

Dialectical Materialism and Subject: Monism and Dialectic

Hideki Shibata

Introduction

Chapter 1 Critique of Tadashi Kato

Chapter 2 Sartre's Theory of Subject

Chapter 3 Language and Subject: the Social Origin of Transcendental Beings

Conclusion

Introduction

I have translated three of Tadashi Kato's articles (Kato 2014; Kato 2015; Kato 2016). In these articles, Kato seizes Marx's monistic argument, but divides dialectics into the dialectic of cognition and the dialectic of objects, and finally turns to the dualism of cognition and the objective world because of Engels' influence.

Hegel's dialectic was born as the identity of substance and subject (substance is subject) in its birthplace, *the Phenomenology of Spirit*, but this means the identity of being and cognition.¹⁾ It does not mean that there are two kinds of dialectic. To overcome the dualism that remained after Kant was one of the principle themes of German Idealist Philosophy, and Marx also inherited this critically important issue.

Marx's monism, however, does not mean that "we must understand man as a being who produces himself and his world" (Landgrebe 1966, p. 10). Marx's monism does not characterize the world as the product of the constitutive operations of the human subject. Sartre understood Marx's real intention, and developed it in his articles (Cf. Omote 2014). In the conclusion of *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre writes, "a working hypothesis as fruitful as historical materialism," and follows it with a criticism of Engels' materialism, which "never

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1) As I will discuss later in Chapter 1, dialectic means to grasp activity = practice, which is intermediary between subject and real world. Therefore, Marx highly appreciates Hegel saying "in contradistinction to materialism, the active side was set forth abstractly by idealism." Such an appreciation would have made it possible for Marx to establish his concept of "objective activity," and to develop his historical materialism.

needed for a foundation the absurdity which is metaphysical materialism.” (Sartre 1960, p. 105)

Sartre’s on-target criticism is based on his own theory of consciousness, which further developed Husserl’s intentionality. He then added his impersonal and non-reflective theory of consciousness to Marxism, which made it possible for him to criticize Engels’ materialism in his attempt to revive Marx’s dialectic. Sartre’s deep understanding of Marxism clarifies the commonalities of Marxism and existentialism in this respect, as well as the foresight and reality of Marx’s dialectic.

In this paper, I will first review Kato’s articles critically, and then clarify Marx’s true intention with regard to his dialectic.

Chapter 1 Critique of Tadashi Kato

Kato published the article *Feuerbach ni tsuite: Dai Ichi Tehze no Ichi Kaishaku* [An Interpretation of the First Thesis on Feuerbach] to criticize Shinichi Hunayama in 1936, when the party-orientation debate was thought to be over. He explained his interpretation of the Thesis, and resumed the party-orientation debate in his interpretation. He raised important issues for Marx’s interpretation, but he did not understand Marx’s dialectic well, because of Engels’ influences. In this chapter, I would like to study his interpretation of the Thesis, to clarify the defect of his interpretation. First, I present his interpretation.

I provide the full text of the thesis for later use:

1. The chief defect of all previous materialism (that of Feuerbach included) is that things [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness, are conceived only in the form of the object or of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, practice, not subjectively.
2. Hence, in contradistinction to materialism, the active side was set forth abstractly by idealism—which, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such.
3. Feuerbach wants sensuous objects, really distinct from conceptual objects, but he does not conceive of human activity itself as objective activity.
4. Thus, in *Das Wesen des Christentums*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty-Jewish form of appearance.
5. Hence, he does not grasp the significance of “revolutionary,” of “practical-critical,” activity.

