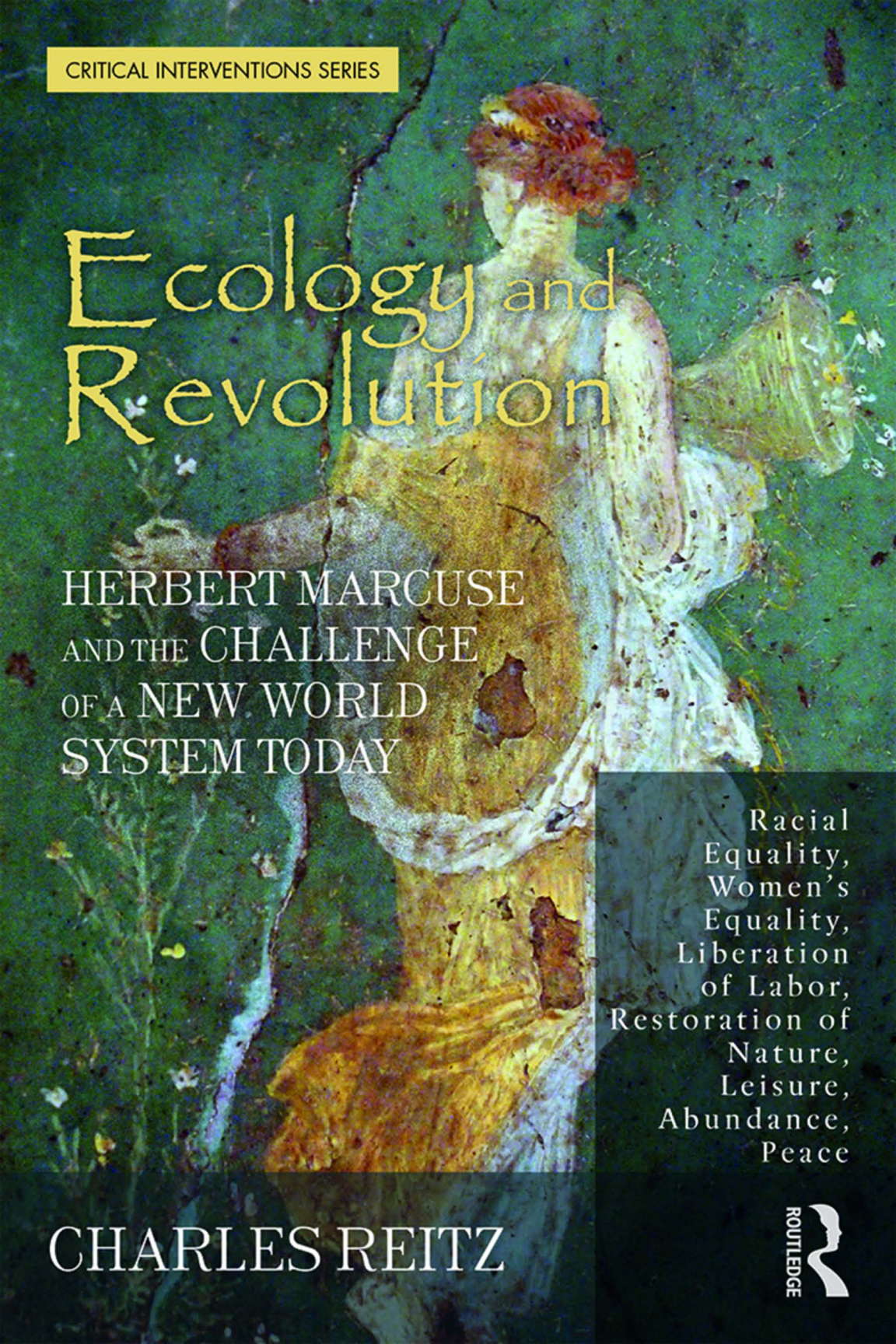
CRITICAL INTERVENTIONS SERIES
Ecology and Revolution
HERBERT MARCUSE AND THE CHALLENGE OF A NEW WORLD SYSTEM TODAY
Racial Equality, Women's Equality, Liberation of Labor, Restoration of Nature, Leisure, Abundance, Peace
CHARLES REITZ
ROUTLEDGE

Marcuse's critical theory is as large as the world he was mapping. No one has navigated Marcuse's oeuvre with greater care and precision than Charles Reitz, who is not only the most accomplished translator of Marcuse's German works into English but also the most accessible teacher of Marcuse's radical contributions to contemporary theory. Inspired by the persistence of the Great Refusal and by what Marcuse called "revolutionary ecological liberation," Reitz maintains the necessity of settling for nothing less than human freedom.

Andrew T. Lamas, University of Pennsylvania

Charles Reitz is without question one of the most important interpreters of the work of Marcuse writing today, as well as one of the key contemporary philosophers of praxis. His most recent work only underscores this assessment. A brilliant and timely work!

Peter McLaren, Chapman University

As we hurtle towards planetary destruction, Reitz provides a revolutionary alternative to global financial capitalism. Building upon the work of Marcuse and Marx, a GreenCommonWealth outlines how we can and must challenge structural oppression through a praxis oriented towards solidarity within a communal humanity.

Sarah Surak, Salisbury University

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ECOLOGY AND REVOLUTION

A timely addition to Henry Giroux's *Critical Interventions* series, *Ecology and Revolution* is grounded in the Frankfurt School critical theory of Herbert Marcuse. Its task is to understand the economic architecture of wealth extraction that undergirds today's intensifying inequalities of class, race, and gender, within a revolutionary ecological frame. Relying on newly discovered texts from the Frankfurt Marcuse Archive, this book builds theory and practice for an alternate world system. Ecology and radical political economy, as critical forms of systems analysis, show that an alternative world system is essential – both possible and feasible – despite political forces against it. Our rights to a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture reside in our commonworks as we express ourselves as artisans of the common good. It is in this context, that Charles Reitz develops a Green-CommonWealth Counter-Offensive, a strategy for revolutionary ecological liberation with core features of racial equality, women's equality, liberation of labor, restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace.

Charles Reitz is the author of *Philosophy & Critical Pedagogy: Insurrection & Commonwealth* (2016); editor of *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren* (2015); and author of *Art, Alienation and the Humanities: A Critical Engagement with Herbert Marcuse* (2000). He served for several years on the Board of Directors of the International Herbert Marcuse Society.

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Noah De Lissovoy, Alexander J. Means, and Kenneth J. Saltman

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Ecology and Revolution: Herbert Marcuse and the Challenge of a New World System Today
Charles Reitz

ECOLOGY AND REVOLUTION

Herbert Marcuse and the Challenge of a New World System Today

Charles Reitz

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To the youth of this generation and generations to come. May our generations meet with understanding.

"A pedagogy of educated hope . . . is central to any viable notion of change."

—Henry A. Giroux (2018, 247)

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Cover Art

Flora, the goddess of flowers, fresco from Villa Arianna, Stabiae, near Pompeii, artist unknown, National Archaeological Museum of Naples.

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INTRODUCTION

Working with a "New" Marcuse: Building the Theory and Practice for an Alternative World System

> Americans live at a time in which the destruction and violence waged by neoliberal capitalism is unapologetic and without pause.
>
> —*Henry A. Giroux (2018)*[1]

> As the world sees the ominous growth of right-wing populism, as inequality in the distribution of income, wealth, and power continues to grow, there is continued need and desire for radical political economic analysis.
>
> —*Editors,* Review of Radical Political Economics *(49:4 Winter 2017)*

> [W]e have to become aware of the real possibility of a revolution in the most advanced industrial countries taking place not on a basis of poverty and misery, but rather on the basis of wasted abundance.
>
> —*Herbert Marcuse (1974)*[2]

Herbert Marcuse recognized the importance of ecology to the revolutionary movement and the importance of the revolutionary movement for ecology. Radical political philosophy seeks to apprehend the ecology of the historical and material world and the changing social condition of humanity within it. Yet, over the last several decades there has been a regression in the comprehensiveness and materiality of critical social theory. This volume, grounded in Marcuse's Frankfurt School writings, speaks to both ecology and revolution in terms of the challenge and necessity of building an alternate world system today.[3]

A refugee intellectual from Nazi Germany exiled to the U.S. in the 1930s, Herbert Marcuse emerged in the 1960s as this nation's most visionary social philosopher. Addressing multiple issues of concern to critical scholarship here and in Europe at the time (from the rise of fascism and the authoritarian personality, to Soviet philosophy and culture, the Vietnam War and student anti-war protest,

the civil rights movement, the women's movement), near the end of his life he found the environmental movement to be particularly promising as a force for social change. Its criticisms of extractive and polluting economic policies involved system-negations and embodied what he termed the "Great Refusal." This adamant political and personal critique signified both activist opposition to needless institutional destructiveness and advocacy for goals connected to utopian practices of human freedom including the restoration and enjoyment of nature, quietude, and peace.

Since the 1970s, the time of Marcuse's initial prominence, the world has become ever more aware and rightfully disturbed about multiple forms of environmental disaster on the horizon. These include extreme weather events such as hurricanes, floods, droughts, and wild fires, chiefly in terms of global warming due to the burning of fossil fuels, and also resource waste, mismanaged plastic waste streaming into the oceans, soil contamination, degraded water and air quality, depleted ozone, ocean acidification, habitat and biodiversity loss. Each of these is also profoundly enmeshed within a world-wide system of economic inequality and conflict. Marcuse's work has the strategic radicalism and optimism that are needed more than ever today.

> [M]onopoly capitalism is waging a war against nature—human nature as well as external nature. For the demands on ever more intense exploitation come into conflict with nature itself … and the demands of exploitation progressively reduce and exhaust resources: the more capitalist productivity increases, the more destructive it becomes. This is one sign of the internal contradictions of capitalism.
>
> *(Marcuse [1972] 2005, 174)*

Marcuse was cognizant of the systemic dangers of advanced industrial society and he valorized ecological activism in a revolutionary mode. He advocated a fundamental opposition to global capitalism's predatory and extractive economic order; so too he had a radical respect for our interlocking interdependence with the earth and our need for collective engagement in building an environmentally honorable future.

> Increasingly, the ecological struggle comes into conflict with the laws which govern the capitalist system: the law of increased accumulation of capital, of the creation of sufficient surplus value, of profit, of the necessity of perpetuating alienated labor and exploitation. Michel Bosquet put it very well: the ecological logic is purely and simply the negation of capitalist logic; the earth can't be saved within the framework of capitalism, the Third World can't be developed according to the model of capitalism.
>
> *(Marcuse [1972] 2005, 175)*

Marcuse's ethical perspective has much in common with Aldo Leopold's ecological vision to be unfolded in Chapter 1. Leopold "discards at the outset the fallacious

notion that the wild community is one thing, the human community another" (Leopold [1942] 1991, 303). He understood earth (i.e. land) scientifically as a biotic system. "That the land is a community is a basic concept of ecology. But that the land is to be loved and protected is an extension of ethics" (Leopold, 1966, x). Leopold's philosophy was not a narrow instrumental rationality of resource management, but rather in dialectical sympathy with wildlife, plant life, ice, water, air, and the land (Brennan 2007, 519). Like Marcuse, Leopold was not content to limit himself to immediate observation and description of ecological wrongs. His analysis was grounded in a deep appreciation of the mediated dialectical dynamism and interdependencies of nature that could also make recovery and ecological/ethical advance possible.

