form of food, heating, clothes, a dwelling, etc. The universality of man appears in practice precisely in the universality that makes all nature his *inorganic* body—both in as much as nature is (1) his direct means of life, and (2) the material, the object, and the instrument of his life activity. Nature is man's *inorganic body*—nature, that is, insofar as it is not itself a human body. Man *lives* on nature—meaning that nature is his *body*, with which he must remain in continuous interchange if he is not to die. That man's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature. (Marx 1975, pp. 275–276)

Marx needed such a broad perspective of the human-nature relationship to situate and relativize modern civil society—which is founded on private property—in history. Without such relativization, we can only understand private property and modern civil society superficially and have no chance of overcoming and eliminating them. Marx's words from *Capital* (1996), “my standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history” (Marx 1996, p. 10), have provoked many arguments, but the foundation of the “process of natural history” is “the species-being” and “life of the species” in the above quote. Especially important to Marx's understanding of the “process of natural history” are the ideas that “the universality of man appears in practice precisely in the universality which makes all nature his *inorganic* body,” and

“that man’s physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself.” Marx further explains “natural history” in his “Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole.”

Whenever real, corporeal man, man with his feet firmly on the solid ground, man exhaling and inhaling all the forces of nature, posits his real, objective essential powers as alien objects by his externalization, it is not the act of positing, which is the subject in this process. It is the subjectivity of objective essential powers, whose action, therefore, must also be something objective. An objective being acts objectively, and he would not act objectively if the objective did not reside in the very nature of his being. He only creates or posits objects because he is posited by objects, because at the bottom he is nature. In the act of positing, therefore, this objective being does not fall from his state of “pure activity” into a creating of the object; on the contrary, his objective product only confirms his objective activity, his activity as the activity of an objective, natural being.

Here, we see how consistent naturalism or humanism is distinct from both idealism and materialism, and constitutes at the same time the unifying truth of both. We also see how only naturalism is capable of comprehending the action of world history. (Marx 1975, p. 336)

The “consistent naturalism or humanism” referred to above is the philosophical foundation of the materialistic understanding of history and Marx’s realistic dialectic. He learned and used the concept of “object” from Feuerbach, but added the concept of “action” to it, and developed it further. We can see this in the words “objective activity,” which are central to the concept in the *Thesis on Feuerbach*. (Marx 1976)

Marx further explains the relationship between men and nature as follows:

Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living natural being, he is on the one hand endowed with natural powers, vital powers—he is an active natural being. These forces exist in him as tendencies and abilities, as instincts. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous objective being he is a suffering, conditioned, and limited creature, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his instincts exist outside him, as objects independent of him; yet these objects are objects that he needs—essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers. To say that man is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous, objective being full of natural vigor is to say that he has real, sensuous objects as the object of his being or of his life, or that he can only express his life in real, sensuous objects. To be objective, natural and sensuous, and at the same time to have object, nature and sense outside oneself, or oneself to be object, nature, and

sense for a third party, is one and the same thing.

Hunger is a natural need; it therefore needs a nature outside itself, an object outside itself, in order to satisfy itself, to be stilled. Hunger is an acknowledged need of my body for an object existing outside it, indispensable to its integration and to the expression of its essential being.

A being that does not have its nature outside itself is not a natural being, and plays no part in the system of nature. A being that has no object outside itself is not an objective being. A being, which is not itself an object for some third being, has no being for its object; that is, it is not objectively related. This is not an objective. The non-objective being is a non-being.

Consider a being, which is neither an object itself nor has an object. Such a being, in the first place, would be a unique being: there would exist no beings outside it—it would exist solitary and alone. For as soon as there are objects outside me, as soon as I am not alone, I am another—another reality than the object outside me. For this third object, I am thus a different reality than itself; that is, I am its object. Thus, suppose a being that is not the object of another being is to presuppose that no objective exists. As soon as I have an object, this object has me for an object. However, a non-objective being is an unreal, non-sensuous thing—a product of mere thought (i.e., of mere imagination)—an abstraction. To be sensuous, that is, to be really existing, means to be an object of sense, to be a sensuous object, to have sensuous objects outside oneself—objects of one's sensuousness. To be sensuous, is to suffer. Man as an objective, sensuous being is therefore a suffering being—and because he feels that he suffers, a passionate being. Passion is the essential power of a man who is energetically bent on its object.