From the organization of this thesis, it becomes clear that “things [*Gegenstand*] ... are conceived ... subjectively” (first sentence), “know real, sensuous activity as such” (second sentence), and “conceive human activity itself as objective activity” (third sentence) have substantially the same meaning. This is the key to understanding this thesis. If you substitute “things [*Gegenstand*], reality, sensuousness” (first sentence) for “real, sensuous activity” (second sentence), you will get the phrase “objective activity” (third sentence). Feuerbach is no idealist. He does not seek speculative, ideological things but sensuous things. Nonetheless, he fails to comprehend human activity as sensuous, real, and “objective activity” as such. He becomes, therefore, an idealist (as in [the] second sentence) when faced with “activity”; he sees human activity as speculative activity (reflection and interpretation), that is, a theoretical attitude (as in the fourth sentence). Marx’s new materialism conceives of things subjectively, as sensuous human activity (first sentence). It comprehends the subjective and active side of things (second sentence) realistically as such, not abstractly. Human activity as such is apparently objective activity in the third sentence. To conceive things subjectively means to conceive objective activity, while to conceive of them subjectively means to conceive subjective things (things in subjective activity). Moreover, to conceive “human activity itself as objective activity” (third sentence) means that human activity as such must be the object of our cognition (and, at the same time, the object of our actions). That is all the thesis says. (Kato 2014, pp. 115–116)

Kato interprets the second and fourth sentences and says, “Feuerbach is no idealist. He does not seek speculative, ideological things but sensuous things. Nonetheless, he fails to comprehend human activity as sensuous, real, and ‘objective activity’ as such. He becomes, therefore, an idealist (as in the second sentence) when faced with ‘activity’; he sees human activity as speculative activity (reflection and interpretation), that is, a theoretical attitude (as in the fourth sentence).” Idealists in the second sentence, however, are German Idealists from Fichte to Hegel, not idealists who generally see only “speculative activity (reflection and interpretation)” as reality. Marx comments in the second sentence mostly on Hegel’s dialectic, which he criticized and overcame. Kato unfortunately does not notice it at all, and writes that the First Thesis treats only the objects, and not the dialectic.

To begin with, the first thesis largely concerns the object and not the subject of materialistic cognition. Cognitive and active subjects as such must also be conceived as objects or objective activity and as the objects of materialistic cognition. Mr. Hunayama believes that the thesis mainly involves the cognitive subject and says that “conceiving things subjectively” means most of all that the reproduction of things is given by practice and that human beings not only contemplate things but also act on them. In other words, he thinks that, before Marx, materialist cognition pursued its purpose by act-

ing on things and not by distancing itself from and just contemplating them. However, Marx does not criticize earlier materialism in that way. Regardless of the attempt by Mitin and his followers to apply the copy theory of knowledge to the interpretation of the thesis, Marx himself makes no distinction between his and earlier materialism in terms of cognition.

Marx uses a few simple phrases to explain his materialism. He notes that “this method of approach is not devoid of premises. It starts out from the real premises and does not abandon them for a moment,” and he refers to “real, positive science.” In his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Engels explains “that means it (materialism) was resolved to comprehend the real world—nature and history—just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist crotchets. ... And materialism means nothing more than this.” Thus, what distinguishes Marx’s materialism from earlier materialism is that “the materialistic world outlook was taken really seriously for the first time and was carried through consistently—at least in its basic features—in all domains of knowledge concerned.” It develops knowledge materialistically (empirically and scientifically, based on observation) not only in nature but also in history. Although neither the thesis nor *The German Ideology* addresses the dialectic, about which Marx says in a letter, “What was of great use to me as regards method of treatment was Hegel’s *Logic*, at which I had taken another look by mere accident.” (Kato 2014, pp. 116–117)

Kato divided dialectic into the dialectic of cognition and the dialectic of object, and thought that dialectic in *Theses on Feuerbach* was mostly the dialectic of object. If so, how does he understand Marx’s comments that “the active side was set forth abstractly by idealism—which, of course, does not know real, sensuous activity as such”? Kato apparently did not notice that the idealism here means that of Fichte to Hegel. He believed that the idealism here was practical idealism in general, and his misunderstanding originated from Engels’ viewpoint. Engels did not understand the significance of dialectic from Fichte to Hegel, and, in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* explained—from the standpoint of naive materialism—that Hegel’s system and method were able to be divided, and only the latter was dialectic, as Kato cited here. Kato writes that “Marx himself makes no distinction between his and earlier materialism in terms of cognition,” but then how did Marx come to obtain the idea of “objective activity” in *Theses on Feuerbach*?

