

ENGELS' CONTRIBUTION TO MARXISM

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Now that knowledge of Marxism has become a respected path to academic advancement, scholars have increasingly occupied themselves with minute analyses of the differences between Marx's and Engels' writings, and with Engels' role as the foremost interpreter and disseminator of Marxism as a social and philosophical system. A survey of current writing on Marx and Engels in the English language shows two major efforts of scholarship: the reinterpretation of Marx's later thought in terms of his early humanism and the attribution to Marx of a scientific world-view based upon the work of Engels. Because of the association of the one Marxism with liberal values and of the other with the philosophy and scientific outlook of dialectical materialism, the young Marx has become the hero of Marx scholarship and the late Engels its villain. Engels is portrayed as the foremost systematizer and disseminator of Marx's thought, and also as the first and most influential revisionist.' Although the differences in their thinking have been occasionally exaggerated in an indirect political effort to dissociate Marx's views from the dialectical outlook culminating in Soviet philosophy, by and large the critics are right in arguing that Engels was not only Marx's mouthpiece, but that he also had a mind of his own.

At least two questions have been posed by the current debate concerning Engels' relation to Marx. What is the extent of his philosophical contribution, the scientific status, if any, of his ontological assertions about the dialectical process and the laws of nature? Since the critics argue that Engels substituted for Marx's critical method a dogmatic and scholastic metaphysics, we shall have to assess the evidence for this interpretation. There is also the question of the theoretical and practical relevance of Engels' philosophical works to modern socialism and to the labour movement in particular. To what extent, in other words, is Engels' philosophy of nature relevant or irrelevant as a theoretical basis for Marxist social theory and the formulation of socialist policy?

The purpose of this essay is to extend the current criticism of Engels into those aspects of his thought that have hitherto been only barely touched upon. First, I hope to show that his efforts to make Marxism meaningful to scientists led him to the formulation of a metascience, partly philosophical and partly scientific, that was intended to be more immediately useful to scientific intellectuals than to socialists. Second, I shall argue that the differences between Marx's and Engels' formulations of their dialectical method were real and not just verbal. Third, I

hope to delineate significant differences between their respective interpretations and forecasts of the withering away of philosophy. And, finally, I intend to show that **Engels** did a disservice to the analytical and critical method of Marx in a misguided effort to make it universal in scope. I take this opportunity to join with the critics in showing still further how the traditional assumption propagated by **Engels** concerning the indissoluble unity of his and **Marx's** thinking has been put to the test and found wanting.

I

Let us consider, first, **Engels'** theoretical efforts to make Marxism meaningful to scientists. Although the critics have suggested that the difference between his and **Marx's** views can be traced as far back as 1844 or at least to 1847,¹ it is only with the publication of *Anti-Duhring* (1878) that **Engels** can be shown definitely to have begun the process of generalizing Marxism by raising it to the status both of an interdisciplinary science and a scientific world-view. In this book **Engels** attempted for the first time to develop a philosophy congenial to a scientific intelligentsia. On the one hand, *Anti-Duhring* contains a scientific formulation of **Marx's** materialistic-critical socialism that is of interest both to scientific intellectuals and to the labour movement. On the other hand, it outlines a scientific philosophy, a philosophy of nature as well as history, that we have come to associate with dialectical materialism.²

Beginning with *Anti-Duhring*, **Engels** began to address himself to scientific workers and to scientific circles as well as to educated labourers. Considering his efforts to develop both the interdisciplinary sciences and a philosophical metascience, the scientific and technical intelligentsia had become for him either a part of the main forces of socialism or at least its most influential secondary reserve. In effect, he substituted the co-operation of scientists and workers for the young **Marx's** alliance of philosophers and proletarians. As he might have interpolated a statement by the young **Marx**, science cannot be made a reality without the assistance of the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot be assisted without science being made a reality.³ Science, he declared, was no less a revolutionary force than the modern labour movement. The more ruthlessly it advances, "the more it finds itself in harmony with the interests and aspirations of the workers."⁴ Without the continuing co-operation of science and socialism, there could, indeed, be little hope in progress. Just as science is necessary to the planned organization of social production and distribution, so these in turn are necessary to the advancement of science.