Recent years have witnessed a genuine Marcuse Renaissance. *New Political Science* devoted a special issue to *Marcuse in the Twenty-First Century: Radical Politics, Critical Theory, Revolutionary Practice* (2016). The *Radical Philosophy Review* dedicated four Special Issues to fresh considerations of Marcuse's thought (2017 and 2016; twice in 2013). Two collections of commentary on Marcuse's political perspective have also been published in 2017, *The Great Refusal: Herbert Marcuse and Contemporary Social Movements*, edited by Andrew T. Lamas, Todd Wolfson, and Peter N. Funke, and *One-Dimensional Man 50 Years On: The Struggle Continues,* edited by Terry Maley.

I have co-contributed to this renewal of interest in Marcuse by translating and publishing (with Peter-Erwin Jansen, Andrew Lamas, Douglas Kellner, and Sarah Surak) much newly discovered or neglected material from the Frankfurt Marcuse Archive (Reitz 2017, 2016a, 2016b, 2015, 2009a, 2009b, 2000). An examination of these "new" Marcuse sources discloses that they are not merely of antiquarian interest, but strategically advantageous to us in today's turbulent political milieu. In important respects these materials modify Marcuse's earlier, more well-known positions. His ecological writing is especially important in this respect.

My effort here reclaims for our time, in particular, four crucial aspects of Marcuse's philosophy: a) revolutionary ecological liberation, b) the dialectical rationality of philosophy, c) the material nature of the human essence, and d) critical political economy and the radical goals of socialism. My aim is to demonstrate how Marcuse's ideas overall reveal that (and how) emancipatory and egalitarian social change can actually be attained. I do not call upon Marcuse as if he were a faultless authority. I engage with, expand upon, and criticize Marcuse's ideas, particularly in Chapters 5 and 6 below. Further, I address what I see as the current crisis in economic theory and in sociological theory more generally. I want to develop a viable theoretical paradigm for social science and philosophy that can overcome postmodern moral relativism and nihilism. My aim is to build an intercultural sense of human solidarity and commonwealth, underpinning—in ethics, economics, and education—a realistic telos of human flourishing.

Ecology and Revolution

A militant defense of the earth and its people occupied much of Marcuse's final year of life. His essay, "Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society" (Marcuse [1979] 2011) addresses "the destruction of nature in the context of the general destructiveness which characterizes our society."

> Under the conditions of advanced industrial society, satisfaction is always tied to destruction. The domination of nature is tied to the violation of nature. The search for new sources of energy is tied to the poisoning of the life environment.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 209)*

Marcuse's essay "Ecology and Revolution" noted the revival of the women's movement and student anti-war protest in 1972. The ecology movement joined these in protesting against the capitalist "violation of the Earth" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 174).

> The revolt of youth (students, workers, women), undertaken in the name of the values of freedom and happiness, is an attack on all the values which govern the capitalist system. And this revolt is oriented toward the pursuit of a radically different natural and technical environment; this perspective has become the basis for subversive experiments such as the attempts by American "communes" to establish non-alienated relations between the sexes, between generations, between man and nature—attempts to sustain the consciousness of refusal and of renovation.
>
> *(Marcuse [1972] 2005, 174)*

Marcuse tied his anti-war criticism tightly to his criticism of the ecocide (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 173) being perpetrated by the massive U.S. bombing campaigns there. "U.S. bombs are meant to prevent the people of North Vietnam from undertaking the economic and social rehabilitation of the land" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 174). Hence, he saw the struggle of the Vietnam National Liberation Front as a form of "revolutionary ecological liberation."

> The genocidal war against people was also "ecocide" in so far as it attacks the sources and resources of life itself. It is no longer enough to do away with people living now; life must be denied to those who are not even born yet by burning and poisoning the Earth, defoliating the forests, blowing up the dikes. This bloody insanity will not alter the ultimate course of the war, but it is a very clear expression of where contemporary capitalism is at: the cruel waste of productive resources in the imperialist homeland goes hand in hand with the cruel waste of destructive forces and consumption of commodities of death manufactured by the war industry.
>
> *(Marcuse [1972] 2005, 173)*

Dropping more tonnage in Southeast Asia than the U.S. had used in all of World War II, became part of a strategy, which Marcuse recognized as a "vital aspect of the [U.S. political war makers' and arms makers'] counterrevolution" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 173).[4] More on this prescient assessment, elaborated in Marcuse's *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972), below in Chapter 1. We cringe still today at the thought of Trump's reactionary sabre-rattling and opposition to the Paris climate accords and his appointment of anti-ecology ideologists to the Departments of the Interior (Ryan Zinke), Energy (Rick Perry), and the Environmental Protection Agency (Scott Pruitt).[5]

We have seen, of course, how often the ecological movement has been co-opted and harmonized with the perspective of a "green capitalism." For Marcuse "the issue is not the purification of the existing society but its replacement" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 175). In Marcuse's estimation, the environmental movement's system critique continually re-emerges: The methodology of ecology, critical philosophy, and sociology takes the system as the unit of analysis, rather than the individual. It focuses on the complex and pivotal underlying structures of economic oppression and exploitation that are too often overlooked (sometimes actively suppressed) by analysts, policy makers, commentators, and educators when examining both the causes and the impacts of imperial corporate globalization. "Authentic ecology flows into a militant struggle for a socialist politics which must attack the system at its roots, both in the process of production and in the mutilated consciousness of individuals" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 176).

The Dialectical Rationality of Philosophy

The "unhappy consciousness" is a philosophical concept developed by Hegel indicating a human being's profound awareness of the shortcomings of an actual state-of-affairs given a simultaneous appreciation of the full and real potentials of the historical situation. The unhappy consciousness is a consciousness of oneself as alienated from the fuller capacities of the time and place, which are not factually present in the here and now, though they could (and should) be. Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM) devotes much of its Chapter 3 to this—as an awareness "of possibilities defeated, … hopes unfulfilled, … promises betrayed" (Marcuse 1964, 61). He contrasts the awareness of this *un*happy tension between the actual and the potential with the "happy consciousness which facilitates the misdeeds of this society" (Marcuse 1964, 76). Advanced industrial society and its consumerist culture offer a plethora of mass-produced, commercially available, "adjusted pleasures," including media involving unrestrained sex and violence, that facilitate a superficial and repressively desublimated "happy" life while faithfully reproducing the commodity form.

Marcuse understood as single-dimensional any perspective that is oblivious to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations. One-dimensionality is the triumph of a happy consciousness grounded in the suffocation and

repression of life's internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Cultural kitsch is sustained through the pleasant sanitization of these inconsistencies and contradictions, which facilitates adjustment and compliance to the established social order.

Critical intelligence must be more serious and sensitive to questions of complex causality and more skeptical of simplistic visions of the good life or good society. It must confront "the power of positive thinking" (which Marcuse holds to be destructive of philosophy) with "the power of negative thinking" that illumines "the facts" in terms of the real possibilities which the facts deny. Critical intelligence, as he sees it, is thus essentially always multi-dimensional, dialectical, realistic, and normative—i.e. philosophical and generative of fuller cultural freedom.

The main problem as he saw it—and I see it today—is to develop an alternate critical theoretical vision. Marcuse's 1966 Inaugural Lecture at the UCSD (University of California, San Diego) Department of Philosophy emphasized: "'*truth*' is in the potential *rather than the actual*" (Marcuse [1966] 2017, 2).[6]

> [P]hilosophy denies that the established facts are all the facts. Moreover, to philosophic experience the facts are *negative* in that they *deny, distort,* the real possibilities of man. Those, which if translated into reality, would free human existence from prevailing ignorance, servitude, falsehood. Consequently "*truth*" is in the potential *rather than the actual* and is *not only* an order of thought, *a quality of propositions,* but also a quality of *practice*. It follows that the philosopher, in learning, knowing and analyzing the established facts, must transcend them; he must dissociate himself from them, "judge" them in the light of the potentialities which they deny or distort.
>
> *(Marcuse [1966] 2017, 2)*

> Philosophy *suspends and even subverts* common sense as well as scientific experience, substituting a *very different experience*, namely: philosophy experiences all facts, cases, relations in the context of the *human condition*; and it experiences the given facts in the logic of a fundamental dichotomy, a contradiction of the human condition: that between the potential and the actual, expressed as conflict between essence and appearance, universal and particular, idea and reality, substance and accident, a contradiction which is demonstrable in the universe of the given facts "empirically."
>
> *(Marcuse [1966] 2017, 1–2)*

> Looking at philosophy today, philosophy (at least in its most prevalent and fashionable schools) seems to have very little to do with the idea and function of philosophy as I presented them. The *rising tide of authoritarianism* seems

> to affect philosophy too—*withdrawal* from social and political problems—occupation with subtle (and harmless) banalities—suffering (or rejoicing) in the illusion of mathematical purity and exactness at the price of abstracting from the substance: the human condition, which is the referent of all philosophic truth and falsehood.
>
> *(Marcuse [1966] 2017, 9–10, emphasis in original)*

Marcuse's 1969 address as President of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Association, "The Relevance of Reality," vividly demonstrated his radical and heretical stance vis à vis U.S. academic orthodoxy. Marcuse called for a dialectical *re*thinking of reality: questioning the abstract and formalistic, mathematically-modelled assumptions of logical positivism. This latter paradigm largely prevailed in U.S. departments of philosophy. Because it typically eschewed consideration of social and political problems and questions, it had become an evasion of philosophy, "unreal" in the vernacular of philosophical and political radicals of the 1960s, students and teachers alike. Marcuse endorsed, in contrast to positivism, the philosophical and political relevance of reality historically and sociologically understood (i.e. the material human condition in terms of its past and current shortcomings and real future potentials). He focused on four key areas in which such a rethinking could revivify philosophy—making it worthy of the name. 1) Linguistic analysis required a new, more *political* approach to linguistics. 2) Aesthetics needed an emphasis on the nexus of artwork and *society*. 3) Epistemology had to move towards a *historical* understanding of transcendent knowledge. And 4) the history of philosophy itself needed to emphasize the internal relationships linking theory of education to the theory of politics since Plato in order that we might become who we are: "authentic democracy presupposes equality in the ways, means, and time necessary for acquiring the highest level of knowledge" (Marcuse [1969] 2011, 181).

Let's focus for a moment on point 4, our work to become who we are. Marcuse's theory contends that advanced capitalism is obsessed with standardization, mechanization, and specialization, and that this cult of efficiency involves aspects of domination that impede real education and preclude the development of real awareness of ourselves and our world. In *One-Dimensional Man* he had written: "At this stage, it becomes clear that something must be wrong with the rationality of the system itself. What is wrong is the way in which men have organized their social labor" (Marcuse 1964, 144).

