

Engels, Modernity, and Classical Social Theory

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Frederick Engels and Karl Marx were among the first to develop systematic perspectives on modern societies and to produce a critical discourse on modernity, thus inaugurating the problematic of modern social theory. In most of the narratives of classical social theory, Marx alone is usually cited as one of the major founders of the problematic, while Engels is neglected. It is Marx who is usually credited as one of the first to develop a theory of modernity and a critical social theory that links the rise of modern societies with the emergence of capitalism. Yet Engels preceded Marx in focusing attention on the differences between modern and premodern society, and then on the constitutive role of capitalism in producing a new modern world. As I show in this study, from the late 1830s into the 1840s, Engels played a leading role in theorizing the distinctive features of the modern world, and he inspired Marx to see the importance of capitalism in constructing a distinctively new modern society. Consequently, I argue that Engels preceded Marx in his analysis of the historical originality and novelty of modern societies and their rupture from traditional societies. Study of the work of the early Engels and the beginning of his collaboration with Marx thus provides fresh perspectives on their relationship and the role of Engels in creating their shared theoretical and political positions. This analysis will also suggest that the critical theory of modern societies and political economy of capitalism remains a major contribution of Marx and Engels to contemporary thought. [1]

Engels and the Search for the Modern

Engel's father had factories in Barman and Bremen, Germany and Manchester, England, and his son Frederick was thus able to experience the modern world in the beginnings of industrialization in Germany. Some of Engels' initial publications concern the new industrial society emerging in Germany and what he saw as modern forms of industry, urbanization, architecture, culture, and thought. In a series of "Letters From Wuppertal," published in a German newspaper in 1839, Engels described the novel industrial conditions in the Wuppertal valley, opening with a description of the pollution of the Wuppertal river, caused by dyes from "the numerous dye-works using Turkey red" (CW2 [1839], 7). [2]

Engels then describes the town of Elberfeld and contrasts it with its neighboring town, his own native Barmen. Engels lauds the "large, massive houses tastefully built in modern style" which "take the place of those mediocre Elberfeld buildings, which are neither old-fashioned nor modern" (CW2, 8). The new stone houses appearing everywhere, the broad avenues, the green bleaching-yards, gardens, and the Lower Barmen church were, Engels thought, "very well constructed in the noblest Byzantine style" (ibid). He concludes that "there is far more variety here than in Elberfeld, for the monotony is broken by a fresh bleaching-yard here, a house in the modern style there, a stretch of the river or a row of gardens lining the street. All this leaves one in doubt whether to regard Barmen as a town or a mere conglomeration of all kinds of buildings; it is, indeed, just a combination of many small districts held together by the bond of municipal institutions" (ibid).

Engels thus characterizes the new modern world in terms of new modern architecture, new industry, and new towns, bustling with variety and diversity. He also describes inebriation in the ale-houses, with drunken individuals pouring out of them at closing time and sleeping in the gutter. Engels blames this situation on factory work and describes the lot of the new industrial working class as a miserable one: "Work in low rooms where people breathe in more coal fumes and dust than oxygen -- and in the majority of cases beginning already at the age of six -- is bound to deprive them of all strength and joy in life. The weavers, who have individual looms in their homes, sit bent over them from morning till night, and desiccate their spinal marrow in front of a hot stove. Those who do not fall prey to mysticism are ruined by drunkenness" (CW2, 9). Likewise, the "local-born leather workers are ruined physically and mentally after three years of work: "three out of five die of consumption." In sum, "terrible poverty prevails among the lower classes, particularly the factory workers in Wuppertal; syphilis and lung diseases are so widespread as to be barely credible; in Elberfeld alone, out of 2,500 children of school age 1,200 are deprived of education and grow up in the factories -- merely so that the manufacturer need not pay the adults, whose place they take, twice the wage he pays a child" (CW2, 10).

Thus, as early as 1839, Engels deplores the horrific working and living conditions of the working class and depicts it as a reprehensible effect of modern industrial development. In the latter part of his "Letters," and in many other newspaper articles written over the next few years, Engels describes in great detail "modern" literature, culture, and thought of the present, equating "modern" cultural tendencies with Enlightenment criticism and the contemporary literature of the "Young Germany" movement, which he champions against reactionary Pietistic thought and backwards German literature. In the voluminous newspaper articles and sketches of the early Engels, he reveals himself to be, like Marx, a great partisan of modernity, an avatar of modern ideas, as well as a sharp critic of the impact of modern conditions on the working class (see Engels in CW2).