From **Engels** we first hear of scientific socialism, a comprehensive theory including the materialistic conception of history and the **Marxian** theory of surplus value. The posthumously published *Dialectics of*

Nature, the bulk of which was written between 1872 and 1882, contains a full-fledged philosophical system that has almost nothing in common with the practical-critical emphasis of Marx's early work and the materialistic-critical approach of his later writings.⁶ As a philosophical theory, Marxism came into being in the years following the publication of *Anti-Duhring* when Engels became increasingly active as a writer and publisher, while Marx's illness prevented him from publishing anything of note. (Marx, it may be remembered, died in 1883, only a few years after Engels first announced that socialism had become a science.) In addition to *Anti-Duhring*, the principal works that helped to shape Marxism as a world-view and as an interdisciplinary science of nature and history were Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888) and his essay on historical materialism written in introduction to the English edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1892). On the one hand, his work on Feuerbach further clarified the dialectical philosophy first presented in *Anti-Duhring* and in the posthumously published *Dialectics of Nature*. On the other hand, his writings on anthropology, classical civilization, and his later essay on the history of early Christianity (1894/95) illustrated and applied the principles of scientific historiography outlined in *Anti-Duhring*.

In Engels' first systematic statement of Marxism, scientific socialism is presented as a theoretical response to two different kinds of social problem: the class antagonisms between capitalists and wage workers; and the anarchy and irrationality inherent in the capitalistic mode of production.⁷ Socialism expresses, first, the interests of wage earners intent on alleviating the general misery caused by industrial revolution; and, second, the interests of scientific workers scandalized by the planlessness and waste resulting from periodic economic crises.⁸ Since capitalism is noxious on both counts, Engels believed that the economic interests of scientific workers tend to coincide with those of organized labour. Economic crises indicate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to manage its own system of production. Since the economic functions of the capitalist are increasingly performed by salaried employees, the owners of capital are, furthermore, superfluous even when they are not actually harmful to the development of the productive forces. In their unfitnes to rule, the bourgeoisie are condemned by the standards of modern technology as well as by the subjective needs of the proletariat. Scientific workers are called upon not only to assist the modern labour movement in its efforts to comprehend the historical and economic conditions of its emancipation, but also to manage the industrial system according to their own specialties. The very term scientific socialism suggests an alliance of scientific workers and revolutionary activists from the ranks of labour. Although scientific and technical workers employed by capital may find it necessary to sacrifice truth and efficiency to preserve their jobs under capitalism, their enduring professional interests are represented by socialism.

In his effort to transform Marxism into a coherent body of doctrine, Engels can be seen groping towards a general scientific world outlook that includes the revolutionary theory of the proletariat. Despite his contempt for Duhring's efforts to build a complete system of natural philosophy as the basis of a socialist *weltanschauung*, he found himself constructing a scientific world-view in the very process of criticizing Duhring. Although the organization of *Anti-Duhring* follows the outlines of Duhring's own positive science of socialism, it also served Engels as the basis of a reinterpretation of Marxism that went beyond an express commitment to the labour movement. Instead of confining himself to a negative critique of Duhring's attempt to present socialism as the practical fruit of a philosophical system, he took the opportunity of setting forth in a positive form his own views on the general scientific issues of the day.⁹ While denying that his work aimed at presenting another system of philosophy, he formulated the rudiments of one in working out the interconnections between the various fields of knowledge.¹⁰ As he described the results of following Duhring across the boundaries of several philosophic and scientific disciplines, "the polemic was transformed into a more or less connected exposition of the dialectical method and of the communist world outlook. . . ."¹¹

Engels' philosophical efforts were also prompted by the rapid advancement of natural science, which could "no longer escape dialectical generalization."¹² The old natural philosophy, metaphysical as it was, had never fully satisfied either himself or Marx. Here was the opportunity to apply dialectics systematically to the natural sciences, instead of only piecemeal, intermittently and sporadically. As Engels notes, "the same dialectical laws of motion force their way through [nature] as those which in history govern the apparent fortuitousness of events; the same laws as those which similarly form the thread running through the history of the development of human thought. . . ."¹³