The Nature of the Human Essence

Marcuse, like Marx, asserted a radically materialist conception of the essence of socially active human beings: seen from the outside, we are the ensemble of our social relations; seen from the inside, we are sensuous living labor. I extend this perspective in Chapters 1 and 4 below. Charles Woolfson, Professor Emeritus of

Labor Studies, Linköping University, Sweden, has furnished a dialectical materialist philosophical perspective on the material human condition in *The Labour Theory of Culture* (1982) that undergirds my work here as well. I follow also anthropological theorists, Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac (2017), Riane Eisler (1987), Richard Leakey (1994; Leakey and Lewin 1978), and primatologist Frans de Waal (2013, 2009) in departing from masculinist mythic accounts of human origins in any Golden Age or Garden of Eden and/or from accounts of Man the Killer Ape (Dart 1956) or Man the Hunter (Ardrey 1976). Instead I stress the cultural context of cooperation and caring in the earliest human societies which fostered interdependence and an awareness of the customary power of partnership. Partnership customs and behaviors had the capacity to ensure survival. Subsistence needs were met with relatively little time spent in the collaborative acquisition of necessities (three to four hours a day); thus, the foundation was established for the fuller species life to flourish within the human community. This included the development of language as a derivative of the communal human condition (Leakey 1994, 124).

I am further oriented within a world-historical frame and committed to understanding the multiple wisdom traditions of a globally diverse humanity. My analysis utilizes a dialectical and materialist perspective to develop its understanding of an ethical core common to the wisdom traditions of the world's major religions as well as non-theistic humanist philosophy. Through an examination of the essentially economic features of the human condition and the history of our species as socially active human beings, I am seeking the pivotal principles of conscience that can ascertain the concrete common goods undergirding the evaluation of moral practice. On the basis of my interpretation of Marcuse's early work on labor as an ontological concept (Marcuse [1933] 1973) these are theorized as emerging from our sensuous practical activities, our subsistence strategies, and our earliest forms of communal labor in egalitarian partnership societies. Humanity's earliest customs, i.e. communal production, shared ownership, and solidarity assured that the needs of all were met, i.e. including those not directly involved in production like children, the disabled, and the elderly. This right of the commonwealth to govern itself, and humanity's earliest ethic of holding property in common, derive only secondarily from factual individual contributions to production; they are rooted primarily in our essentially shared species life and our being as humans, as sensuous living labor.

Radical Political Economy, Humanism, and Socialism

Socialism's minimal standards require the provision of adequate social needs-oriented programs and services such as housing, health care, child care, and education, to everyone, as well as government policy, law enforcement, and public media ensuring the optimization of the human material condition. For Marcuse the radical goals of socialism go beyond the elimination of want and poverty

through efficient production and distribution of use values: they involve a "*qualitative leap*" against "the fragmentation of work, the necessity and productivity of stupid performances and stupid merchandise, against the acquisitive bourgeois individual, against the servitude in the guise of technology, deprivation in the guise of the good life, against pollution as a way of life" (Marcuse 1972, 16–17). The radical transformation of the labor process itself stands first and foremost here: labor's liberation from commodification, becoming a good in itself, undergirding the production of many of the most valuable things in life, society as a work of art, commonwealth as labor's aesthetic and ethical form. "Labor is the father of material wealth, the earth is its mother" (Marx [1867] 1976, 134, quoting William Petty). Further, to be radical, socialism must ensure the ecological well-being of humanity, the biosphere, and the earth. A humanist ecology must be free of the familiar discriminatory patterns of the past and eliminate the infamous (if unacknowledged) caste status of racial minorities as well as gender-based abuse and violence. It must deconstruct all customary obstacles to human actualization and lead to a better future condition for all humans.

The Task at Hand: to understand the global architecture of wealth extraction that undergirds today's intensifying inequalities of class, race and gender, within a revolutionary ecological frame. My objective is to theorize the origins and outcomes of contemporary patterns of economic and cultural oppression in the U.S., including the polarizing tendencies of contemporary authoritarian populism and its design of discord[7] here and abroad. I desire to focus our political engagement in ways that can actually eliminate the injury and suffering involved. Political progress requires that we are able to identify what we are against and explain why. Just as importantly, we need a strategy to negate the negations and go on the offensive for the changes we are for that can support and extend race and gender equality, labor freedom, economic abundance, peace, and communal well-being.

Chapter 1, "Ecology of Commonwealth: Racial Equality, Women's Equality, Liberation of Labor, Restoration of Nature, Leisure, Abundance, and Peace," develops Marcuse's perspective on the dialectical rationality of philosophy and critical social theory. In accordance with the logic of critical political economy and the radical socialism, he spells out, the "utopian" vision of a new world system. Advanced industrial society, functioning at the highest levels of technology and productivity, blocks this alternative, yet it shows that a new intercultural architecture of commonwealth production, ownership, and stewardship can bring to fruition, within the realm of necessity, the revolutionary goals of rehumanization (disalienation): economic and political equality, labor freedom, ecological balance, leisure, abundance, and peace.

Core features of the ecological writing of Herbert Marcuse will be joined to the environmental thinking of one of America's foremost conservationists, Aldo Leopold, and to Hungarian Marxist, Georg Lukács, whose critique of reactionary thinking and analysis of racist ideology are essential to what I have termed the "ecology of commonwealth" or the "GreenCommonWealth paradigm." I see

this alternative vision as vital to the eventual building of a new world system. I articulate in the course of this chapter countermeasures against "the system transformation that now appears to be developing—a transformation that may be replacing parliamentary democracies by right-wing nationalist repressive regimes in many countries."[8] Paying particular attention to the structural and systemic origins of today's build-up of authoritarian populism and the intensifying use of racism and sexism as economic and political weapons, I will recall Marcuse's critique of pure tolerance and offer a new political and philosophical perspective drawing on Marcuse's radical socialist intellectual legacy.

Chapter 2, "The Trajectory of Marcuse's Philosophy," traces the arc of Marcuse's philosophical journey from the literary-aesthetic orientation of his student years just after World War I, through the writings on ontology and dialectics of the 1930s, his anti-Nazi studies for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the U.S. State Department in the 1940s, to his 1960s fame and radical intellectual impact, up to the final writings on art, education, and ecology of the late 1970s just before his death. Marcuse's life and philosophical work offer powerful theoretical and practical leverage in our mobilization for the future of freedom that is every human being's birthright. This retrospective establishes how Marcuse developed his insights into the dialectical rationality of philosophy and radical socialism as humanism as well as revolutionary ecological liberation.

Chapter 3, "The Activist Political Legacy of *One-Dimensional Man*" contextualizes Marcuse's magnum opus, *One-Dimensional Man,* in terms of a discussion of ten newly discovered guest lectures Marcuse presented in Paris (in 1974) and around the U.S. These stress the latent power of the radical opposition to global capitalism. The chapter also elucidates in particular ODM's underappreciated optimism in accordance with what he sees as the rationality of philosophy and the fuller reality of concept of human essence. It develops a political appreciation for ODM's exploration of the technological and intellectual warrants that undergird a utopian future for humanity in a new world system actualizing the radical promise of a socialist commonwealth.

Chapter 4, "A Foundation for Ethics in Commonwealth Labor," illumines a latent historical materialism in Marcuse's early writings on the nature of human essence, which are customarily regarded as having almost exclusively Heideggerian and phenomenological qualities and methods. I will stress his underappreciated insights into the power of sensuous living labor to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation in order to make commonwealth a universal human condition. As Marcuse emphasizes, labor here is not to be reduced to any form of class circumstance. Sensuous living labor is the substrate of our being as humans. It is the foundation of our affective and intellectual capacities (and vulnerabilities), bio-ecologically developed within history. As a species we have endured because of our sensuous appreciation of our emergent powers: the power to subsist cooperatively; to create, communicate, and care communally within what Marx called a *Gemeinwesen* and that I call a commonwealth.

Chapter 5, "Dialectics Rising: Science, Philosophy, Marxism, Marcuse" steps back to gain a wider view of the development of the philosophical problem Marcuse knew was central to human history and human liberation: theoretical explanation and its relation to reality. Our ability to understand the contradictions and dynamics of material economic structures is pivotal to our critical assessment of the vicissitudes of alienation theory, reification, and the commodity fetish discussed in Chapter 6 below. Likewise, they revolve around Hegel's contention that history, not mathematics or positivism, is the model of scholarship and science. Therefore, this chapter traces the broad outlines of the intellectual emergence of the view (central to philosophical rationality) that not only social life, but also the natural world must be understood historically, dialectically, ecologically, in terms of its patterns of geological change and bio-ecological development. My reconstruction of these interconnected views culminates in what I contend has been an ongoing tendency toward a dialectification of method in science and philosophy. From Plato to Kant—from Renaissance humanism to the Frankfurt School—we have learned that knowledge comes not simply through the senses but is mediated through intelligent exertions toward explication and explanation in theory. Most importantly, dialectical and historical reality is *obdurate* even if also changing and not immediately evident. This world must not be misapprehended through subjectivist or relativist fallacies. Yet competing theories of dialectics have emerged even within the Marxist frame. These require detailed analysis and evaluation in order to establish reliable warrants for radical social change in the direction of revolutionary ecological liberation.

Chapter 6, "What Makes Critical Theory *Critical*? Reclaiming the Critique of Commodity Fetishism," follows through on a pivotal research question with regard to the larger tradition of the Frankfurt School as well as Marcuse: It challenges the cornerstone of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and Western Marxism, which is often seen as its philosophical critique of alienation, understood, *not* as a critique of commodity fetishism, but as a critique of *Verdinglichung* (usually translated as *reification*). Certainly, if *Verdinglichung* represented merely a terminological difference with reference to a concept of alienation whose content remained the same, this shift would not be a matter of much analytical concern. This alteration is, however, by no means an inconsequential semantic variation of (what I shall describe below as) Marx's notion of reification as capitalism's fetish with commodities and commodity production, as this appears in *Capital* Volume One. Such distinctions make all the difference in revolutionary strategy and in terms of a radical socialist humanism.

Chapter 7, "Ecology and Revolution: A Global Alliance of Transformational Forces," demonstrates that revolutionary ecological action pivots on the fulcrum of radical political economy and in particular upon its critique of the commercial fetish with commodities. The material foundation for the persistence of economic want, political unfreedom, and ecological distress, is commodity-dependency. Necessities of life are available to the public nearly exclusively as commodities through market

mechanisms based upon profitability to producers and consumers' ability to pay. Commodified existence is not natural; it is contrived. It is built upon production for exchange value rather than use value, upon profitable waste and environmental degradation. I emphasize here how the transformation of commodified human labor into public work, i.e. work that aims at the public good rather than private accumulation (Boyte and Kari 1996), undergirds progressive political advance. Such work expands areas of the economy traditionally considered the public domain, the public sphere, the commonwealth: social needs-oriented projects like libraries, parks, utilities, the media, telephone service, postal service, transportation, social services, especially care for the young and the elderly. The decommodification of production overall supplies a socialist alternative its economic and ecological viability.

Marcuse emphasized that

> Marxism must risk defining freedom in such a way that people become conscious of and recognize it as something that is nowhere already in existence. However, precisely because the so-called utopian possibilities are not at all utopian [in the sense of impossible—CR] but rather the determinate sociohistorical negation of what exists, a very real and very pragmatic opposition is required of us.
>
> *(Marcuse 1970b, 69)*

This opposition is the negation of production according to the commodity fetish, and it is this critical negation that I have incorporated into a Green-CommonWealth Counter-Offensive.