Engels was sent to England in 1842 to learn the business of industrial production in his father's factory, which was situated in Manchester, the industrial heart of the most advanced capitalist society of the day. While experiencing first-hand the new mode of industrial production and way of life that accompanied it, young Engels assiduously studied the writing of German, French, and English socialism, as well as British political economy. In an article on "Progress of Social Reform on the Continent," Engels describes the new communist ideas as "not the consequence of the particular position of the English, or any other nation, but that it is a necessary conclusion, which cannot be avoided to be drawn from the premises given in the general facts of modern civilisation" (CW3 [1843], 392).

Indeed, it is generally accepted that Engels preceded Marx in converting to communism, that Moses Hess converted Engels in 1842, at a time when Marx was still formally a radical democrat who acknowledged that he was not thoroughly familiar with the communist ideas (see Riazanov 1973, 43 and Carver 1989, 95). Engels, by contrast, began to write newspaper and journal articles promoting communist ideas in early 1843 (see CW3, 379-443 and CW4, 212-265), as well as attending meetings and making speeches.

For Engels, it is British political economy that describes the workings of the new capitalist economy and provides its ideological legitimation. In the autumn of 1843, Engels accordingly

began writing an article on the new modern economy theory and sent it to Marx and Ruge for publication in their forthcoming *Deutsch-französische Jahrbucher*. The yearbook was intended to collect studies by the top German and French radical theorists to help produce a new tendency that would further progressive social change. The first -- and only -- issue contained an article by "Friedrich Engels in Manchester" titled "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy."

Engels dissected the forms of private property, competition, trade, and crisis in the newly emerging modern industrial society. His study is fragmentary and highly moralistic, though it contains some good insights into the modern capitalist economy and discloses his early commitments to radical social critique and transformation. He opens by relating the genesis of political economy with the rise of trade and industry, and presents it as a legitimation of the new capitalist social relations, anticipating the Marxist critique of ideology: "political economy came into being as a natural result of the expansion of trade, and with its appearance, elementary, unscientific huckstering was replaced by a developed system of licensed fraud, an entire science of enrichment" (CW3 [1843], 418).

Engels develops his "outline" as an ideal type comparison between the mercantile system and "modern economics" (CW3, 420). The new system assumes "the *validity of private property*" (419) and develops into a system of trade (422). Competition is the economists' "principle category--his most beloved daughter, whom he ceaselessly caresses" (431). But competition leads to the monopoly of property and produces an inherently unstable economic system full of conflicts and crises. As noted, Engels' critique of the new modern market economy is highly moralistic. Malthus' theory of population is "the crudest, most barbarous theory that ever existed, a system of despair which struck down all those beautiful phrases about philanthropy and world citizenship. The premises begot and reared the factory system and modern slavery, which yields nothing in inhumanity and cruelty to ancient slavery" (CW3, 420). Trade is "legalised fraud" (422), and to those apologists of the system who argue for its civilizing virtues, Engels contemptuously replies:

You have destroyed the small monopolies so that the one great basic monopoly, property, may function the more freely and unrestrictedly. You have civilised the ends of the earth to win new terrain for the deployment of your vile avarice. You have brought about the fraternisation of the peoples--but the fraternity is the fraternity of thieves. You have reduced the number of wars--to earn all the bigger profits in peace, to intensify to the utmost the enmity between individuals, the ignominious war of competition! When have you done anything out of pure humanity, from consciousness of the futility of the opposition between the general and the individual interest? When have you been moral without being interested, without harbouring at the back of your mind immoral, egoistical motives? (CW3, 423).