Like scientific socialism and its associated sciences of historiography and political economy, the scientific world outlook developed by Engels was expected to find recognition and support in every country sufficiently advanced economically to contain "on the one hand proletarians and on the other undaunted scientific theoreticians."¹⁴ Interpolating Marx's materialist historiography which was tied to the interests of the labour movement, Engels was the first to claim that historical materialism might be of advantage even to British respectability.¹⁵ His letters on historical materialism (1890-94) were designed to clarify the philosophical and scientific character of Marxist historiography, thereby making it acceptable to the scientific intellectual.¹⁶ Both Marx and Engels challenged the traditional role of philosophy as queen of the sciences. However, Engels replaced traditional philosophy with a new scientifically oriented one, whereas Marx subordinated both science and philosophy to his radical critique of bourgeois society.

In Engels' hands historical materialism became a general method of

historical interpretation. The theory of the historical origin of surplus value is one of the few applications of the historical materialist method that Engels mentions as immediately relevant to the revolutionary struggle for socialism. Although his own works of historical research are indirectly concerned with questions of socialist strategy and tactics, his interest in the method of historical materialism did not simply reflect his socialist commitments. In contrast, Marx's historical research concentrated almost entirely upon the present as **history**, a matter of direct concern to the labour movement.

By raising Marx's theoretical contributions to the status of a scientific world-view, Engels changed the order of precedence assigned by Marx to social theories and to theories of the physical universe. Although as early as his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx states that human history is a part of natural history, he believed that eventually the science of man would subsume under itself natural science.¹⁷ There will be one science of the social development of nature and of the natural origins of man: "The [science of the] social reality of nature, and . . . the natural science about man, are identical terms."¹⁸ Actually, the principal task Marx set for himself was not to construct a social science upon naturalistic foundations, but to criticize the pretensions to an objective science of society by bourgeois historiography and political economy.

Going beyond Marx, Engels found in natural-scientific materialism the foundation of the edifice of human knowledge. Herein lay the significance of Engels' research in the natural sciences. It was a question "of bringing the science of society (i.e. the sum total of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences) into harmony with the materialist foundation, and of reconstructing it thereupon."¹⁹ Marx hoped to show how science was a valuable ally of the labour movement and how independent developments within the natural and life sciences provided theoretical support for his historical and economic theories. Engels was more ambitious in arguing that the world-view or philosophy implicit in modern science provides support for modern socialism, and that a socialist science of society in turn contributes to a scientific world-view.

This project of Engels shows some striking similarities to the work of Comte. Although Engels was scarcely more impressed than Marx by the Comtean synthesis and classification of human knowledge, he seems to have been more aware of the need for a scientific world-view to help free scientists themselves from the remnants of the metaphysical tradition in science and philosophy.²⁰ In the first place, Engels, like Comte, hoped to find allies for the revolution in science within the ranks of the modern labour movement.²¹ Secondly, he aimed at elucidating the unity of science, its internal connections and hierarchical relations in the form of a philosophical science of the general laws of motion common to nature, society and human thought.²² And, thirdly, without agreeing with Comte that a science of human society presupposes the prior

development of the physical and biological sciences, he was concerned with **completing** the hierarchy of knowledge by including within it **Marx's** own contributions to the **historical sciences**.⁶³ As a matter of fact, he regarded the social science of the bourgeoisie as the outmoded theoretical expression of a social system that was in process of being superseded by the political economy of **labour**.⁶⁴ Like Comte, he associated higher forms of knowledge with higher forms of production and corresponding political organizations. Consequently, **Marxian** social theory was judged to be scientifically superior and not just complementary to the works of bourgeois social scientists, although it is not at all clear whether Marx had the same exalted opinion of its worth.