> All the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand. That they are not used for that purpose is to be attributed to the total mobilization of the existing society against its own potential for liberation.
>
> *(Marcuse 1970b, 64)*

"Today radical opposition can be considered only in a global framework" (Marcuse 1970a, 83). Marcuse's materialist interpretation of human nature as sensuous living labor assists a labor-based opposition today to also express the "social force of a new general interest" (Marcuse 1970a, 90). Hence, this last chapter focuses on strategy that can take the offensive to build a global alliance of transformational forces.

The real possibilities projected by Marcuse, blocked today by objective conditions, nonetheless offer a common ground program for revolution by opposing the forces of exploitation and waste on multiple fronts. This concluding chapter provides a discussion of concrete forms of the Great Refusal as a global alliance of transformational forces in pursuit of a life-affirming and humanist future of intercultural solidarity within a new eco-socialist political order.

Notes

1 Henry A. Giroux, *The Public ~~in~~ Peril: Trump and the Menace of American Authoritarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2018) p. 291.
2 Herbert Marcuse, [1974] 2015. *Paris Lectures at Vincennes University, 1974*. Edited by Peter-Erwin Jansen and Charles Reitz. (Philadelphia, PA: International Herbert Marcuse Society) p. 49.
3 I utilize the terms *new world system, systemic, generative system, systems analysis, ecosystem*, etc., in a manner of my own, independent of the analytical legacy of Immanuel Wallerstein; so too I have developed my own emphasis on the centrality of radical political economy to critical education and revolutionary practice world-wide. Wallerstein's work has much to offer in terms of system comprehension and problem diagnosis; it is not to be rejected. I draw instead on Marcuse's work because it offers real transformational insight, not only into how things stand and what we are up against, but also into what we are for. More on my critique of Wallerstein in notes to Chapter 1.
4 See BBC News, "Laos: Barack Obama regrets 'biggest bombing in history,'" September 7, 2016. "President Obama described Laos as the most heavily bombed nation in history. Eight bombs a minute were dropped on average during the Vietnam war between 1964 and 1973—more than the amount used during the whole of World War Two." http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37286520 retrieved April 22, 2018.
5 Coral Davenport, "Climate Change Denialists in Charge," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2017, A19. Each of these appointees is committed to dismantling the environmental mission of his department, but each may also be soon out of office for ethics violations with regard to lavish expenditures for travel, furnishings, etc., and questionable personnel practices. On Scott Pruitt's difficulties see "Officials at E.P.A. Raised Concerns and Were Ousted: Pushback on Expenses," *The New York Times*, April 6, 2018, A1. Pruitt was in fact forced to resign in early July 2018.
6 Published first in 2016 in *New Political Science,* Robert Kirsch and Sarah Surak (Guest Eds.), Vol. 38, No. 4. Also published in Kirsch and Surak's *Marcuse in the Twenty-First Century: Radical Politics, Critical Theory, and Revolutionary Praxis* (New York: Routledge, 2017).
7 See Elwin H. Powell, "Revolution Aborted, Society Sacralized, Class War in Buffalo, 1910–1920," in *The Design of Discord* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). After WWI many and diverse forces clamored for progressive social reform, even revolution. Powell discusses the role of the media in the mobilization of bias against immigrants and radicals during "Red Scare" in Buffalo, NY, and role of the local and federal (i.e. FBI) police-state tactics of intimidation and deportation in the Palmer Raids. Emphatic counterrevolutionary Americanism, patriotism, and white supremacy, reinforced the "sanctity of the prevailing order of society."
8 David M. Kotz, "Social Structure of Accumulation Theory, Marxist Theory, and System Transformation," *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 2017, Volume 49, Number 4, p. 534.

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1

ECOLOGY OF COMMONWEALTH

Racial Equality, Women's Equality, Liberation of Labor, Restoration of Nature, Leisure, Abundance, and Peace

> [A]uthentic freedom, i.e. freedom from the reactionary prejudices of the imperialist era (not merely in the sphere of art), cannot possibly be attained through mere spontaneity or by persons unable to break through the confines of their own immediate experience. For as capitalism develops, the continuous production and reproduction of these reactionary prejudices is intensified and accelerated, not to say consciously promoted by the imperialist bourgeoisie. So if we are ever going to be able to understand the way in which reactionary ideas infiltrate our minds, and achieve a critical distance from such prejudices, this can only be accomplished by hard work, by abandoning and transcending the limits of immediacy, by scrutinizing all subjective experiences and measuring them against social reality. In short it can only be achieved by a deeper probing of the real world.
>
> —*Georg Lukács ([1938] 1980, 37)*

The critical Marxist philosopher, Georg Lukács, understood in the 1938 run-up to Germany's reactionary Nazi politics, that opposition to the nationalist, antisemitic, and racist prejudices of fascism's rising authoritarian populism required "a deeper probing of the real world." This meant that the origins of reactionary prejudice required theoretical understanding. From 1944–1950 critical social theorists, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, working with the American Jewish Committee, published a five-volume series, *Studies in Prejudice*. The fifth volume, *Prophets of Deceit,* written by Leo Löwenthal and Norbert Guterman, was furnished with a foreword by Herbert Marcuse when it was re-issued in paperback in 1970. Like Lukács in 1938, Marcuse stresses that any mobilization of bias must be understood concretely within the social context of contradictory economic and political conditions (see Jansen 2013).

The Counterrevolutionary Context

Today, perhaps more than ever, we must examine the conditions that perpetuate the increasingly stressed and volatile realities of our political, economic, and cultural lives. Global finance capital is in crisis. So too are the economic worlds of "the 99 percent" in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Critical theorizing requires that we investigate the networks of determinants underlying systems and sub-systems of global capitalist domination. What follows braids together compressed accounts of my research exertions over the last few years to do just that.

Forty years ago, Marcuse warned of the global economic and cultural developments that are now much more obvious given capitalism's crescendo of economic failures since 2008. Political and philosophical tendencies that are often referred to as "neoliberalism" and/or "neo-conservatism" in much analytical work today, Marcuse clearly understood back then as organized counter-revolution (Marcuse 1972).

Marcuse (1972) saw preventive counterrevolution as an assault undertaken by an increasingly predatory capitalism against liberal democratic change, not to mention the radical opposition ([1975] 1987a, 172).

> The Western world has reached a new stage of development: now, the defense of the capitalist system requires the organization of counterrevolution at home and abroad …. Torture has become a normal instrument of "interrogation" around the world …. even Liberals are not safe if they appear as too liberal.
>
> *(Marcuse 1972, 1)*

This was well before the post-9/11 era of U.S. counter-terrorism. Today this entails: the police-state U.S.A. Patriot Act, global "Terror War" (Kellner 2003), a "money-is-speech" Supreme Court, and intensifying political economic inequalities. Marcuse understood the capitalist state is an expression of material inequalities, never neutral, having been captured by the forces of class, race, and gender exploitation. Within the current forms of unfreedom that are yet called democracies, real crimes by the right (years before 9/11, as well as in its aftermath) are tolerated by the state in practice—such as systematic police brutality, depriving millions of Americans from comprehensive health care, treating asylum seekers as criminals, implementing the death penalty in a racially biased manner, supplying arms and training to governments and armed groups around the world that commit torture, political killings, and other human rights abuses, etc. (Amnesty International, 1998).

Henry A. Giroux (2018) has summed up the nature of America's current political plight in duly vivid prose:

> Mainstream politics is now dominated by hard-right extremists who have brought to the center of politics a shameful white-supremacist ideology,

> poisonous xenophobic ideas, and the blunt, malicious tactics of Islamophobia. On the other side of the political spectrum, the Democratic Party operates in the service of the war machine, financial elite, and various registers of the military–industrial–academic–surveillance complex.
>
> *(Giroux 2018, 3)*

Today the Alt-Right, much like its precursor in the pre-9/11 New Right, is asserting a putative political need for a democratic society to maintain an absolute tolerance of abusive and even assaultive speech—as protected forms of "dissent." According to my colleague, David Brodsky, if we all have a *de jure* right to express any opinion in public, the *de facto* condition is that left opinions are usually marginalized and often suppressed, while right-wing ones, which benefit the ruling class, are given free play. "This pure tolerance of sense and nonsense" practiced under the conditions prevailing in the United States today "cannot fulfill the civilizing function attributed to it by the liberal protagonists of democracy, namely protection of dissent" (Marcuse 1965a, 94, 117). "To treat the great crusades against humanity … with the same impartiality as the desperate struggles for humanity means neutralizing their opposite historical function, reconciling the executioners with their victims, distorting the record" (Marcuse 1965a, 113).

No "Pure Tolerance" of Hate Speech

In 1965, Marcuse called out what is now more widely recognized as "the free speech fallacy" (Stanley 2016). The Right is now using "[t]he charge of imperiling free speech … to silence oppressed and marginalized groups and to push back against their interests" (Stanley 2016). Marcuse's partisanship is clear:

> The small and powerless minorities which struggle against the false consciousness and its beneficiaries must be helped: their continued existence is more important than the preservation of abused rights and liberties which grant constitutional powers to those who oppress these minorities.
>
> *(Marcuse 1965a, 110)*

Given also the contemporary heightened awareness of the regularity of police killings of unarmed black men in the U.S. after incidents such as Ferguson, Sacramento, Baltimore, Cleveland, New York City, and elsewhere, Marcuse's condemnation of the rhetoric and violence of systemic racism demands renewed attention. In 1965, Marcuse condemned the violence that actually prevails in the ostensibly peaceful centers of civilization: "it is practiced by the police, in the prisons and the mental institutions, in the fight against racial minorities … . This violence indeed breeds violence" (Marcuse 1965a, 105).

During the mid-1960s, Marcuse met Brandeis student Angela Davis, and began an intellectual/political relationship that lasted well-beyond her student years

(Davis 2013; 2004). He published "Repressive Tolerance," at that time (1965a), and dedicated it to students at Brandeis. This contains insights and elements that make it extremely pertinent as we debate how to best protect human rights in this era of acrid backlash against the progress of the multicultural/intercultural education reform movement.

Writing of the Nazi organizers of institutionalized violence, Marcuse said:

> if democratic tolerance had been withdrawn when the future leaders started their campaign, mankind would have had a chance of avoiding Auschwitz and a World War … . Such extreme suspension of the right of free speech and free assembly is indeed justified only if the whole of society is in extreme danger … . Withdrawal of tolerance from regressive movements *before* they can become active; intolerance even toward thought, opinion, and word, and finally intolerance in the opposite direction, that is toward the self-styled conservatives, to the political Right—these anti-democratic notions respond to the actual development of the democratic society which has destroyed the basis for universal tolerance. The conditions under which tolerance can again become a liberating force have still to be created.
>
> *(Marcuse 1965a, 110–111)*

Right-wing champions of an abstract First Amendment freedom, like Kors and Silverglate (1998) and Horowitz (2006a; 2006b; 2000), acquiesce when confronted with evidence of the discriminatory effects of abusive speech. They do not seem to think that an absolute right to abusive speech is profoundly problematic in a culture like ours where there is no shortage of verbal vilification and acts of race and gender persecution. In sharp contrast Marcuse believed that the doctrine of pure tolerance was systematically utilized by reactionary and liberal forces to abuse equality guarantees and derail or destroy the possibility of democratic egalitarianism (Marcuse 1965a).