In the context of the history of philosophy, the idea of “activity” was polished in its development from Fichte to Hegel, and the idea of “object” was broadened to include all of nature, including human beings, in Feuerbach’s materialism. Marx came to the idea of “objective activity” by criticizing both Hegel and Feuerbach, and in this sense the very “objective activity” is Marx’s dialectic, which was obtained by turning Hegel’s dialectic up-

side down. For this reason, the main theme of the Theses on Feuerbach is precisely dialectic. The denial of it, like that of Kato, proves his defective understanding of dialectic. He saw dialectic of cognition only as a method of scientific thinking, as Engels did. It made him believe that the *Theses on Feuerbach* served only to expand the object of materialistic cognition from nature to human activity.

In this first thesis, Marx distinguishes his materialism from earlier materialism only in the realm of application; thus, “to conceive things subjectively” means precisely that. In this thesis, “sensuous human activity (practice)” is equated with “subjectively” (first sentence). That is, “subject” means “practice” and “human activity.” “Objectivity,” therefore, here means “nature,” the object independent of human activity. That all previous materialism conceives of things only in the form of the object (first sentence) means that only nature was an object of cognition for it. Thus, “things are ... conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation” does not mean—Mr. Hunayama is wrong about this—that things are regarded as objects of contemplation and not as objects of practical activity. Things are in reality conceived of as objects of practical activity. They are separated from the subject, stand outside of it, stand before it, confront it, and the subject acts actively on them. Such things are objects that are outside human beings, are contemplated, or objects of intuition that confront the active subject or human activity and are independent of it. “Contemplated things” or “objects of intuition” refer to objects that an acting and thinking human finds lying before him. If some things appear as objects of intuition and the subject draws attention to things lying before him, the subject is expected to act practically on such things, and contemplation on them is related only to such acts. Earlier materialism also understands this truth. Francis Bacon, one of the earlier materialists or natural scientists, says *Ipsa scientia potestas est* (knowledge is power), and “we cannot command nature except by obeying her.” In saying this, Bacon only grasps nature as an object of study; he fails to understand human practice as such. This is, according to Marx, the defect of earlier materialism (first sentence).

Marx’s proposal “to conceive things subjectively” means that human activity as such, separated from natural objects, should be apprehended as it is, as objective activity, or as (I think it is fair to say) as an objective object that is intuitively known. There is no difference between conceiving of human activity as an object and making it an object of practical activity.

Bacon describes the empirical and positive study of nature (that is, materialism) as “putting nature on the rack and torturing her for her secrets.” Such a study of human activity is just a matter of applying a practical and realistic attitude toward human objects. Marx’s second thesis about Feuerbach means this: “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a

practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness [*Diesseitigkeit*] of his thinking, in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." Incidentally, some translations seem to misunderstand the second thesis. Plekhanov, for example, translates "this-sidedness" [*Diesseitigkeit*] as "does not stop at this side of phenomena" (in Russian), which is supposed to counter neo-Kantian epistemology. I believe such a translation is incorrect. As Lenin says, "Plekhanov's free paraphrase is not obligatory upon those who desire to know Marx himself." This-sidedness [*Diesseitigkeit*] means reality, being realistic, and seeing things in a realistic perspective, not being out of touch with reality.

The reality of a thought must be demonstrated in practice by applying it to a real object. In that respect, there is no difference between Marx's materialism and earlier materialism. Marx's materialism, however, grasps human activity as such as the object of empirical, demonstrative study, as a realistic object for study. Realistically grasped objects can be treated only realistically and objectively. Actual human problems can be resolved only by practical criticism or realistic reformation (fifth sentence). In this way, Marxists are practical materialists, that is, materialists of human activity. (Kato 2014, pp. 117–118)

The theme of the first sentence of the first *Thesis on Feuerbach* is the identity of object, practice, and subject, not one branch of philosophy, or epistemology (theory of knowledge). Marx advocates the identity of cognition and being, so he has no interest in epistemology. Kato's cognition of object could be Engels' scientific attitude, but it has nothing to do with Marx. He appreciated and criticized Feuerbach, who argued nature but not politics, and Bruno Bauer and Max Schtilner who were Hegelian and made self-consciousness absorb the real world and not grasp the world at all. The idea of "objective activity" represents all this. The reality, which is the alienated and objectified reality, makes cognition of the world, as it is, meaningless and impossible. Such cognition necessarily results in uncritical positivism, as Marx criticized Hegel.