As a Left-Hegelian, Engels is concerned to delineate the series of contradictions between competition and monopoly, supply and demand, wealth and poverty, and the general and particular interest that will eventually lead the system to crisis: "The economist comes along with his lovely theory of demand and supply, proves to you that 'one can never produce too much,' and practice replies with trade crises, which reappear as regularly as the comets, and of which we have now on the average one every five to seven years. For the last eighty years these trade crises have arrived just as regularly as the great plagues did in the past--and they have brought in

their train more misery and more immorality than the latter" (CW3, 433). Yet although Engels sees the emerging industrial society as inherently unstable and crisis-prone, he does not grasp any mechanism or tendencies which will lead to a progressive social transformation, beyond the pronouncement that:

But as long as you continue to produce in the present unconscious, thoughtless manner, at the mercy of chance--for just so long trade crises will remain; and each successive crisis is bound to become more universal and therefore worse than the preceding one; is bound to impoverish a larger body of small capitalists, and to augment in increasing proportion the numbers of the class who live by labour alone, thus considerably enlarging the mass of labour to be employed (the major problem of our economists) and finally causing a social revolution such as has never been dreamt of in the philosophy of the economists (CW3, 434).

During 1843, Engels also composed a review of Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*, which like Engels' work of the period, developed a contrast between modern and premodern society. It shows Engels at work in researching the contemporary factory system and exploring the development of industrial society. Studies of England -- "The Eighteenth Century" and "The English Constitution" -- disclose that Engels was also inquiring into the structure and conditions of the modern economy and state, as they emerged in England (CW3, 444-514). In addition to studying industrial production and the political constitution of modern society, Engels explored the new working class life in England, compiling materials for a book that he published in 1845, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. In this ground-breaking work, Engels argued that the history of the proletariat was bound up with the invention of the steam-engine and "machinery for working cotton" in the second half of the 17th century (CW4, [1845], 307)]. These instruments gave rise to the industrial revolution which produced new instruments of labor, new industries, a new social structure, and new living and working conditions. [3]

Engels claimed that: "The industrial revolution is of the same importance for England as the political revolution for France, and the philosophical revolution for Germany; and the difference between England in 1760 and in 1844 is at least as great as that between France under the *ancien regime* and during the revolution of July. But the mightiest result of this industrial transformation is the English proletariat" (CW4, 320). Engels' account begins with a sketch of the living conditions of weavers in pre-industrial England, thus setting up a model for distinguishing between premodern and modern societies in the mode adopted by later classical social theory. He describes the "passably comfortable existence" of weavers who worked in their home, owned their means of production, had a stable family structure, and "leisure for healthful work in garden or field," as well as sports and recreations (CW4, 308f.) Yet Engels does not idealize the previous conditions of the English workers, calling attention to their lack of education, political awareness, intellectual life, and the possibility of a better life.[4] Previously, the workers

were comfortable in their silent vegetation, but for the industrial revolution they would never have emerged from this existence, which cosily romantic as it was, was nevertheless not worthy of human beings. In truth, they were not human beings; they were merely toiling machines in the service of the few aristocrats who had guided history down to that time. The industrial revolution has simply carried this out to its logical end by making the workers machines pure and simple, taking from them the last trace of independent activity, and so forcing

them to think and demand a position worthy of men. As in France politics, so in England manufacture and the movement of civil society in general drew into the whirl of history the last classes which had remained sunk in apathetic indifference to the universal interests of mankind (CW4, 309).

Note that Engels adopts the same attitude toward the industrial revolution that he and Marx were later to espouse toward the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie in the "Communist Manifesto" and their writings on imperialism. The industrial revolution destroyed the "romantic" conditions of traditional society and violently forced the proletariat into the conditions of modern industrial society. By bringing them into "the whirl of history," the industrial revolution brought them the possibility of achieving human emancipation, of developing their human potentials and faculties to the fullest. This dialectical vision that affirmed both destructive effects and emancipatory possibilities would characterize the work of Marx and Engels throughout their career.

Engels' humanism is also striking and indeed a sharp focus of both the early Marx and Engels is their critique of capitalist modernity for what it did to human beings, for its demoralizing, dehumanizing, and oppressive aspects. The first result of the industrial revolution is thus a class structure, divided into the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Engels writes:

It has already been suggested that manufacture centralises property in the hands of the few. It requires large capital with which to erect the colossal establishments that ruin the petty trading bourgeoisie and with which to press into its service the forces of Nature, so driving the hand-labour of the independent workman out of the market. The division of labor, the application of water and especially steam, and the application of machinery, are the three great levers with which manufacture, since the middle of the last century, has been busy putting the world out of joint (CW4, 325).