More recently, a strategy for the defense of equal civil rights and intercultural solidarity with victims of hate speech has been developed by authors like Dolores Calderón (2006); Christine Sleeter and Dolores Delgado Bernal (2003); Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (1997); Mari Matsuda, Charles Lawrence, Richard Delgado and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1993); and John K. Wilson (1995). They claim that freedom of speech is not absolute and must be viewed in the context of its real political consequences.

Donald Trump's presidency has brought these issues to the fore, full force, in 2017:

> Donald Trump has a particular taste for the degradation of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities and women … as a way of personal sense of racial, sexist, and patriarchal entitlement. And as he degrades, he plays to those very same entitlements in the base that elected him.[1]

Despite Trump's individual psychology or pathology, it is the system's politics, at work here. Recall the general thinking of the Frankfurt School on this matter: that fascism [or neo-fascist authoritarian populism today] is capitalism with the mask off, summed up in Max Horkheimer's warning ([1939] 1989) that political and psychological theories unwilling to criticize capitalism have little of value to say about fascism. The political system unleashes the "new normal" through changes in the media, the law, the economy, education, etc. Trump's ascendency is only the most recent brash expression of the predatory political economy of race, class, and gender—and the earth-killing tendencies latent in the essential contradictions of capitalism. My work here, unlike other social critics today, is *not* about Trump,[2] it is about the challenge and necessity of a new world system.[3]

Today radical social science understands that incidents of bigotry or interpersonal discrimination are largely conditioned by underlying social forces and structures. Individual acts and prejudiced rhetoric are the tip of the iceberg; below the surface is the real social substance of racial discrimination. For example: the institutional realities of inequality in housing, employment, education, health care, media, law enforcement, etc. also serve as material agents of socialization, simultaneously generating overt and covert awareness of privilege for some, and a kind of caste status for those directly abused. Established legal and economic forces since the days of ancient Rome had the power to censure individuals and groups and disqualify them from civil rights based on a hegemonic determination that the target group's mode of living was supposedly disreputable, "infamous" (Grabiner & Grabiner 1982; Franklin 2000).[4] This official stigmatization and degradation, known in Rome as infamy, could happen to prisoners of war turned into slaves (a debased group that was nonetheless an economic asset within the system of exploitation). A residue of this hegemonic shaming mechanism has persisted through American slavery to this country's subsequent social history of Jim Crow. Until 1967, *de jure* (legally enforceable) separation of the "races" persisted in one-third of the United States; *de facto* separation in the others (in housing, jobs, schools, marriage, etc). As Chief Justice Earl Warren explained the U.S. Supreme Court's reasoning in the *Brown* decision, which reversed a century of legal governmental enforcement of school segregation, racial isolation generated among these black children "a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community."[5] School segregation represented a kind of mass institutionalized shaming and disgracing of these black students which the Supreme Court in 1954 was no longer willing to regard as constitutional, though it had done so explicitly since 1896 (*Plessy vs. Ferguson*). Despite wide-spread and militant demands for black civil rights extension, highly placed political resistance to change ensured decades of institutional inertia and the persistence of caste-like societal relations. Hegemonic power finds that it can utilize the stigmatization of the caste-like "other" to consolidate an "in group" sense of identity and superiority.

Over recent decades the income, wealth, and power of the most parasitic elements of the U.S. economy and military have grown excessively relative to the

system's total output. Meanwhile, components of the system's productive forces (e.g. infrastructure, labor force skills, the global ecosystem) are being underreproduced, its "surplus" population stigmatized, suffocated, crushed. Racial animosity and anti-immigrant scapegoating have once again been orchestrated in service to this system, just as they were during the 1930's Depression, the 1950's McCarthy period, the 1960's civil rights era and the anti-Vietnam War movement. Earlier in the 20th century, after World War I in the U.S. during the so-called Red Scare and Palmer Raids, the "sanctity of the prevailing order of society"[6] was enforced through waves of governmentally-orchestrated counterrevolutionary patriotism, anti-immigrant Americanism, and resurgent white supremacy. Federal, state, and local governments in 1919 demonstrated that nothing was sacred when it came to the deportations of immigrants, criminal frame-ups of radicals, not to mention the mass lynching in Arkansas of 237 black men—unionizing sharecroppers and the returning black veterans supporting them.[7]

It is easy to blame individuals rather than institutions for resurgent racism:

> Today's American fascists are far less educated than the fascists of the Third Reich, and they're proud of their ignorance—they're defiantly stupid and mediocre and resentful of hard working educated people of color, immigrants, and women. And that defiant ignorance has gotten into the American bloodstream.[8]

Still, dynamic structural interconnections and real material interdependencies exist in society and in nature. We must be able to envision, even from the debilitating conditions of the present, intelligent choices about real possibilities for our future.

Intercultural Solidarity versus the Resurgence of Race, Class, and Gender Oppression

The Frankfurt School's critical theory is sometimes criticized as having a narrowly Eurocentric focus (see Farr 2017; Outlaw 2013; Gandler 1999). This criticism is apt, but there is something more that remains to be appreciated. Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM 1964) actually opened up a proto-multicultural expansion of critical theory's perspective. Marcuse made a special effort to encompass certain broadly critical projects already underway in the U.S., like the demystification of the vaunted myths of affluence and melting pot assimilation in American life (see Gordon 1964). Marcuse understood the reigning Anglo-conformity and WASP patriotism and militarism in the U.S., as well as its economic instrumentalism, as single-dimensional insofar as these were oblivious to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations. If abundance for all was a capacity of advanced industrial society, this was effectively cancelled by forces of capitalism, while affluence for some was the privilege of the propertied. "In the

contemporary era, the conquest of scarcity is still confined to small areas of advanced industrial society. Their prosperity covers up the Inferno inside and outside their borders" (Marcuse 1964, 241); see also Marcuse's address, "Liberation from the Affluent Society" ([1967] 1968). Marcuse understood the limits of liberal democracy (Farr 2009, 119–136), and how the notion of the "affluent society" actually masked a gravely unequal, patriarchal, and monocultural form of domination. Of course, the conventional wisdom within the nation itself was largely oblivious to its own racism and other forms of prejudice. In many ways it continues to be.

This volume proposes a vision of intercultural solidarity against the resurgent politics of race, class, and gender characteristic of preventive counterrevolution and authoritarian populism. By a "solidarity system, I mean a non-hierarchical, non-exploitative, equitable set of economic relationships and activities geared toward the grassroots—that's of the people (people before profit), indigenous, participatory, based on human needs, humane values, and ecological sustainability" (Nembhard 2016). Further, the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) recognized racist and authoritarian dangers in the aftermath of World War II, and clearly articulated an egalitarian and antiracist defense of human rights (see especially its Preamble and Articles 1 & 2). In the context of the United States today, using the First Amendment to protect the speech and action of those intent upon destroying the liberty rights and civil rights of others is a clear infringement of the principle of universality also embedded in these provisions.

The year 1963, just before ODM's publication, marked the culmination of the U.S. civil rights movement with its black-led (i.e. SCLC, CORE, and SNCC) bus boycotts, lunch-counter sit-ins, freedom rides, voter registration campaigns, and the March on Washington. These anti-racism efforts also involved the support of many radical and progressive whites, especially students. In 1964, in ODM, given the background of recent and high profile lynchings, bombings, and murders of blacks in the U.S. (Emmett Till; Medgar Evers, the four girls in Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist church), Marcuse wrote: "Those whose life is the hell of the Affluent Society are kept in line by a brutality which revives medieval and early modern practices" (Marcuse 1964, 23). As Nina Simone was singing "Mississippi Goddamn" and castigating the "United Snakes of America," ODM concluded:

> underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors … Their opposition hits the system from without … it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game. When they get together and go out into the streets, without arms, without protection, in order to ask for the most primitive civil rights, they know that they face dogs, stones, and bombs, jail, concentration camps, even death … The critical theory of society …

> wants to remain loyal to those who, without hope, have given and give their life to the Great Refusal.
>
> *(Marcuse 1964, 257)*

Above and beyond Marcuse's admiration for the leadership and grit of the U.S. civil rights movement, Marcuse stressed that New Left radicals were not only conscious of a socialist economy's potential to eliminate want and misery, they put a new emphasis on quality of life, not just a secure subsistence. Marcuse prized this "emergence in the individual of needs and satisfactions which can no longer be fulfilled within the framework of the capitalist system, although they were generated by the capitalist system itself" (Marcuse [1974] 2015b, 53). These included the struggle for the restoration of nature, women's equality, racial equality, and elimination of profitable waste, planned obsolescence, destruction (Marcuse 1972, 17; [1966–1976] 2017, 30).

> [W]hat is at stake in the socialist revolution is not merely the extension of satisfaction within the existing universe of needs, nor the shift of satisfaction from one (lower) level to a higher one, but the rupture with this universe, the *qualitative leap*. The revolution involves a radical transformation of the needs and aspirations themselves, cultural as well as material; of consciousness and sensibility; of the work process as well as leisure. The transformation appears in the fight against the fragmentation of work, the necessity and productivity of stupid performances and stupid merchandise, against the acquisitive bourgeois individual, against the servitude in the guise of technology, deprivation in the guise of the good life, against pollution as a way of life. Moral and aesthetic needs become basic, vital needs and drive toward new relationships between the sexes, between the generations, between men and women and nature. Freedom is understood as rooted in these needs, which are sensuous, ethical, and rational in one.
>
> *(Marcuse 1972, 16–17)*

Marcuse links the transvaluation of values to radical system change. Kellner (1984, 339) notes that the transvaluation of values represented the new Reality Principle that Marcuse projected in *Eros and Civilization*. An echo of Nietzsche's critique of any morality of subservience—this was an "Umwertung aller Werte" [revaluation of values] in the direction of a greater appreciation for joy, exuberance, and freedom in living (Reitz 2017). Marcuse was among the earliest radical writers to focus on issues of ecological ruin, see especially his "Ecology and Revolution" ([1972] 2005), which I have mentioned above. Given the general destructiveness of modern society, Marcuse recognizes the need for a reconciliation of alienated humanity with the natural world, a pacification of the struggle for existence. In his estimation this requires a change in the conditioned needs of individuals—away from those generated by the mechanism of repressive desublimation, which promises compensatory satisfactions for a totally commercialized and commodified life—toward new

sensibilities. The existing structure of needs was then, and is now, being subverted by discontent, awakening, upheavals (Pedram 2016, 19).