In sum, Kato grasped the objective side of "objective activity," but failed to grasp the activity in his interpretation of the Thesis, because of his standpoint on Engels.

Chapter 2 Sartre's Theory of Subject

Sartre understood Marx's monism well, and highly valued Marx. On the other hand he criticized Engels' metaphysical "Marxism." At the end of *Transcendence of the Ego*, Sartre writes:

It has always seemed to me that a working hypothesis as fruitful as historical mate-

rialism never needed for a foundation the absurdity which is metaphysical materialism. In fact, it is not necessary that the object precede the subject for spiritual pseudo-values to vanish and for ethics to find its bases in reality. It is enough that the *me* be contemporaneous with the World, and that the subject-object duality, which is purely logical, definitively disappear from philosophical preoccupations. The World has not created the *me*: the *me* has not created the World. These are two objects for absolute, impersonal consciousness, and it is by virtue of this consciousness that they are connected. This absolute consciousness, when it is purified of the I, no longer has anything of the *subject*. It is no longer a collection of representations. It is quite 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 an ethics and a politics which are absolutely positive. (Sartre 1960, pp. 105–106)

In this article, Sartre tries to get rid of the internality of ego, self, and selfhood. Sartre grasps the *I* of the modern person, not as subject but as object, which coexists with the world. This enables him to go beyond the dualism of subject–object and to say: “It is enough that the *me* be contemporaneous with the World, and that the subject–object duality, which is purely logical, definitively disappear from philosophical preoccupations.”

He criticizes the philosophers and psychologists who believe that the ego indwells in consciousness, and insists that the ego is one object outside of consciousness.

For most philosophers the ego is an “inhabitant” of consciousness. Some affirm its formal presence at the heart of *Erlebnisse*, as an empty principle of unification. Others—psychologists for the most part—claim to discover its material presence, as the center of desires and acts, in each moment of our psychic life. We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness: it is outside, *in the world*. It is a being of the world, like the ego of another. (Sartre 1960, p. 31)

In another place Sartre characterizes both as “a sphere of absolute existence” and “a sphere of pure spontaneities.”

This transcendental sphere is a sphere of *absolute* existence, that is to say, a sphere of pure spontaneities which are never objects and which determine their own existence. The *me* being an object, it is evident that I shall never be able to say: *my* consciousness, that is, the consciousness of my *me* (save in a purely designative sense, as one says for example: the day of *my* baptism). (Sartre 1960, pp. 96–97)

This “spontaneity” is later restated as “freedom” in Sartre’s philosophy, and it is in reality one and only one essential determinant of consciousness. A human-being exists as consciousness, that is, he exists as freedom. It is for Sartre one and only one essential definition of human-being, which also has ontological significance.

Such primordial “spontaneity” of consciousness is argued in *Existentialism and Humanism*, and Sartre is thinking of fundamental human freedom.

Atheistic existentialism, of which I am a representative, declares with greater consistency that if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being which exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality. What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world — and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him as not definable, it is because to begin with him is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills, and as he conceives himself after already existing — as he wills to be after that leap towards existence. Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism. And this is what people call its “subjectivity,” using the word as a reproach against us. But what do we mean to say by this, but that man is of a greater dignity than a stone or a table? For we mean to say that man primarily exists — that man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so. Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss, or a fungus or a cauliflower. Before that projection of the self nothing exists; not even in the heaven of intelligence: man will only attain existence when he is what he purposes to be. Not, however, what he may wish to be. For what we usually understand by wishing or willing is a conscious decision taken — much more often than not — after we have made ourselves what we are. I may wish to join a party, to write a book or to marry — but in such a case what is usually called my will is probably a manifestation of a prior and more spontaneous decision. (Sartre 1955, pp. 27-29)

From this citation, it is clear that “existence” is the practical form of Sartre’s “absolute, impersonal consciousness.” This argument is a derivative form of the freedom described in the third part of *Being and Nothing*.