Concerning his own distinctive contribution to Marxism, **Engels** said that before and during his forty years' collaboration with Marx he had a certain "independent share in laying the foundations, and more particularly in elaborating the **theory**."⁶⁵ However, this statement is rather less helpful than it appears. For what in fact was Engels's independent contribution to the foundations if not his philosophy of dialectical materialism? Since he grants that **Marx's** contribution lay in the realm of economics and history, what remains except Engels's alleged foundation and elaboration of historical materialism in terms of a scientific philosophy of nature? Although it may have been partly his interest in science that led him to subordinate **Marx's** social theory to a scientific world outlook, his purpose was to make Marxism respectable in scientific circles, to enlist the support of scientific workers on behalf of socialism, and to buttress **Marx's** social critique with the entire weight and authority of modern **science**.⁶⁶

II

Nowhere are the differences between **Marx's** and Engels's views clearer than in their respective interpretations of dialectics. By interpreting the dialectic as the method peculiar to **philosophical** or **interdisciplinary** science, **Engels** gave it **precedence** over his radical critique of **society**. Secondly, he extended its application to natural phenomena and the processes of abstract thought, thereby distinguishing it from **Marx's** historical method. As interpreted by Engels, dialectics is the science of the general laws of motion and development of human thought, nature and society, comprehending things and their representations in their interconnections, origins and **endings**.⁶⁷ To him we owe the Soviet identification of Marxism with a scientific world outlook, and the current tripartite division of Marxist theory into materialist or abstract dialectics (general laws of thought), the dialectics of nature (general laws of the physical universe), and historical dialectics (general laws of history). As a philosophical theory concerned with the development of a unified science rather than with solving problems of special or unique significance to the labour movement, dialectics includes the **compre-**

hensive treatment and rational ordering of human knowledge, the classification of the sciences, and their cross-fertilization.²⁸

In contrast to this interpretation, let us consider briefly Marx's own formulation of his method. The most complete statement of it is contained in his preface to the second edition of *Capital* (1873): "it (the dialectical method) includes in its comprehension an affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; . . . it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; . . . [and] it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."²⁹ Here Marx identifies the dialectical method with a philosophical or comprehensive vision of the historical process, with a scientific method of inquiry that lays bare the economic laws of motion of society at different stages of historical development, and with a political critique of bourgeois society expressing the interests of a revolutionary class.

Since he did not always distinguish in practice between his several uses of dialectics, it is sometimes extremely difficult to determine where one method begins and another ends. In *Capital* his several methods so blend into one another that it is almost impossible to separate his economic philosophy from his specialized contributions to economic science and from his critique of bourgeois economics. *Capital* was designed to develop a comprehensive and interdisciplinary theory of political economy and of the general law of motion of capitalist production in general. It also aims to investigate the underlying dynamics of surplus value and capital accumulation by means of a theory of economic conflict that explains periodic crises and the business cycle. Moreover, its entire framework is partisan in adapting the classical labour theory of value and Marx's corresponding theory of surplus value to a critique of bourgeois society. Since these three efforts occur in conjunction with instead of isolation from each other, *Capital* presents a complicated texture of meanings that requires considerable patience to unravel.

In general, one can say that of the several functions of the dialectic the most important to Marx was its power to disclose the oppressive character of social facts.³⁰ Dialectics breaks the hold of common sense, the conformist power of facts and corresponding ideological glorification of actuality by special interests hostile to the workers. Its critique of ideology follows from its practical purpose of unmasking human oppression and alienation. As a radicalism of disclosure it focuses upon the antagonisms dissolving the present, upon the transitory character and movement of events, upon elements of the future, upon potentialities instead of actualities, change instead of permanence, crises instead of equilibrium, disintegration instead of harmony.³¹ If the dialectic could also make a claim to seeing things whole in their varied intercon-

nections, it is largely because the power of negative thinking is a necessary complement of modern science in building a philosophic or comprehensive vision of social reality.