The expression "out of joint" articulates the rupture produced by modern conditions and Engels also emphasizes the impact of technology, science, and industry on the production of modern societies. [5] He provides an account of how the spinning jenny created a new division of labor and new factories for the spinning of cotton, flax, wool, and silk. Invention of the steam-engine produced new sources of power and the beginning of a manufacture and factory system. The factory system mechanized agriculture and created the possibilities of new large-scale farming which displaced small farmers who were forced to seek their livelihood in the newly emergent factory towns.

Throughout the book, Engels describes the novel forms of manufacture, the innovative division of labor, and the new social differentiation produced by the industrial revolution and capitalism. The production of raw materials and of fuel for manufacture produced new mining industries and generated coal mining and iron smelting. The iron industry created new forms of construction like bridges and new products like nails and screws. New industries like ocean trade boomed and new forms of transportation and communication emerged such as roads, bridges, canals, and railroads. But Engels' focus is on the towns which were a distinctive feature of the new industrial revolution and the new social structure appearing in the urban centers.

After briefly describing London and other "great towns," Engels zeros in on his own Manchester, the second largest city in England and the capital of the industrial world.[6] Engels

maps out the structure of the city, the class division that cleaves it, and the deplorable working and living conditions of the working classes. For Engels, class division and conflict "is the completest expression of the battle of all against all which rules in modern bourgeois society" (CW4, 375). This battle is fought not only between the different classes, but "also between the individual members of these classes. Each is in the way of the other, and each seeks to crowd out all who are in his way, and to put himself in their place" (ibid). In a later passage, Engels describes the class war typical of modern societies, thus delineating the new forms of division and conflict: "In this country, social war is under full headway, every one stands for himself, and fights for himself against all comers, and whether or not he shall injure all the others who are his declared foes, depends upon a cynical calculation as to what is most advantageous for himself. It no longer occurs to any one to come to a peaceful understanding with his fellow-man; all differences are settled by threats, violence, or in a law-court. In short, every one sees in his neighbor an enemy to be got out of the way, or, at best, a tool to be used for his own advantage.... The enemies are dividing gradually into two great camps -- the bourgeoisie on one hand, the workers on the other" (CW4, 427; Note the anticipation of the class analysis of "The Communist Manifesto" in this passage).

Yet Engels describes the associations that the working class strives to put in the place of competition and is optimistic concerning the revolutionary potential of the proletariat. Throughout the book he describes the cycles of capitalist crisis which he believes makes the collapse of the system inevitable. Anticipating the classical Marxian vision of revolution, Engels claims that if the present trends continue,

commercial crises would continue, and grow more violent, more terrible, with the extension of industry and the multiplication of the proletariat. The proletariat would increase in geometrical proportion, in consequence of the progressive ruin of the lower middle-class and the giant strides with which capital is concentrating itself in the hands of the few; and the proletariat would soon embrace the whole nation, with the exception of a few millionaires. But in this development there comes a stage at which the proletariat perceives how easily the existing power may be overthrown, and then follows a revolution (CW4, 580).

Marx and Engels arrived at the conclusion that the proletariat was the revolutionary class at approximately the same time, but Marx had a much more extravagant Hegelian concept of the proletariat as revolutionary subject at this time than Engels' more modest sociological and political concept (Compare Marx CW3, 175ff. with Engels' *Condition of the Working Class*). Engels is completely confident that a "revolution will follow with which none hitherto known can be compared.... These are all inferences which may be drawn with the greatest certainty.... The revolution must come; it is already too late to bring about a peaceful solution" (CW4, 581). Later, Engels would chide this excessive optimism, but in fact a similar vision of the certainty of the coming revolution would permeate Marx and Engels' works.

Engels thus emerges as one of the first social theorists to attempt to grasp the structure of modern societies, to delineate their fundamental conflicts, and to predict their eventual demise. One is struck by the confidence with which he attempts to delineate the entire situation of the working class in England, attempting to map out comprehensively its working and living conditions, and to lay bare the class structure of modern societies. Moreover, Engels' analysis is a dynamic one, showing the classes in conflict, struggling for control of society. Marcus (1974,

177ff.) claims that in Engels' study of the English working class, one sees a particularly modern mode of thought emerge: the ability of thought to grasp the essential features of a phenomenon, and to distinguish between appearance and reality in producing a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the contemporary social structure.