Sartre’s argument of human freedom, however, is often criticized, for example, by Ricoeur. In the case of Ricoeur, human freedom is “an only human freedom” (Ricoeur 2007, p. 482), and “human and not divine” freedom,” which does not posit itself absolutely

because it is not Transcendence. "To will is not to create" (Ricoeur 2007, p. 486). On the other hand, Ricoeur proclaims that Sartre's human freedom is the only creative freedom, which Descartes once attributed to God.

According to Ricoeur, Sartre's Cogito or consciousness as subject of a project is "a consciousness which thought itself divine." But this consciousness is preordained to end in failure, and suffers from this failure as "black existentialism" (Ricoeur 2007, p. 466).

In sum, Ricoeur criticizes Sartre because he ignores human inevitability. Human-being has in itself what he cannot treat at his will: the involuntary, for example, one's character, unconsciousness, and life. They belong to him but cannot be treated at his will. They even limit him. Sartre treats them as transcendental beings, but Ricoeur insists on the limits of phenomenological reduction.

Everything that constitutes my particularity limits me. The obscure richness of my consciousness is also its default. Life which supports me is heavy with threats and will fail me one day. I am borne up by what at the same time ties me down. Thus negation rises up from the body, invests and penetrates consciousness. (Ricoeur 2007, p. 445)

In spite of Ricoeur's critique, Sartre does not think that human-being is a divinely unlimited being. This is especially clear in his argument about language, which I would like to argue in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 Language and Subject: the Social Origin of Transcendental Beings

Sartre refers to language twice in *Being and Nothingness*, and in both cases he argues about language in relation to others.

The argument about language first appears in *Part Three: Being-For-Others*. Sartre here describes our two attempts to have concrete relations with others. One of them is the attempt to "seek again for the Other's freedom across the object which he is for me and to find privileged attitudes or conduct which would appropriate this freedom across a total appropriation of the Other's body" (indifference, sexual desire, hate, sadism), but "these attempts...are on principle doomed to failure" (Sartre 1956, p. 380) because the Other's freedom is inaccessible to me.

Another attempt is to abandon my freedom to the Other, and identify myself with the objectification by the Other (love, language, and masochism). It is the total recognition of both freedom of the Other, which objectifies me by his eyes, and the appropriation of me.

Sartre raises love as a typical example of this kind of attempt. According to him, love is not to appropriate the Other, but to wish to make myself loved. The loving one, therefore, plays the seductive person in front of the eyes of the Other. Such seduction is an attempt to reproduce oneself in the Other, by withholding one's freedom and fleeing. And language

is also a kind of such seduction.

Seduction does not presuppose any earlier form of language; it is the complete realization of language. This means that language can be revealed entirely and at one stroke by seduction as a primitive mode of being of expression. (Sartre 1956, p. 373)

Language here means not only utterance, but also expressions in general, which could be given meanings by the Other. All expressions are the experiences of being seen by the eyes of the Other. Language is, therefore, always the subject–Other relations and a being-for-others.