In what respects did Engels bring about a change in Marx's conception and application of dialectics? In place of Marx's threefold function of dialectics as revolutionary critique, disequilibrium analysis and comprehensive vision—in that order of importance—Engels substituted his so-called laws of dialectics.³³ The most important of these general laws of motion for Engels is the law of the interpenetration of opposites, which in the realm of thought gives us the rich and many-sided knowledge required for comprehensive vision. His other two laws, the transformation of quantity into quality and the negation of the negation, have a bearing upon Marx's critique of social statics and the social criticism of industrial capitalism. However, Marx's dialectic becomes for Engels merely an extension of the laws of nature to the investigation of human societies. Furthermore, since Engels's philosophical science attaches supreme importance to the interconnections uniting the several branches of knowledge, it invariably stresses the importance of comprehensive vision and scientific method over the critical uses of the dialectic.

Engels notes that dialectical philosophy stresses the transitory character of everything, dissolving in practice all categories of permanence, all stable time-honoured institutions including all conceptions of final, absolute truth and of ideal states of humanity corresponding to it.³⁴ This is the extent of its revolutionary criticism of reality. Although whatever exists within the sphere of human history tends to pass away with time, it perishes only in so far as it becomes irrational or incompatible with a new viable order of society—the principal reason Engels gives for condemning it.³⁵ Unlike Marx's dialectic which was concerned chiefly with revolutionizing practice, Engels' dialectic was directed to the revolutionary criticism of theory. In effect, Engels became interested in interpreting the world, when Marx's whole point was to change it.³⁶

III

In comparing the thought of Marx and Engels, the most salient differences are linguistic in character. None the less, their different usage of key terms suggests a difference in intellectual content. What, for example, did Marx and Engels mean by their several references to the end or withering away of philosophy? As we shall see, Engels did not envisage a total eclipse of philosophy by science, but introduced at least three important qualifications: that philosophy is finished only in the hitherto accepted sense of the word; that it has been expelled chiefly from the areas covered by the natural and social sciences; and that there still remains to it the realm of pure thought, the theory of the laws of the thought process, formal logic and pure dialectics.³⁷ Further-

more, philosophy is used in still another sense as synonymous with world outlook.³⁷ And in this respect it is synonymous with dialectics itself as the sum total of the interdisciplinary sciences of nature, society and human thought.

There is little evidence that Marx ever changed his opinion about philosophy as defined by him in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, notably, that "philosophy is nothing else but religion rendered into thoughts and unthinkingly expounded. . . ."³⁸ Consequently, he proposes that we condemn philosophy, like religion, as another form of man's self-alienation.³⁹ Another objection to philosophy is its contemplative and purely intellectual character, its divorce from human practice. It is not a revolutionary or practical-critical activity; the contemplative attitude and scholastic inquiries promoted by philosophy are in fact inimical to most efforts at changing the world.⁴⁰ Logic is no more part of philosophy for Marx than are the special sciences of nature and history. It belongs rather to the *organon* of modern science. Similarly, dialectics is not a branch of philosophy for Marx, but belongs with logic to the methodology of the sciences and to the social sciences in particular.

How did Engels's treatment of philosophy differ from that of Marx? It is noteworthy that Engels proposed to salvage philosophy by changing its traditional function. While disclaiming any need for that sort of philosophy which traditionally aspired to a knowledge of the totality of things, he does not turn his back upon philosophy altogether. On the contrary, he notes that formal logic and dialectics not only played an important part in all earlier philosophy, but also continue to be of service to science and the world.⁴¹ Natural scientists, he argues, cannot afford to do without philosophy in this special sense. Philosophy is needed to free science from traditional philosophical notions that cannot withstand logical and dialectical scrutiny.⁴² Furthermore, science stands in need of interdisciplinary investigations that transcend the narrow jurisdictional claims of any one science.⁴³