As Marcus points out (1974, 192) Engels also provides the first full-scale attempt at representing the "culture of poverty." In order to grasp the macrostructure of the new industrial cities, Engels maps out the various connections of neighborhoods to each other, describing and mapping the structure of the city in what can be seen as the first work of urban sociology. Penetrating into the heart of darkness of modern industrial society, Engels plunges into the labyrinth of squalid working and living conditions, attempting to make order out of chaos. Using his eyes, nose, ears, and feet, he attempts to map and comprehend the horrific situation of the working class in England, which he takes, as did Marx later in *Capital*, as the model of the modern industrial societies of the future. In mapping this immense complexity, Engels makes use of Hegelian dialectical thought, relating the parts to each other and to the whole social system. For Engels, dialectics is making connections and he confidently maps out the essential structures of the emerging industrial society. His thought is thoroughly systematic, conceptualizing the parts in terms of whole, and showing how the parts are components of a new modern industrial society.

Yet Engels also maintains a critical posture, describing the horrendous living and working conditions of the proletariat in astonishing detail. His critique is generally moralistic and lacks the concepts of alienation and human nature with which Marx carries out his analysis of the alienation of labor in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (see Marx in CW4). Engels condemns the greed and callousness of the bourgeoisie, recounting in one telling vignette, how he described the wretched lot of the workers to a bourgeois associate, who nodded and then said: "And yet there is money to be made. Good day, sir" (CW4, xx). Typically, Engels sees retribution coming in the future revolution, an event for which he and Marx dedicated their lives.

Marx, Engels, and Modernity

Although thinkers like Machiavelli, Vico, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Condorcet, Adam Smith, Comte, Saint-Simon, and Hegel all distinguished between modern and premodern times, it was Karl Marx and his collaborator Friedrich Engels who produced the first systematic social theory of modernity, thus initiating the mode of thought associated with classical social theory. Although previous theorists developed distinctions between modern and ancient societies, sketched historical stages that described the transition to a new modern society, and delineated some of its key distinguishing features, it was Marx and Engels who provided the first rigorous and comprehensive historical analysis of the rupture that produced modernity and the first systematic analysis of the distinctive structures, processes, conflicts, and potentials for progressive transformation of modern societies. Combining detailed historical and empirical analysis of capitalist social formations, systematic theoretical conceptualization, radical social critique, and a call for fundamental social transformation, Marx and Engels formulated with particular analytical rigor and historical grounding the new forms of social differentiation, conflict, and fragmentation, as well as the modes of social cooperation and association produced by social modernity.

Moreover, it was Marx and Engels who initiated a distinctive emancipatory tradition in social theory that critically addressed the structures of modern society from a standpoint of its higher historical possibilities and developmental tendencies. In the Marxian vision, the destructive and oppressive features of modernity would be overcome in a superior stage of societal development that would fully realize the potentials of modernity. Thus, whereas Enlightenment thinkers and positivist-technocratic social theorists like Comte and Saint-Simon embraced modernity and postulated a utopian future ruled by a technocratic elite who would solve all social problems and promote social progress, the Marxian theory addressed the forms of societal crisis and oppression that modernity produced, but saw the solution to its problems and its potentials for more progressive societal development to be imminent features of modern societies, rather than simply a normative ideal to be imposed from without.

In the Marxian theory, the motor of modernity was the capitalist mode of production with economic development shaping the forms of social, political, and cultural life, and consequently generating a new modern social formation. For classical Marxism, the capitalist mode of production thus produced an entirely new modern world which decisively broke with the feudal world. For the Marxian theory, the concept of modernity is thus constituted by the theory of capitalism as the fate of the new modern world, as the motor and demiurge of modernity.