Language is not a phenomenon added on to being-for-others. It is originally being-for-others; that is the fact that a subjectivity experiences itself as an object for the Other....In the intersubjectivity of the for-others, it is not necessary to invent language because it is already given in the recognition of Other. ...Language is therefore not distinct from the recognition of the Other's existence. (Sartre 1956, pp. 372–373)

According to Sartre such an attempt is condemned to collapse, because both appropriating Other's freedom as it is, and completely identifying oneself with the being-for-others is impossible. Such attempts are, however, different from the commonsensical language relations, in that I cannot by any means realize the interpretation of my expressions by the Other, and language does not make myself understood as it is, but makes myself experienced as seductive. My language expressions are mere histrionic and magical. The exact transfer of the meaning of the expression is a secondary matter, and the effect of the expression becomes a crucial matter. Inserting language expressions into the system of code does not matter. What matters is to give my being-for-others to the eyes of the Other, and to actively create relationships between I with freedom and the Other with freedom, at the risk of my meaninglessness or the failure of such relationships.

Sartre also refers to the institutional aspects of language. Although human-being is free, this freedom is always in a unique situation. Human-being is free as far as it transcends this situation. I give meanings through such transcendence, and at the same time I am caught in circumstances that have already been given meanings, but not by me. Such circumstances, according to Sartre, consist of three realistic layers.

Instruments which are already meaningful (a station, a railroad sign, a work of art, a mobilization notice), the meaning [of] which I discover as already mine (my nationality, my race, my physical appearance), and finally the Other as a center of reference to which these meanings refer. (Sartre 1956, p. 510)

Speaking some languages in such circumstances means using a technique, and is a proof of my belonging to some groups (such as mankind, a state, or a region).

On the level of techniques of appropriating the world, the very *fact* of the Other's existence results in the fact of the collective ownership of techniques. Therefore facticity is expressed on this level by the fact of my appearance in a world which is revealed to me only by collective and already constituted techniques which aim at making me apprehend the world in a form of whose meaning has been defined outside of me. These techniques are going to determine my belonging to collectivities: to the *human race*, to the national collectivity, to the professional and to the family group.

It is even necessary to underscore this fact further: outside of my being-for-others...the only positive way which I have *to exist [in] my factual belonging* to these collectivities is the use which I constantly make of the techniques which arise from them. (Sartre 1956, p. 512)

Sartre describes language as seduction and an acting performance for the Other on the one hand, and ensures the belonging to some language group on the other hand. However, in the actual communication, I must make every effort to create a seductive message by the projection of sentences in relationships with the Other.

Sartre's argument about language so far, which sounds like denying the possibility of true communication, is called Dialogism by Bakhtin.

Dialogism is exactly this: for in self-Other relations the subject is translated into linguistic terms over which he has no control and whose meaning is inevitably determined by Other. (Jefferson 2001, p. 212)

Bakhtin argues in his language theory that the individual consciousness (=ego) is not the final explanatory ground for ideology. Ideology originates from signs that are created and organized socially, and it is proof that there is a society that consists of more than two men, and is well organized.

The objective and social regulatedness of ideological creativity, once misconstrued as a conformity with laws of the individual consciousness, must inevitably forfeit its real place in existence and depart either up into the superexistential empyrean of transcendentalism or down into the presocial recesses of the psychophysical, biological organism.

However, the ideological, as such, cannot possibly be explained in terms of either of these superhuman or subhuman, animalian, roots. Its real place in existence is in the special, social material of signs created, organized so by man. Its specificity consists

precisely in its being located between organized individuals, in its being the medium of their communication.

Signs can arise only on *interindividual territory*. It is territory that cannot be called “natural” in the direct sense of the word: signs do not arise between any two members of the species *Homo sapiens*. It is essential that the two individuals be *organized socially*, that they compose a group (a social unit); only then can the medium of things take shape between them. The individual consciousness not only cannot be used to explain anything, but, on the contrary, is itself in need of explanation from the vantage point of the social, ideological medium. (Vološinov 1986, p. 12)

According to Bakhtin neither individual consciousness nor unconsciousness is a self-producing being. They are both products of the social intersubjective activity of human-beings. In this respect, both Bakhtin and Sartre stand against Recoeur.