The difference in intellectual content underlying Marx's and Engels' different formulations is evident not only in their choice of language, but also in their honorific use of special terms to designate the principal tasks they set for themselves. Thus Marx's major concern to demolish the authority and intellectual pretensions of bourgeois political science, law, jurisprudence, political economy and ethics was honoured by the names "critique" and "criticism." Not only are most of his works critiques of one kind or another, such as his several works on political economy, but his early writings indicate almost an obsession with the word criticism.⁴⁴ Whether we call his method positive criticism, humanistic criticism, scientific criticism, naturalistic criticism, practical criticism, or materialistic criticism, we are in any case employing terms that Marx himself used to distinguish his work from the critical criticism, and pre-eminently theological criticism of the bourgeois radicals of his

day. Although Engels, too, wrote a number of critical works, his later writings, like his fierce polemic against **Duhring's** alleged revolution in science, suggest an increasing concern with scientific criticism, especially of the interdisciplinary variety. The honorific term par *excellence* in Engels' writings is not "critique" but "dialectic," itself a term for interdisciplinary science. Although Marx also used the term "dialectics" in a similar sense, for him it was chiefly a method applicable within the special sciences, and, furthermore, a method of social criticism in particular.

For Marx the withering away of traditional philosophy went hand in hand with what today we would call the rise of philosophy of science, or what he preferred to call a dialectical critique of science. Of course, a major difference between **Marx's** philosophy of science and the philosophy of science as currently taught in our universities is that materialist dialectics is essentially critical and revolutionary. Dialectical criticism employs not only the skills of epistemology and scientific method, but also those of the sociology of knowledge. Science is criticized for the values it presupposes and the interests it serves as well as for its lack of theoretical completeness and comparative neglect of conflict theory and social dynamics. Above all, **Marx's** philosophy of science did not pretend to be politically neutral.

The end of philosophy in the hitherto accepted sense of the word meant for **Engels** abandoning the quest for certainty for the sake of specialized scientific investigations and the "summation of their results by means of dialectical thinking."⁴⁶ Here the stress is upon the development of a general science, interdisciplinary in nature, which has to be confirmed and validated not in a science of sciences standing apart, but in the positive sciences.⁴⁸ Thus dialectics is equated with a philosophical science in a new sense distinct from both traditional metaphysics and modern methodologies of science. Dialectics becomes with **Engels** the science of **metaconnections**; the queen of the sciences is not philosophy of science but philosophical science.⁴⁷ Here lies the crucial difference in emphasis and approach in **Marx's** and **Engels'** different uses of "dialectics." It is the difference between a generalized scientific reinterpretation of philosophy and a critical-economic one tied directly to the interests of modern wage-earners.

Superficially, Engels' reinterpretation of the task of the scientific philosopher was more all-embracing than that of Marx. He did not limit himself to **Marx's** job of criticizing bourgeois science and social science in particular, but went further in the effort to formulate a scientific world-view and general theory of society. However, in extending the meaning of dialectics he increasingly substituted the interdisciplinary-scientific for the critical-revolutionary approach to human knowledge. Although his dialectics of society as a science of socialism is directly partisan to the interests of labour, his dialectics of nature is not. Furthermore, in his preoccupation with the need for a

unified social science he claims much more for **Marx's** contributions to it than is actually warranted. At least Marx did not presume to be developing a philosophical science of society that would omit nothing of importance in the social sciences, not to mention matters of special interest to other classes besides the proletariat.

Clearly, Marx abandoned philosophy in turning most of his theoretical energies to political economy and historiography. Although political economy, or what today goes under the name of economic sociology, can now claim to constitute an interdisciplinary science, in **Marx's** day it had yet to become a separate discipline from economics. In any case, it was left for **Engels** to popularize it and to provide a general philosophical over-view of **Marx's** specialized researches.

IV

What, then, is our assessment of Engels's contribution to the corpus of Marxist theory? Here it may be of interest to contrast Engels's interpretation of Marxism with Lenin's elucidation of it. For **Engels** the basis of **Marxism** is the materialist conception of nature rather than of history. Evidence for the interrelation between the various spheres of investigation in the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) has called for a science of sciences capable of integrating our interdisciplinary knowledge in this area into a natural scientific world-view.⁴⁸ In one sense, materialism is no longer a philosophy at all, but simply a world outlook predicated upon the natural sciences.⁴⁹ Traditional materialism is "overcome as regards its form [metaphysics], and preserved as regards its real content [science]."⁵⁰ The question is whether or not **Engels** was warranted in believing that his dialectics of nature was in fact a science of sciences rather than a philosophy in the traditional sense.