Discontent from the Left: Marcuse's New Sensibility

As early as 1975 Marcuse maintains:

> [C]apitalism destroys itself as it progresses! Therefore no reforms make sense. The notion that the society, as a whole is sick, destructive, hopelessly outdated, has found popular expression: "loss of faith" in the system; decline in the work ethic, refusal to work, etc. … . The general form of the internal contradictions of capitalism has never been more blatant, more cruel, more costly of human lives and happiness. And—this is the significance of the Sixties—this blatant irrationality has not only penetrated the consciousness of a large part of the population, it has also caused, mainly among the young people, a radical transformation of needs and values which may prove to be incompatible with the capitalist system, its hierarchy, priorities, morality, symbols (the counter-culture, ecology).
>
> *(Marcuse [1975] 2015a, 304–307)*

This is from Marcuse's 1975 typescript "Why Talk on Socialism?" discovered in the Frankfurt Marcuse Archive and published for the first time in 2013 (Marcuse in Reitz [2013] 2015b). Marcuse's philosophy, practically from the beginning, addressed the deep roots of the capitalist system's functioning and its crisis: the commodification of labor, burgeoning inequality, wasted abundance (especially in war), lives without meaningful purpose. The inadequacy of one-dimensional American liberalism was its obliviousness to the problematic nature of prevailing social and economic relations and its suffocation and repression of life's internal inconsistencies and contradictions. Yet pockets of protest emerged within it, and created a New Sensibility comprising an oppositional philosophy and politics:

> [Changed] needs are present, here and now. They permeate the lives of individuals … . First the need for drastically reducing socially necessary alienated labor and replacing it with creative work. Second, the need for autonomous free time instead of directed leisure. Third, the need for an end of role playing. Fourth, the need for receptivity, tranquillity and abounding joy, instead of the constant noise of production… . The specter which haunts advanced industrial society today is the obsolescence of full-time alienation.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 211)*

It is very telling that Marcuse's essay, "Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society," frames his discussion of a destructive and authoritarian personality structure within "the concerted power of big capital" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 212), just as Lukács advised at the start of this chapter:

> [T]he destructive character structure so prominent in our society today, must be seen in the context of the institutionalized destructiveness characteristic of both foreign and domestic affairs. This institutionalized destructiveness is well-known, and examples thereof are easy to provide. They include the constant increase in the military budget at the expense of social welfare, the proliferation of nuclear installations, the general poisoning and polluting of our life environment, the blatant subordination of human rights to the requirements of global strategy, and the threat of war in case of a challenge to this strategy. This institutionalized destruction is both open and legitimate. It provides the context within which the individual reproduction of destructiveness takes place.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 207)*

In his analysis there is no separation between individual psychology and social psychology: "[T]he potential forces of social change are there. Those forces present the potential for emergence of a character structure in which emancipatory drives gain ascendency over compensatory ones" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 210).

> Can we now speculate, against Freud, that the striving for a state of freedom from pain pertains to Eros, to the life instincts, rather than to the death instinct? If so, this wish for fulfillment would attain its goal not in the beginning of life, but in the flowering and maturity of life. It would serve, not as a wish to return, but as a wish to progress. It would serve to protect and enhance life itself. The drive for painlessness, for the pacification of existence, would then seek fulfillment in protective care for living things. It would find fulfillment in the recapture and restoration of our life environment, and in the restoration of nature, both external and within human beings. This is just the way in which I view today's environmental movement, today's ecology movement. The ecology movement reveals itself in the last analysis as a political and psychological movement of liberation. It is political because it confronts the concerted power of big capital, whose vital interests the movement threatens. It is psychological because (and this is a most important point) the pacification of external nature, the protection of the life-environment, will also pacify nature within men and women. A successful environmentalism will, within individuals, subordinate destructive energy to erotic energy.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 212)*

Marcuse explains that a politicization of erotic energy has resulted in the appearance of new goals, new behavior, new language in movements for radical social change. The individual's New Sensibility may well even energize protest and "counteract the neglect of the individual found in traditional radical practice" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 210).

Today we are acutely aware of our interconnectedness to the planet and the damaging role played by rapacious imperialism. The promise of the Green-CommonWealth alternative is that of socio-cultural equality and sustainable political-economic abundance. An increasingly awakened working population is aware of the intensifying racism and sexism in our epoch of rising social injustice: that racism and sexism are economic weapons with deep and grotesque consequences (past and present) as part of the capital accumulation process; that white privilege and male privilege have functioned primarily to secure the dominance of the 1 percent while politically dividing the 99 percent of working humanity against itself.

The social movements of our age have been its civilizing forces. BLM [Black Lives Matter] has effectively educated the nation about the cavalier use of racist deadly force (on and off the campus) and the real nature of undemocratic governance. So too, the uprising of women in the "Me Too," "Time's Up," "She Persisted," movements are teaching us all of the deep and longstanding patterns of insult, abuse, and violence present in the prevailing patriarchal institutions of employment, education, politics and the media in the U.S. The organized social struggles against racism, sexism, poverty, war, and imperialism, have educated wide swaths of this country's population outside traditional classrooms about the structural foundations of alienation and oppression, power and empowerment. Sociologist Lauren Langman has written much about Marcuse, social change, and social movements:

> [E]merging forms of subjectivity, among the younger cohorts—with values and identities that were clearly set in motion by the various movements of the 1960s … seek to transform society in the future by articulating alternative values, identities, and lifestyles in the present. Much of what was considered radical, if not deviant, in the 1960s, giving rise to both political mobilizations and a counterculture, is now relatively normative throughout the society.
>
> *(Langman 2017)*

The Workforce as Resource with Strategic Power

As I see it, the "New Social Movements" around the globe at the start of the 21st century learned to ally crucially with labor. I am making the case that the latent emancipatory power of labor is axial to revolutionary theory and praxis. The militant anti-globalization action in Seattle 1999 against corporate capitalism, the World Trade Organization, and other international financial institutions, united "teamsters and turtles," activist elements of organized labor in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world with environmental organizations, in a massive confrontation with the paramilitary police power that protected the representatives of global capital as they consolidated their payroll-slashing and earth-bashing investment

strategies, through outsourcing and the "race to the bottom." In 2001, a similar confrontation occurred in Genoa, Italy. This was one of the most enormous demonstrations against global finance capital Europe had seen in years. The 2011 and 2012 anti-austerity uprisings in Athens, Rome, Madrid, and elsewhere were equally spectacular and militant. So too the massive student protests against tuition increases in Montreal, Quebec during March, May, and August 2012. These struggles echo the worker-student protests in Paris 1968, and the new forms of political-economic thinking emergent from the now regular meetings of the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil and elsewhere. Then there are also the left populist movements of SYRIZA in Greece, Podemos in Spain, and even the Bernie Sanders campaign in the United States.

Human society reproduces itself through the process of labor. In the history of human modes of labor in each case labor is a social process. For the longest period of human history labor has been a communal project of social beings to meet human needs. Human brains and hands are not only tools of labor but the products of labor. The basic economic challenge is: how do we generate and sustain the flourishing of human existence and culture? How do we, and the world, work together best? What are the purposes of labor and production—meeting communal human needs or accumulating unbounded private property? Philosophy's deep and systemic moral and political questions involve the nature of the good life and the good society. What are our highest abilities—speech, cooperative social action, caring, intellectual and emotional empathy, wisdom? How does critical economics help us reclaim our common humanity?

Communal labor has historically sustained communal human life and human development. When commodified, labor's wealth-creating activity is no longer a good in itself. The overall "value" of the activity of the workforce, governed by capitalist property relations, is reduced to its aggregate payroll. It is never fully remunerated for its contribution to the production process precisely because its contribution, when commodified through the labor market, is reduced to the equivalent of the cost of labor force reproduction (i.e. subsistence), and the "surplus" is appropriated as property by powerful non-producers. Classical political economy (Ricardo, then Marx) called the pressures upon the "value" of commodified labor to drop to bare subsistence income the iron law of wages. As Marcuse clearly saw, there can be no rehumanization of society and social philosophy without the decommodification of labor.

This first chapter will attempt to furnish the beginnings of a more comprehensive critical social theory stressing the centrality of labor in our future political-economic and moral order. My thesis is that there is a commonwealth promise at the core of humanity's material reality as sensuous living labor. I have connected the theory of commonwealth developed here to the axial values of world's wisdom traditions. An alternative world system, an intercultural labor force humanism, is not only necessary, it is feasible: it is the gravitational center holding social life together despite flare ups and explosions caused by the massive

forces of careening corporate capitalism. The labor force must rely upon itself and the world's commonwealth traditions to mobilize its fullest revolutionary power.

Only the labor force, as a broadly conceived group, has a legitimate right to the political leadership of the commonwealth system of governance upon which it is built. This right of the commonwealth to govern itself, and humanity's earliest ethic of holding property in common, derive only secondarily from factual individual contributions to production; they are rooted primarily in our essentially shared species nature as humans (i.e. as sensuous living labor) when this nature is comprehended in terms of our communal heritage and our communal future.

Marcuse is noted for his contention that labor, narcotized and anaesthetized by consumerism and in collusion with business priorities, lacks a critical appreciation of the potential of its own politics to transform the established order. With the publication of *One-Dimensional Man* Marcuse consolidated his key and characteristic argument that U.S. culture is politically and economically unfree. "Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole" (Marcuse 1964, 2). We are socialized to "submit to the peaceful production of the means of destruction, to the perfection of waste, to being educated for a defense which deforms the defenders and that which they defend" (Marcuse 1964, ix). Thus, the lack of resistance to the advanced industrial order by the working class and others.

> By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic political coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.
>
> *(Marcuse 1964, 3)*

The critical Marxism of ODM sought to break through the "pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose" (Marcuse 1964, 19). He maintained that the most important duty of the intellectual was to investigate destructive social circumstances—and be engaged in activities of transformation toward justice and peace (Marcuse [1975] 1987a, 182). "The fact that the vast majority of the population accepts, and is made to accept, this society does not render it less irrational and less reprehensible" (Marcuse 1964, xiii).

Marcuse foresaw the end of capitalism precisely at a time of its greatest productive capacities and its greatest wealth accumulations. He believed he could

discern U.S. societal disintegration from what was actually happening in the process of production itself. First, is the increasing unproductivity of those who control "the destructive and wasteful development of the productive forces today" (Marcuse [1974] 2015b, 33). As far back as 1974 he pointed out that the Pentagon was the nation's biggest single industrial enterprise with 14.2 million workers directly or indirectly dependent on military spending. "[I]f you throw together—which as an orthodox Marxist you might well do—unemployment and employment for the military services, you arrive at the following numbers: a total of over 25% of the labor force, i.e. 22.3 million, were either unemployed or dependent on military spending directly or indirectly" (Marcuse [1974] 2015b, 42). This is a capitalism of wasted abundance.[9] This a capitalism with a frantic bourgeoisie aware that the preponderance of congealed labor (capital goods) over living labor is intensifying the tendency of the rate of profit therefore to fall. Never content to receive less than maximal returns, capital is today as always hungry for valorization, seeking yields above average rates of profit. Hence there is wild speculation in search of maximum returns, and investment has also become more and more militarist and predatory; profits are still most soundly generated by wasteful war production. Likewise, any limited prosperity among war production workers is eluding masses of people whose conditions of life are becoming increasingly precarious. While immensely profitable to a fraction of the global 1 percent, the directly human cost of this wasted abundance on soldiers and civilians alike is catastrophic, unrepented, and unatoned for.