The abstract biological person, biological individual—that which has become the alpha and omega of modern ideology—does not exist at all. It is an improper abstraction. Outside society and, consequently, outside objective socioeconomic conditions, there is no such thing as a human being. *Only as a part of a social whole, only in and through a social class, does the human person become historically real and culturally productive*. In order to enter into history it is not enough to be born physically. Animals are physically born but they do not enter into history. What is needed is, as it were, a second birth, a *social birth*. A human being is not born as an abstract biological organism but as a landowner or a peasant, as a bourgeois or a proletarian, and so on—that is the main thing. Furthermore, he is born a Russian or Frenchman, and he is born in 1800 or 1900, and so on. *Only this social and historical localization makes him a real human being* and determines the content of his life and cultural creativity. (Vološinov 1976, p. 15)

Thus the personality of the speaker, taken from within, so to speak, turns out to be wholly a product of social interrelations. Not only its outward expression but also its inner experience are social territory. Consequently, the whole route between inner experience (the “expressible”) and its outward objectification (the “utterance”) lies entirely across territory. (Vološinov 1986, p. 90)

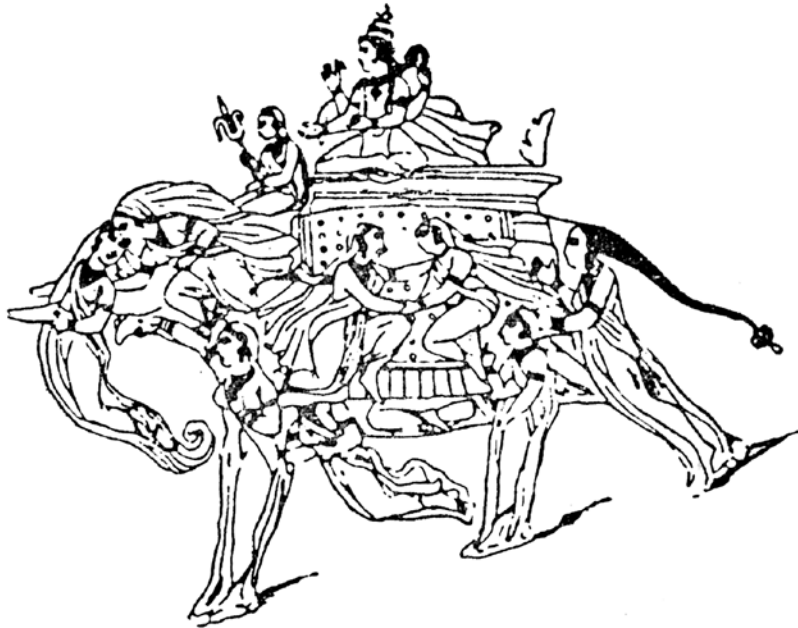
Tzvetan Todorov (a French philosopher stemming from eastern Europe) sums up Bakhtin’s view of language as follows:

It is already clear that the utterance is the product of a working up, in which linguistic matter is but one of the ingredients; another is all that is brought to a verbal

production by the fact of it being uttered, that is its unique historical, social, cultural, context. (Todorov 1988, p. 26)

We can learn of an example of Bakhtin's argument from S. M. Eisenstein, another Russian theorist. Eisenstein, a film director, was working with the problem of the relations between description and image. Under the communist regime, he had to make films in accordance with communist doctrine. He was not able to avoid the socialist realism in his activity as film director. However, for him the true realism meant the integration of description and image. True realistic works must begin with the fundamental principle of realism, and integrate the descriptions of real objects, and the image essentially sums up the phenomena. The description and image must make transitions mutually in the end.

He found such ideal work in an ancient Hindu miniature and explained it as follows:



The "moment" that interests us here represents a stage in the formation of consciousness when the generalising concept has not yet wholly managed to "separate itself" from the objectification of a particular instance; a stage in which, for instance, the generalised concept of "carrying" still cannot separate itself from depiction of the more familiar idea of "a carrier." It is precisely this process that has been captured in a certain very curious and extremely ancient Hindu miniature (see Figure above).

We must assume that in this case the generalising outline of the composition does not represent some dynamic, overall scheme, ...but retains some elements of semi-abstract representation.

And this applies, with the utmost clarity, to our miniature.