Aside from the question whether it is theoretically possible to provide Marxism with a foundation in the natural sciences, **Engels** tends to confuse the foundation with the structure itself. More important than the foundation for Marx are the special sciences dealing directly with man and his problems. Moreover, the general laws of connection, concatenation, motion, development, origins and endings in nature, which are applicable to human society and thought, are far too general in scope to be regarded as experimental or strictly scientific. Engels's laws of the transformation of quantity into quality, the interpenetration of opposites, and the negation of the negation⁵¹ are susceptible to verification only inasmuch as they are not universal. A science of sciences is one thing; a philosophical science universal in scope is, however, a contradiction in terms. Despite Engels's attack upon the metaphysical tradition for its timeless and static character, his own generalizations concerning motion are no less abstract and universal than those of traditional metaphysics. And, to that extent, they are just as vacuous.

Considerably closer to **Marx's** own views was Lenin's identification of dialectics with "*living, many-sided knowledge... with an infinite number of shadings of every sort of approach and approximation to reality (with a philosophical system growing into a whole out of each shade)... an immeasurably rich content as compared with 'meta-physical' materialism, the fundamental *misfortune* of which is its inability to apply dialectics to... the process and development of knowledge.*"⁸⁴ In this light, the contribution of dialectics is not the formulation of the most general interconnections in nature, society and human thought, but rather the use of these formulas as guides towards further specialized investigations within these areas. Dialectics is less of a philosophical science for Lenin than a *propædeutic* to the special sciences. Furthermore, it is only the theory of knowledge of Marxism and, to that extent, only a very small part of **Marx's** theory as a *whole*.⁸⁵ That theory is in its essence critical and revolutionary rather than dialectical in Engels's sense of the term. What is unique about Marxism is that "this theory directly sets out to *disclose* all the forms of antagonism and exploitation in modern society, to trace their evolution, demonstrate their transient character, the inevitability of their transformation into a different form, *and thus help the proletariat as quickly and easily as possible to put an end to all exploitation.* . . . indeed, the purpose of theory, the aim of science, as directly laid down here, is to assist the oppressed class in its actual economic *struggle*."⁸⁶ Unlike Engels's interpretation that goes beyond Marx, Lenin's comments indicate a return to the original content of **Marx's** thought.

Here we may agree with Engels's critics that the dialectic has in some instances been degraded from a theory of the inner dynamics of history to a subspecies of formal logic and elementary scholasticism. In abstraction from the theory of history and politics, philosophy becomes metaphysics, whereas the great achievement of Marxism in the history of modern thought is the concrete historicization and politicization of *philosophy*.⁸⁷ **Marx's** achievement should not be confused with **Engels'** efforts to illustrate historically the general laws of dialectics. The mere effort to illustrate them presupposes that the laws of dialectics are first abstracted from the history of nature and human society and presented in the form of general categories and conclusions. This transformation of dialectics into a universal scientific world outlook and the subsequent application of its most general laws to the study of history would have been pointless to Marx. In the first place, these laws are nothing but empty shells until they are historically illustrated. Furthermore, the attempt to illustrate them historically is distinct from **Marx's** own method of historical criticism, which consists not in the application of abstract categories to the passage of events, not in a comparison of facts with ideas, but rather with other *facts*.⁸⁸