Marcuse's Critical Economic Theory: Labor and Alienation

Marcuse developed a critical study of work and social alienation looking at economic activity within the total complexity of other human activities and human existence in general. Marcuse's critical social theory has special relevance to U.S. culture today centering on his analysis of the commodified labor process as a structural source of social inequality and economic crisis, and the power of labor to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation to make commonwealth the human condition. In Chapter 4, I shall expand upon my concept of commonwealth, which I derive from Marcuse's critical philosophy of labor and his radical eco-socialism.

I am seeking to recover Marcuse's philosophy of labor from its relative obscurity and defend his view that the felt needs of sensuous living labor insist upon political movement from the minimal to the radical goals of socialism (Reitz 2016a, 127–128, 155). I also attempt in Chapter 4 to develop a labor theory of ethical action and commonwealth and show how this undergirds Marcuse's desire to rehumanize the labor process and our very mode of existence (Reitz 2016a, 125–148).

"Sensuous living labor" is my term for the elemental form of the human material condition that I find theorized within the social philosophies of Marx

and Marcuse. Labor here is not to be reduced to any form of class circumstance. Sensuous living labor is the substrate of our being as humans. It is the foundation of our affective and intellectual capacities (and vulnerabilities), bio-ecologically developed within history. Sensuous living labor, is thus at the core of such terms as "work force" and "labor force" throughout my writing of this volume.

As a species we have endured because of our sensuous appreciation of our emergent powers: the power to subsist cooperatively; to create, communicate, and care communally within that form of society that I call a commonwealth. Our earliest proverbs, fables, and riddles from the oldest African cultures teach the survival power of partnership and cooperation and the categorical ethical advantages of empathy, reciprocity, hospitality, and respect for the good in common. Humanity experiences the satisfactions / dissatisfactions derived from our bio-ecologically generated economic, aesthetic, intellectual, and moral standards gravitating toward the humanism of a communally laboring commonwealth. Having brought into being these universalizable value criteria (reciprocity, hospitality), our cultural, political, and emotional conditions can be considered authentic (when consistent with the fullest potentials of our species being. i.e what Marx called our *Gattungswesen*) or alienated when social power structurally distorts or denies humanity such authenticity.

If living labor creates all wealth, as John Locke and Adam Smith have maintained, then it creates all the value that is under capitalism distributed as income to labor (wages and salaries) and to capital (rent, interest, dividends, and profit). Marx and Marcuse stressed that labor is a social process, that the value created through labor is most genuinely measured by socially necessary labor time, and its product rightfully belongs to the labor force as a body, not to individuals as such, i.e. grounding a socialist labor theory of ownership and justice.

Marx and Marcuse encompassed the theories of Locke and Smith within a larger philosophy of labor. Where Locke and Smith saw individual labor as the source of private property, in an atomistic (Robinsonian) manner, Marx recognized that all humans are born into a social/ecological context.

Conventional economists contend that profit accrues primarily from entrepreneurial skill, technological innovation, and risk-taking. These factors may increase profit in the short run in a sub-division of any given industry, where fractions of capital compete, yet in the long run the innovative production processes and reduced costs and payrolls become the new social average. What has meaning for an individual entrepreneur does not explain the aggregate picture. Even progressive capitalist voices, from Elizabeth Warren, to Barak Obama, to Yanis Varoufakis, have recently emphasized the extent to which private businesses rely on government investments in infrastructure (public sector or commonwealth resources) to develop new technologies and products. Barak Obama's remark from a 2012 campaign speech: "If you've got a business—you didn't build that"[10] created a furor by challenging the conventional entrepreneurial wisdom. Former Greek finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, did likewise by contending that "If you

take an iPhone apart, every single technology in it was developed by some government grant, every single one."[11] Capital owners and business managers are often oblivious to the unwaged contributions, largely by women, of family care and child care in making participation in the labor force possible, as well as its social reproduction. Other essential contributing factors often taken for granted are the availability of clean water, clean air, and a livable natural (and built) environment. These insights reflect the reality that my colleague and sometimes coauthor, Stephen Spartan, has highlighted within a fuller more radical economic context: that the productive efforts of humanity must be seen within an ecology of commonwealth every bit as much as humanity's distributive efforts.

As Spartan and I see it (Reitz & Spartan [2013] 2015), a commonwealth arrangement of the state and economy means to hold, control, and conserve resources as elements of the public domain. It would distribute incomes without reference to individual productivity, according to need, and as equally as feasible. It would substantially reduce hours of labor and eliminate the for-profit financial industry and rent-seeking as modes of illegitimate privilege. It would foster the well-rounded scientific and multicultural development of the young through socialist general education privileging no single culture or language. The human species is a multicultural species. Certain of these cultures, however, as with the Anglo-American imperium, have displaced and dominated others in contravention of the egalitarian commonwealth principles advocated here.

Real structured interconnection exists in our economic lives. Economic theory can be called critical only if it penetrates beneath empirical economic facts and given ideologies to discern generative economic and labor structures that are neither obvious nor apparent. Usually concealed, the objective structure and dynamics of the value production process will be made visible in their material form in what follows. This crucial dynamic undergirds the over-appropriation of capital and the intensifying dehumanization accompanying the vastly unequal distribution of wealth in the U.S. This accumulation structure is at the root of this country's recurring recessions and economic depressions. The recent global economic dislocations demand a re-thinking of critical theory with greater focus on issues of our economic alienation and dehumanization, the powers of our commonwork and commonwealth, and the rehumanization/intercultural solidarity of world politics.

The fuller potential and power of labor, as recognized by Locke and Smith, challenges the presumption that capital produces value, the view that profit unilaterally accrues as a reward for the contribution of the investor/employer. Labor provides the total value added in the production process.[12] Profit is a subtraction from the overall value produced. A critical appreciation of work turns right side round the empiricist assertion that employers are paying their employees and demonstrates that employ*ees* are paying their employ*ers* (Reitz & Spartan, [2013] 2015). Inequalities of income and wealth have been increasing over the last three decades in the United States, a tendency established well before the 2008 economic fiasco in the banking and real estate industries. Middle range households

have lost the most in absolute terms, about 20 percent of their wealth between 1984 and 2004. These middle range losses are the toll of capitalist globalization and its arbitrage of labor.

The Americanization/globalization of the world-wide economy aims at the overall reduction of payrolls on the global assembly line, no matter the greater levels of manufacturing employment in developing countries. My thesis is that inequality is not simply a matter of the gap between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in the economic arena between propertied and non-propertied segments of populations. The crisis conditions which afflict the U.S. economy today need to be understood not only in terms of predatory financialization dynamics but also as a war on labor.

The Roots of Crisis: The Capital-Labor Antagonism and Capital's Commodity Price Fetishism

Corporate globalization has intensified social inequality and cultural polarization worldwide. Increasing globalization correlates directly with growing inequality both within and between nations (Sernau, 2006). During 2011, compensation to those in Wall Street's financial industry in total rose to near record levels, up 4 percent over 2010,[13] and in October 2012 Wells Fargo bank reported a jump of 22 percent in profits, JP Morgan 34 percent.[14] In November 2010, U.S. corporations reported their best quarter ever, after seven consecutive quarters at the highest rates of growth in history.[15] Clearly this rate could not endure unmarred, but in spite of temporary setbacks, after decades of labor speedup, the economic "recovery" continues to facilitate enormous amounts of capital accumulation and the intensification of poverty.[16] As reported front page by *The New York Times* March 4, 2013, "Recovery in the U.S. Lifting Profits, Not Adding Jobs; Wall Street is Buoyant." Its author, Nelson D. Schwartz, reports

> the split between American workers and the companies that employ them is widening … "So far in this recovery, corporations have captured an unusually high share of the income gains" said Ethan Harris, co-head of global economics at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

Douglas Dowd (2009, 11) has called this capitalism's imperative of exploitation. Today it is intensifying through the "race to the bottom" as capitalism searches the globe for the lowest wage labor markets. Despite modest fluctuations, the global tendency toward ever increasing inequality endures: "Nowhere has the distribution of the pie become more equitable … . among the more unequal regions of the world—the United States, say, or Russia—income disparities are reaching levels not before seen in modern history."[17] "The three richest people in the U.S. own the same wealth as the bottom half of the U.S. population (roughly 160 million people)."[18]

Middle range households have lost the most. The sharpest wealth declines in the U.S. have hit minority families. Hispanic households suffered asset losses of 66 percent between 2005 and 2009; wealth in Asian American households fell by 54 percent; African American households dropped 53 percent.[19]

It must be remembered, however, that, cutting across all these categories, women are again and again losing out overall:

> Gender and economic inequality are closely connected . . . . [M]en are paid more for doing the same roles as women, and men are concentrated in higher paid, higher status jobs. It is no coincidence that women are vastly over-represented in so many of the poorest paid and least secure jobs. Around the world, social norms, attitudes and beliefs devalue the status and abilities of women, justify violence and discrimination against them, and dictate which jobs they can and cannot expect to hold … . The neoliberal economic model has made this worse—reductions in public services, cuts to taxes for the richest, and a race to the bottom on wages and labour rights have all hurt women more than men.[20]

According to Oxfam International's January 2018 report, *Reward Work, Not Wealth*, "82% of all of the growth in global wealth in the last year went to the top 1%, whereas the bottom 50% saw no increase at all." In January 2018, *The Washington Post* reported "Stock Markets Wrap Up Best Year Since 2013 As Investors Shrug Off Bad News."[21] *The New York Times* likewise ran a page one heading "The Dow Hits 25,000: The Party Will End One Day, but When?"[22] The robust rise in asset prices has been accompanied by a "kind"[23] downturn in unemployment, yet income inequalities between capital and labor continue to grow. The authors warn that investors seem to be turning a blind eye toward geopolitical dangers (North Korea, China, natural disasters) that threaten to disrupt the economic upturn. What they overlook is that even before the implementation of the major 2017 tax benefits for corporations and investors, the U.S. has a capital glut once again, as in 2008. As Paul Krugman has described it, "too much money is chasing too few investment opportunities … the global glut [is] looking for new bubbles to inflate …,"[24] and this puts the capital valorization process into crisis. Given the super-abundance of wealth accumulated at the top, investment banks have to devise ever more speculative strategies to realize profit from it all. The system itself becomes hyperactive, erratic, desperate, and self-destructive. The strategic irrationality of this country's investment banking institutions arises from the systemic fetish characteristic of finance capital: the obsession with an asset's ostensible price (as a commodity in the market) independent of its value as a function of real factors of production (such as socially necessary labor-time). Earlier bubbles in asset prices in the dot.com sector, telecommunications, commercial and residential real estate, resulted from finance capital's compulsion under penalty of extinction to seek the valorization of capital

(i.e. accumulation/acquisition of profit) through desperate bets on price fluctuations and volatile market values in speculative transactions independent of values as measured by real factors of production. A highly financialized economy, in which capital seeks valorization without employment, leads to the delusional (inflated, unreal) claims on wealth that are not sustainable. Price fetishism confuses selling price growth with real value growth.