However, man is not merely a natural being: he is a human natural being. In other words, he is a being for himself. Therefore, he is a species-being, and has to confirm and manifest himself as such both in his being and in his knowing. Therefore, human objects are not natural objects as they immediately present themselves, and neither is human sense as it immediately is—as it is objectively—human sensibility and human objectivity. Neither nature objectively nor nature subjectively is directly given in a form adequate to the human being. And as everything natural has to come into being, man too has his act of origin—history—which, however, is for him a known history, and hence as an act of origin, it is a conscious self-transcending act of origin. History is the true natural history of man. (Marx 1975, pp. 336–337)

“Natural history” in the previous quotation, and “history is the true natural history of man” refers to the “process of natural history” in *Capital*. (Marx 1996, p. 10) “Neither nature objectively nor nature subjectively is directly given in a form adequate to the human being,” and this is why “human objects are not natural objects as they

immediately present themselves, and neither is human sense as it immediately is—as it is objectively—human sensibility, human objectivity.” So, people must act on their objects, and process them, and “as everything natural has to come into being, man too has his act of origin—history—which, however, is for him a known history.”

Returning to the subject, Marx describes the third feature of estranged labor, according to the argument of man as a species-being as follows:

In estranging from man (1) nature, and (2) himself, his own active functions, his life activity, estranged labor estranges the *species* from man. It changes for him the *life of the species* as a means of individual life. First, it estranges the life of the species and individual life; second, it makes individual life in its abstract form the purpose of the life of the species, likewise in its abstract and estranged form.

For labor, *life activity and productive life* itself appear to man in the first place merely as a *means* of satisfying a need—the need to maintain physical existence. Yet, productive life is the life of the species. This is a life-engendering life. The whole character of a species, its species-character, is contained in the character of its life activity, and free, conscious activity is man’s species-character. Life itself appears only as a *means to life*. (Marx 1975, p. 276)

The third feature of estranged labor is often called estrangement from the species-being. In more precise terms, first, the species-being and private life are divided and estranged, and then private life makes the species a means of living. That is to say, the estrangement of the species-being and private life refers to the division of both and explains the formation of the individual in modern civil society in a profound way. As a result, the individual is abstracted, and at the same time, the species-being is abstracted. Needless to say, this abstraction is not abstraction in thought but abstraction in the objective world.

Marx explains that productive life is the life of the species. It is life-engendering life to clarify the significance of the species.

The animal is immediately one with its life activities. It does not distinguish itself from it. This is its life activity. Man makes his life activity itself the object of his will and his consciousness. He has conscious life activity. This is not a determination with which he merges directly. Conscious life activity distinguishes human life from animal life. This is because he is a species-being. Or it is only because he is a species-being that he is a conscious being, that is, his own life is an object for him. Only because of this is his activity-free activity. Estranged labor reverses the relationship, so that it is just because man is a conscious being that he makes his life activity, his essential being, a mere means to his existence.

In creating a world of objects through his personal activity, in his work on inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species-being, that is, as a being that treats the species as his own essential being, or that treats itself as a species-being. Admittedly, animals also produce. They build themselves nests and dwellings, like bees, beavers, ants, etc. However, an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces for only one side, while man produces universally. It produces only under the dominion of immediate physical need, while man produces even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces freedom therefrom. An animal produces only itself, while a man reproduces the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs immediately to its physical body, while the man freely confronts his product. An animal forms only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, while man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Humans also form objects in accordance with the laws of beauty.

It is just in his work upon the objective world, therefore, that man really proves himself to be a species-being. This production is his active species-life. Through this production, nature appears in his work and reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the objectification of man's species-life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created. In tearing away from man, the object of his production, estranged labor tears from him his species-life, his real objectivity as a member of the species and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him.

Similarly, in degrading spontaneous, free activity to a means, estranged labor makes man's species-life a means to his physical existence.

The consciousness that man has of his species is thus transformed by estrangement in such a way that species [-life] becomes for him a means. (Marx 1975, pp. 276-277)

These passages summarize the significance of Marx's argument regarding species-being. First, he compares humans with animals and grasps the significance of the species-being of humans compared to the limited species-being of animals: "Conscious life activity distinguishes man immediately from animal life activity. This is because he is a species-being. More specifically, it is because he is a species-being that is also a conscious being, that is, his own life is an object for him. Only because of that is his activity-free activity." We usually think that "free" means individuals acting of their own will and colliding with each other. However, Marx believes otherwise. This freedom eventually makes a human part of an impersonal universal consciousness, with himself as the object.

Second, Marx tactfully describes the creation of the human world in the phrase

“creating a world of objects by his personal activity [das praktische Erzeugen einer gegenständlichen Welt].” In addition, the human world is created based on the natural world. The expression used is the extension of the “objectification [Vergegenständlichung]” in the first feature of estranged labor and directly derived from the definition of species-life, that is, “life creating life.”