NOTES

1. For recent estimates of Engels as a "revisionist" of Marxism see Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (New York, 1958), pp. 137–8, 142–5; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 121–35; Robert Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (London, 1961), p. 184; George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (New York, 1961), pp. 58–61, 234–58; and Leopold Labedz, ed., *Revisionism: Essays on the History of Marxist Ideas* (New York, 1962), pp. 179–87, 344–6, 349 n. Historically, this criticism of Engels stems largely from Karl Korsch's *Marxismus und Philosophie* (Leipzig, 1930). For a brief English introduction to Korsch's work see Paul Mattick, "Karl Korsch: His Contribution to Revolutionary Marxism," *Controversy* (Autumn, 1962), Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 11–21. For a conventional Marxist defence of Engels see the all too brief criticism of Leszek Kolakowski by Adam Schaff, "Studies of the Young Marx: A Rejoinder," in the Labedz volume, pp. 188–94.
2. See Lichtheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–1; and Iring Fetscher's essay, "Germany: Marxismus-Studien," in the Labedz volume, p. 344.
3. *Anti-Duhring*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1959), pp. 16–22, 122–5.
4. See Marx's essay, "Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in Lewis Feuer, *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy* (Garden City, 1959), p. 266.
5. *Ludwig Feuerbach* (New York, 1941), p. 61.
6. For the practical-critical emphasis of Marx's early works see especially his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845). For Marx's later designation of his socialism as materialistic-critical see his letter to Sorge, London, October 19, 1877, *Selected Works* (New York, 1933), Vol. II, p. 625.
7. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 27.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 379–82.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
10. *Ibid.* See also the discarded preface to *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 454–5.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14; see also p. 23.
15. "On Historical Materialism" in Feuer, *op. cit.*, p. 54; cf. also pp. 65–6.
16. "Letters on Historical Materialism" in Feuer, *op. cit.*, pp. 395–412.
17. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow, 1956), p. 111; italics deleted.
18. *Ibid.*, italics deleted.
19. *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 29.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
21. See Engels's letter to H. Starkenburg, London, January 25, 1894, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow, 1953), pp. 548–9; and *Ludwig Feuerbach*, pp. 60–1.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–7; *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 122–5; and Engels's letter to Marx, London, May 30, 1873, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 342–3.
23. *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 43, 124 f.
24. *Dialectics of Nature* (Moscow, 1954), p. 245.
25. *Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 42 n.
26. In the Introduction to *Dialectics of Nature* Engels addresses himself directly to scientific workers and their professional interests: "we have subdued the forces of nature and pressed them into the service of mankind; we have thereby infinitely multiplied production, so that a child now produces more than a hundred adults previously did [italics mine]." Who is this "we" if not the scientific community, the "undaunted scientific theoreticians" and "scientific circles" to whom he likewise addressed himself in the prefaces to *Anti-Duhring*?
27. *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 36, 194, 455 f.; and *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 27, 58 f., 82.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-68, 83.
29. Preface to the 2nd ed. of *Capital* (Chicago, 1906), Vol. I, p. 26.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 26; and "Toward the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," *op. cit.*, p. 263. For an interpretation of the dialectic as a method of historical criticism, see Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (London, 1957), pp. 96-7, 99-100; and Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston, 1960), pp. vii-xii, 314-16. For an interpretation of "Marxism" in similar terms see Mattick, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14; and Irving Louis Horowitz, "Social Science Objectivity and Value Neutrality: Historical Problems and Projections," *Diogenes* 39, pp. 21-5.
31. *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 22-5.
32. *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 83.
33. Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 12.
Ibid., p. 11.
"Theses on Feuerbach" in Feuer, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
Ludwig Feuerbach, pp. 15, 59. See also *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 40, 59; and *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 62, 279-80.
Anti-Duhring, pp. 190-1, 457-8.
Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, p. 145.
Ibid.
40. "Theses on Feuerbach," *op. cit.*, pp. 243-5.
41. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 40.
42. *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 279.
43. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 455.
44. See, for example, his Preface to the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*.
45. Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 15; see also p. 59.
46. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 191.
47. *Dialectics of Nature*, pp. 27, 82.
48. An omitted fragment from Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 65.
49. *Anti-Duhring*, p. 191.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Dialectics of Nature*, p. 83.
52. Lenin, "On Dialectics," *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, 5th English edition (Moscow, 1959), pp. 369-70.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 369.
54. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' are and how they fight the Social-Democrats," *ibid.*, p. 118.
55. Gramsci, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
56. *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 23.