The miniature depicts a bevy of heavenly maidens carrying the god Vishnu from one place to another. The maidens are shown carrying the figure of a seated man. The action is very accurately depicted. But the artist was not satisfied with mere representation. He wants to convey fully the idea of the girls carrying Vishnu. What have we done in the instances we have been considering? Apart from objective depiction we have also forced the compositional elements—in particular the contour—to reiterate the content, but in a maximally generated form. We have taken generalisation beyond the limit of immediate depiction and into the compositional arrangement of the subject depicted.

Our Hindu proceeds in the same way, but he does not confine himself to what would have been done at a later stage of development. ...He knows that the carrying of royalty is associated with being seated on an elephant, that on solemn occasions Indian rajahs and high officials move among the people on elephants. The idea of ceremonial transportation is indissolubly linked in his mind with an elephant, i.e., with the creature which transports a rajah on ceremonial occasions. Here, however, the divinity is not being carried by an elephant, but by girls! What is he to do? How is he to combine a depiction of girls carrying [the divinity] with the “image of carrying”—an elephant?

Our master has found the solution! Look at the *contour* into which the maidens, in their flowing diaphanous garments, have been grouped: all these figures and details have been arranged into a contour which corresponds to the outline, the silhouette of ... an elephant! This astonishing example, unique of its kind, shows graphically how generalisation develops from requirements that are firmly depictive in nature, and how even in this still impure form it assumes a compositional function.

At one point in our analysis we referred not merely to *carrying* but to the *carrying of royalty*. I believe the example in question can be interpreted in two ways: as a case of straightforward, primary metaphorical meaning—something which, in essence, every word is—and as a case of metaphorical description. That is to say, the contour of the elephant may be interpreted as a wish to depict the supreme form of transportation together with the idea of *royal* transportation as such. Or it may be interpreted as a wish to express the idea of *royal* transportation. Both cases can be supported by argument. Restricting ourselves to the second case, we simply broaden the horizon of our speculations. We must stress once again that the “generalisation” we are discussing is an artistic type of generalisation, i.e., a generalisation that is tendentiously and emotionally coloured. Any kind of generalisation applied compositionally to an artistic representation gives it a resonance that is in the tonality which we wish to impart to the phenomenon depicted. (Eisenstein 1991, pp. 31-32)

The interpretation of linguistic expression is not to find out the author's true message in

the linguistic expressions, but we depend on the social codes to interpret that which consists of “its unique historical, social, cultural, context.” However codes are not enough to interpret the works. Impersonal consciousness of human-beings transcends such social, cultural, and historical restrictions, and metaphors work creatively. That is the fundamental requirement for the integration of descriptions and images.

Conclusion

Tadashi Kato’s misunderstanding of Marx’s dialectic is not exceptional (Omote 2014). In the middle of the last century Sartre, at long last, rediscovered Marx’s dialectic, but he is also widely misunderstood. Bakhtin, who also understood Marx’s dialectic, identified himself as Marxist, but Tzvetan Todorov, although he understands Bakhtin profoundly, says:

It will be noted that, for Bahktin, “society” begins with the appearance of the second person. Although it claims to be Marxist, his conception of sociability seems to be slightly heterodox: it consists, in a way, in considering intersubjectivity as logically preceding subjectivity. (Todorov 1988, p. 30)

He knows only Marxists who belong to Marxists who have been interpreted and authorized by Engels, as Kato did. Monistic Marxism, in this article, does not argue, like philosophical anthropology, that human-being is a being who produces himself and his world. It is not a rehash of Hegelian dialectical philosophy.

Its critical argument is impersonal consciousness, which has no content. Such impersonal consciousness was obtained by Sartre through the radical pursuance of phenomenological reduction. It requires, then, an understanding of transcendental objects from the social, cultural, and historical points of view, but also enables us to understand human creativity from such impersonal consciousness.²⁾

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2) You will find the same kind of analysis of money in Shibata 2012.

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(Professor, Faculty of Economics, Chuo University, Dr. of Economics)