In this study, I have shown that Engels preceded Marx in developing an ideal type analysis of the distinction between modern and premodern society, in sketching the outlines of a critique of political economy, and in developing a critique of capitalist society with the intention of overthrowing it for a socialist society. In their collaborative texts of the 1840s, Marx and Engels worked together on this project. When Marx was expelled from Paris in 1845 for publishing in a radical emigre newspaper, he moved to Brussels where he began his collaboration with Engels. Together they travelled to England to observe the new factories and industrial living and working conditions. Upon their return, they began developing their sketch of the genesis of the modern world and historical-materialist perspectives in *The German Ideology* (CW5) written in 1845-6 and never published in their lifetime. The text is important for it articulates some of their first formulations of the differentiated structure of modern societies, as well as theorizing the new modes of association and cooperation. Marx and Engels (CW4) also published a joint attack, *The Holy Family* (1845), on Bruno Bauer and their former young Hegelian associates, who they now considered pseudo-radical and idealist. Marx published in addition (CW6, 105ff) an attack on the economics of Proudhon in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1846), declaring the French writer to be trapped in the idealist verbiage of Hegel, thus mystifying the concrete economic phenomena which Marx and Engels were attempting to analyze.

Marx and Engels's vision of history from this period was presented in "The Communist Manifesto," which sketches in dramatic narrative form their view of the origins and trajectory of modernity (CW6 [1848], 477ff). It appeared in early 1848, anticipating the sequence of revolutions that broke out throughout Europe shortly after its publication. Marx and Engels sketch out a contrast between precapitalist societies and the new modern society where: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" (CW6: 487).

The standard English translations (other than Carver's 1996 version for Cambridge University

Press) obscure the important point in German that all previous classes and social groups, *Stände*, dissolve as well as "all that is solid" ("Alles Ständische und Stehende verdampft"). The point is especially important because it distinguishes Marx and Engel's analysis from Hegel's. Hegel believed that the *Stände* would play an important part in integrating individuals into modern society, but Marx and Engels are arguing that these institutions are disintegrating. Hegel thus ultimately developed a political theory that would unify modern and premodern institutions and conceptions, while Marx and Engels developed a concept of a thoroughly modern society.[7] The passage thus points to the dissolution of the old hierarchical order of society and of previous classes, leaving workers facing the bourgeoisie without intervening classes. The first section of the "Communist Manifesto" is titled "bourgeois and proletarians" and one of the first important points is that during the present era class antagonisms have been simplified and "society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeois and proletariat" (CW6, 485). This two class vision was that of Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (CW4) and it would periodically appear in key junctures in their thought, though in some texts they would utilize a more differentiated class analysis. Indeed, much of the vision of the "Communist Manifesto" was delineated in Engels' early writings, although Marx is usually given credit for drafting its especially expressive prose and dramatic historical narrative (see Berman 1982 who interprets the "Manifesto" as a founding document of social modernity and an example of modernist writing; Carver 1983 argues that much of the historical writing is more like Engel's earlier works than Marx's).

When solid ties of dependence melt in the air, individuals become free to compete with each other and engage in exchange. This produces a wholly disharmonious and conflicted social order, precisely as Engels sketched out in his early writings. Indeed, modern capitalist societies for Engels and Marx were torn by inequalities, class conflicts, and crisis tendencies which produced an inherently unstable modern social order riven with conflict and subject to crisis and overthrow. Following the hopes of the Enlightenment for a higher stage of civilization, Marx and Engels held that class conflicts between the ruling bourgeois class and the oppressed proletariat would be resolved through victories of the working class which would create an egalitarian, just, and democratic social order which would realize the ideals of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the emergent socialist traditions, driving modernity to a higher stage of civilization. Marxism thus very much shared the optimistic Enlightenment belief that modern society was on a trajectory of historical progress and that humanity was bound to overcome its limitations and solve its problems en route to a higher stage of human history.

By addressing capitalism in its most advanced setting of British society, Marx and Engels were ideally situated to describe the inner dynamics of the new modern order and to be prescient about changes that came later in other nations. They experienced first-hand the second industrial revolution (with its mechanization, big industry, intensified incorporation of science and technology into the labor process, intensified imperialist competition, and modern state) -- a revolution which began in England and quickly spread to the continent and the new world of the Americas. Marx and Engels also experienced the rise of the working class movement which increasingly called for sweeping political and egalitarian social reconstruction, and themselves became leaders of the movement.