Third, “creating a world of objects by means of his personal activity [das praktische Erzeugen einer gegenständlichen Welt]” is rephrased by “his work upon inorganic nature [die Bearbeitung der unorganischen Natur],” and both expressions together are further rephrased in “his work upon the objective world [die Bearbeitung der gegenständlichen Welt].” The “work [Bearbeitung]” means adding labor to existing natural objects and transforming them, and, as a result, men duplicating themselves through this activity. Such an objective duplication is the foundation of Marx’s realistic dialectic. Marx expresses it as follows: “He duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he sees himself in a world that he has created.” Marx’s explanation reveals that his interest was not limited to human consciousness, and that the duplication [Verdoppelung] of objects themselves was of utmost importance.

The individual ego or subject is no longer satisfactory as the definition of “human,” and Marx’s use of the word species-being is an alternative definition of human beings. Heidegger’s in-the-world-being is, as discussed in my previous paper (Shibata 2020), limited compared to Marx’s concept. Heidegger does not regard reason or apperception as human qualities, and he criticizes the development of scientific reasoning that began in ancient Greece. Natural science today is less subjective and dogmatic than Heidegger proposed, and its investigative process depends on mutual exchanges between humans and nature. Further, these exchanges are part of an endless process of overcoming and breaking down existing theories of nature, and these theories provide the means to investigate natural sciences.

The concept of species itself does not originate from Marx. His idea of “species” is said to have placed production and labor at the center of the human community, and excluded elements of emotions, such as love. Marx, however, investigated labor and production with great care and identified both “objective duplication” and “realistic dialectic.” These observations allowed Marx to understand human society as a profound and realistic process and to anticipate the possibility of a social revolution.

Conclusion

Marx’s theory of society is pronounced by the theory of inter-objectivity, and he did not require Hegel’s subject, which sublates the world with contradictions and realizes the high-dimensional world.

At the end of his first philosophical essay, “The Transcendence of The Ego: An

Existentialist Theory of Consciousness,” Sartre supported phenomenology and criticized the materialism in the Orthodox Marxism of that time (Marxism without Marx):

The theorists of the extreme Left have sometimes reproached phenomenology for being an idealism and for drowning reality in the stream of ideas. However, if idealism is the philosophy without the evil of Brunschwig, if it is a philosophy in which the effort of spiritual assimilation never meets external resistance, in which suffering, hunger, and war are diluted in a slow process of the unification of ideas, nothing is more unjust than to call phenomenologists “idealists.” On the contrary, for centuries, we have not felt in philosophy so realistic a current. Phenomenologists have plunged man back into the world; they have given full measures to man's agonies and sufferings, as well as to his rebellion. Unfortunately, as long as the I remains a structure of absolute consciousness, one will still be able to reproach phenomenology for being an escapist doctrine, for again pulling a part of man out of the world and, in that way, turning our attention from real problems. It seems to us that this reproach no longer has any justification if one makes the I an existent, strictly contemporaneous with the world, whose existence has the same essential characteristics as the world. It has always seemed to me that a working hypothesis as fruitful as historical materialism never needed for a foundation the absurdity, which is metaphysical materialism. In fact, it is not necessary for the object to precede the subject for spiritual pseudo-values to vanish and for ethics to find its bases in reality. It is enough that the I be contemporaneous with the world, and that the subject-object duality, which is purely logical, definitively disappears from philosophical preoccupations. The world has not created the I: the I has not created the world. These are two objects for absolute, impersonal consciousness, and by virtue of this consciousness, they are connected. This absolute consciousness, when it is purified from I, no longer has anything of the subject. This is no longer a collection of representations. It is simply a first condition and an absolute source of existence. And the relation of interdependence established by this absolute consciousness between the me and the World is sufficient for the me to appear as “endangered” before the World, for the me (indirectly and through the intermediary of states) to draw the whole of its content from the World. No more is needed in the way of a philosophical foundation for ethics and politics that are absolutely positive. (Sartre 1960, pp. 104–106)

Sartre's statement is important, as his aim in this essay is to get rid of internality from ego, self, and selfhood. Sartre does not view ego as ‘I’, as a subject which governs the consciousness and the activities.” Instead, Sartre grasps the I of the modern person as an object that coexists with the world. This vision enables him to go beyond the dualism of

the subject-object and say: “It is enough that the I be contemporaneous with the World, and that the subject-object duality, which is purely logical, definitively disappear from philosophical preoccupations.”

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