Marxian theory thus bears distinctly modern hopes for progress, freedom, democracy, and socio-economic and individual development. To some extent, both the strengths and limitations of classical Marxism are connected with its extremely ambitious hopes concerning the progressive features of the era, which they believed would terminate in creation of a democratic and socialist society that would realize the promises of modernity. The Marxian analysis of the contrast between precapitalist and capitalist societies provides the basis of Engels' and Marx's concept of modernity and they present the transition from capitalism to socialism as a process taking place within modernity that would fully develop its potential and produce a higher stage of civilization. The mode of historical, systematic analysis of modern societies developed by Marx and Engels provides the model for classical social theory and the enduring contributions of the Marxian theory consist in its mode of historical and social analysis and its insights into the structures, conflicts, and potentials of modern societies.

Of course, it was in their mature writings that Marx and Engels developed their most articulated perspectives on modern society. But this study of the early Engels and the beginning of his collaboration with Marx reveals that Engels should receive more credit for being one of the founders of classical social theory and contributing decisively to the development of the Marxian vision. Important differences would emerge between Marx and Engels regarding their respective uses of the Hegelian dialectical method and the methods of modern science, and their epistemological and methodological differences have been explored in the literature and are the topic of several other papers in this volume. By contrast, I have argued that before the development of classical Marxism, Engels was a key partner and should receive more credit for his important contributions to developing the theoretical and political perspectives on modern society associated with classical Marxism.

Notes

1. Many interpretations of the relationships between Marx and Engels stress the differences between them, by emphasizing the scientific writings of the later Engels which are contrasted with the more philosophical works of Marx. But both Marx and Engels were engaged in theorizing modernity and shared important perspectives on the modern world, despite some later differences in emphasis in theory and method. It is one of the merits of Gouldner (1980: 250ff, *passim*) to stress the importance of Engels in developing the Marxian theory and to defend Engels against attacks that he was but a crude simplifier of Marx's ideas. Mazlish (1989) and Hamilton (1991) also appreciate the importance of the contribution of Engels, while Levine (1975 and 1984) and many others sharply distinguish between Marx and Engels, attacking Engels as a vulgar debaser of Marx's ideas. While important epistemological differences between their work would eventually emerge, it is a mistake to downplay the important initial contribution of Engels and his significance in shaping Marx's vision of modernity. On Engels' life and times, see Marcus 1974; Carver 1989; Hunley 1991; and Rigby 1992.

2. Engels was 19 when he published these revealing analyses of the novel conditions of the emerging modern industrial society. Self-taught and a voracious reader with evident literary ambitions, Engels spent much of the time during his apprenticeship in Bremen and later during his military service in Berlin engaged in study and writing. Many of his early writings are collected in CW2 and I will draw upon these texts in this study. I use the convention of citing the

volume number of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975ff.) with the abbreviation CW followed by the volume number and page reference; I also include original date of publication in brackets.

3. David Riazanov claims that "The term 'Industrial Revolution' belongs to Engels" (1973, 14). But Dirk J. Struick in notes on the republication of Riazanov's classic study of Marx and Engels argues that: "The term 'Industrial Revolution' was used in France at least as early as the 1820s, in analogy to what was known as 'The Revolution,' the one of 1789. Friedrich Engels, using the term in 1844 and 1845, may well have met it in the French literature and have used it for the first time in the German language. Strangely enough, the term has not been noticed in English before 1884, when the economist Arnold Toynbee used it. Toynbee knew Marx's *Capital*, which uses the term in German" (1973, 223).

4. Standard criticism of the text claims that Engels "painted a one-sided picture of the conditions of the English working classes at the time, overemphasizing the well-being of the workers before industrialization and the subsequent impact of the machine upon them" (Hunley 1991: 16). But the following passage and my discussion raise questions concerning the extent to which Engels did romanticize previous conditions and I suggest rather that he utilized the sort of dialectical model of the gains and losses from the industrial revolution that he and Marx were to develop in "The Communist Manifesto" and their other writings.

5. Throughout his early writings, Engels presents highly favorable pictures of the progressive effects of science and industry; see, for example, Engels CW3, 427-8, 440, and 478.

6. For an excellent study of the city of Manchester and Engels book on it, see Marcus 1974.

7. Carver's 1996 version for Cambridge University Press reads, "Everything fixed and feudal goes up in smoke" (Marx and Engels 1996: xx), though one might suggest "all fixed feudal conditions and social groupings evaporate."