Real Value Added Through Production; the Capital-Labor Split

In capitalist production, incomes flow from the new wealth created in the production process. The new wealth created is termed the "value added." The incomes distributed serve to reproduce differentially the workforce and the owners. Every dollar of the value added in U.S. manufacturing—for example $2,400,063 million according to January 2014 data released by the U.S. Census, was thus distributed into one of the two basic reproduction categories: 1) as income to the labor force—as *payroll* (wages and salaries)—$618,871 million; and 2) as income to owners and investors—as *profit, rent, dividends, and interest* — $1,781,192 million.[25]

Thus, the capital/labor split of the total value added (new wealth created) in manufacturing during 2014: labor 25 percent; capital 75 percent.

This sort of division of the added value between labor and capital has been relatively constant over the last twenty years, yet the gap has been steadily widening.[26] This pattern is structured by unequal property relations into the dynamics of reproduction in manufacturing and a similar gap may well be found in every other productive sector of the economy and in the division of the Gross Domestic Product overall. As a side note: *The New York Times* reported in September 2017 that: "Roughly 10 percent of the $2.2 trillion in domestic factory output goes into the production of weapons sold mainly to the Defense Department for use by the armed forces."[27]

A critical examination of these kinds of social dynamics is a vital part of radical pedagogy (I shall take this up again in my conclusion). Anyone who has grown up in the U.S.A. typically has little awareness of the nature of wealth or the pattern of its distribution in society. We also lack insight into the connection of income flows to relations of capitalist property ownership and the commodification of labor and life. A widely-used text, *Social Problems,* by Macionis (2012, 31) stands out admirably in its emphasis on the facts of the unequal distribution of wealth. Macionis utilizes the standard economic definition of wealth in terms of the value of the property to which one has title, minus debts. In the U.S.A. today, wealth distribution can be depicted on a vertical line representing all households in a declining order of property ownership, from top to bottom in quintiles as follows:

- 85 percent of the total wealth is held by the richest fifth
- 11 percent by the second wealthiest fifth

- 4 percent by the middle fifth
- 1 percent by the second lowest fifth
- −1 percent by the poorest fifth of all households.

When I first started teaching thirty-five years ago, the top quintile owned significantly less, 78 percent of the total wealth, and the poorest quintile owned a positive, albeit tiny, percentage (1 percent). The second richest quintile then had 15 percent of the wealth compared to its 11 percent share today.

This pattern of polarization has also transpired with regard to incomes, over time, such that today "income inequality has soared to the highest levels since the Great Depression."[28] "The increase in incomes of the top 1 percent from 2003 to 2005 exceeded total income of the poorest 20 percent of Americans" (U.S. Budget Office in Dowd 2009, 122). On top of this, in February 2013, Emmanuel Saez of the University of California, Berkeley, reports that during the current recovery the incomes of the top 1 percent rose 11.2 percent, while the incomes of the remaining 99 percent fell by 0.4 percent.[29] According to economist Saez and his colleague Thomas Piketty of the Paris School of Economics, the general pattern is this: about half of all income the economy produces accrues to the top 10 percent of income earners.[30]

If the facts of increasing economic inequality are largely undisputed, the same may not be said of their social significance. The prevailing views among economists and business utopians, represented in the writings of George Gilder (1993) for example, hold that these inequalities are natural and normal, a positive social good. They signify a ladder of opportunity, and meritocratically reward differences in talent, effort, intelligence, perseverance, etc. In their view, it is precisely the possibility of upward mobility that characterizes a democratic economy.

On the other hand, critical writers in economics like Dowd (2009) and Stiglitz (2012), in sociology like Macionis (2012, 37–39), and political philosophy like John Rawls (1971) characteristically emphasize the profoundly alienating, unequal, and *un*democratic impacts that such wealth and income maldistribution have on life chances. "Life chances" is a technical term in sociology used to indicate the relative access a household has to the society's economic resources: decent housing, health care, education, employment, etc. The greater the wealth in one's household, the greater one's life chances. The less wealth in one's household, the fewer the life chances. Life chances (as well as wealth and income) are today being transferred away from the vast majority of households and redistributed to the advantage of the wealthiest.

Thomas Piketty's (2014) massive study of capital and inequality in the 21st century offers no radical challenge to corporate liberalism (Andrews, 2015; Reitz 2015a). Yet, the causes of the profoundly negative impacts of this vastly unequal wealth distribution on life chances must be addressed. Rawls (1971) has argued that departures from universal equality are in principle departures from social justice, and his views are persuasive in terms of social contract theory and a

version of Kant's ethical universalism. Rawls frames an ingenious thought experiment utilizing his concept of the "veil of ignorance" to demonstrate, through abstract logical analysis alone, the advantage (in terms of the sheer probability of enhancing one's life chances) of making the "blind" choice to be born in a perfectly equal society (where each population quintile owned 20 percent of wealth) rather than in one characterized by the stark lopsidedness in the distribution of wealth and life chances as in the U.S. today. In the latter reality, four out of five quintiles each owns substantially less than 20 percent; only the top quintile owns more. Nonetheless, I shall indicate below the outlines of the socialist labor theory of commonwealth ownership and justice utilized by both Marx and Marcuse and which I contend (following Farr 2009) have a greater material and sociological warrant than that of Rawls.[31]

Returning to Marcuse's work fills-in some of the key and notable economic deficits of contemporary forms of cultural commentary stemming from post-modern literary, aesthetic, and political theory. Marcuse tied his labor theory of humanism also to Marx's historical and dialectical theory of socialist revolution as having the essential purpose of labor's supersession of "capitalist commodity production." He likewise honors Marx's philosophical humanism as "the foundation of historical materialism." He repeatedly identifies a genuine concept of communism with a humanist worldview and looks to the supersession of alienation through the actualization of the human essence. Commonwealth has the power to reclaim our common humanity. Its overarching goal is decommodification: public work for the public good. Humanity's rights to a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture reside in our common works. This requires a new system of shared ownership, democratized ownership, common ownership. De-commodified labor and socialized ownership constitute the critical economic beauty of commonwealth.

From Commodity-Dependency to De-commodification

This society is fully capable of abundance as Marcuse recognized in *One Dimensional Man,* yet the material foundation for the persistence of economic want and political unfreedom is commodity-dependency. Work, as the most crucial of all human activities, by which humanity has developed to its present stage of civilization, can be and should be a source of human satisfaction. Under capitalism it is reduced to a mere means for the receipt of wages. Sensuous living laborers are reduced to being mere containers for the only commodity they can bring to the system of commodity exchange, their ability to work. This represents the commodification of the most essential aspect of human life, as I have stressed in the Introduction. Under commodity-dependency necessities of life are also available to the public nearly exclusively as commodities through market mechanisms based upon profitability for the producers and the consumers' ability to pay. The demand for decommodification sets Marcuse's analysis—and ours—distinctly

apart from a liberal call for a "politics of recognition" (Honneth 1994) that features primarily attitudinal or redistributive remedies (Fraser & Honneth 2003).

While recognition and redistribution are certainly necessary, they are not sufficient. The slogan "tax the rich," while fundamentally helpful in liberal terms, misses the revolutionary socialist point that the cure for the harsh distributional inequalities cited above lies in a new mode of property ownership that decommodifies the very process of value creation, as well as the inextricably interconnected processes of exchange and consumption. No non-socialist theory of politics or society has any profound quarrel with wage labor or the general system of commodity dependency. Marx admonishes workers: "instead of the *conservative* motto '*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*' they should inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, '*Abolition of the wages-system!*'" (Marx [1865] 1965, 78, emphasis in original). Marx clarified capitalist society's obsession with production for profit rather than human need: its structurally generated fetish/addiction to production for commodity exchange rather than for use-values. Production for use rather than exchange would optimize living conditions within the social formation as a whole. Capitalist productive relations are driving global labor to its knees. Only the abolition of wage labor and commodity fetishism in the economy can restore satisfaction and dignity to an uncommodified labor process.

CommonWork/CommonWealth

The critical philosophy of commonwealth that I am developing in this volume is intended to convey a vivid sense of the necessity, sufficiency, and attainability of a decommodified and humanist form of socialism. I appreciate the utopian use of the term *commonwealth* by the Danish immigrant and socialist, Laurence Gronlund, of Milwaukee and Chicago, in his 1884 *Cooperative Commonwealth*. Marcuse would recognize it as well. Commonwealth "is not to be regarded as a personal conceit, but as *an historical product*, as a product in which our whole people are unconscious partakers" (Gronlund [1884] 1965, 90, emphasis in original).

> [T]he Cooperative Commonwealth will be highly promotive of social welfare by securing to all its citizens abundance; by furnishing them leisure; and by enabling them to follow their natural bent. Work will no longer be a tribute to physical necessity but a glad performance of social office.
>
> *(Gronlund [1884] 1965, 103)*

Recent literature ostensibly related to the ideas of commonwealth and the liberation of labor has been disappointing, including works by Slavoj Žižek (2009) as well as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009, 2000). These authors offer tantalizing insights on one page and withdraw them on the next. Žižek's *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce* (2009) offers a radical approach that looks at the economic

crisis of 2008 and attempts to open up space for new forms of radical practice. This is a solid critique of the material force of ideology. Evocative, but glib, its contributions are offset by an overall analysis in which labor is seen as having lost its central emancipatory power. This is inadequate as a contemporary manifesto of humanist socialism or as a source of radical practice.

Hardt and Negri, in *Commonwealth* (2009) and *Empire* (2000), offer exciting prospects regarding alternative systems of freedom, yet they displace socialist humanism and labor humanism with allegedly radical accounts of biopolitics and biopower. As they see it, wealth is created through biopolitical production, yet their postmodernist philosophical perspective follows a Wittgensteinian linguistic turn, privileging a discussion of language games and eschewing discussion of human beings as sensuous living labor. Both *Commonwealth* and *Empire* displace critical sociological analysis and dematerialize labor as a variable, seeing industrial production as supplanted by the intellectual, immaterial, and communicative dimensions of production, thereby dematerializing their political economy, and replacing a theory of labor force empowerment with the theory of the multitude against globalized capital.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz points to Hardt and Negri's concept of "the commons" in their 2009 volume *Commonwealth* as being inattentive to the unique situation of Native Americans for whom nationhood and sovereignty were/are matters of importance: "Most writings about the commons barely mention the fate of the Indigenous peoples in the call for all land to be shared" (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, 230). She emphasizes that Native peoples—as original stewards of the American lands—tended, managed, and owned these lands communally. Petroglyphs and cliff art from Chaco Canyon to Lascaux testify to an ethical and aesthetic awareness of the mutual interconnectedness and interdependencies ontologically binding humanity, earth, and sky. For ninety-nine percent of human history principles of mutuality, solidarity, protection of the earth, and rarity of war, were [are] central to the cultural traditions of the small, mobile, self-governing, Indigenous communal bands (Fry & Souilliac 2017, 5). As I shall show in Chapter 4, such principles may be widened beyond small group membership and even beyond national identity. I build upon Aldo Leopold's ecological writing, which extends this perspective arguing that humanity needs to adhere to such an Indigenous-informed, partnership-oriented land ethic and land aesthetic. Thus, ecological insights are fundamental to my call for a future cosmopolitan GreenCommonWealth.

The concepts of commonwork and commonwealth which I develop in this volume are consistent with the historical realities of Indigenous social activity and social ownership. These concepts may not be reduced to the Lockean notion, useful to colonialist settler ideology, that agriculturally unimproved land may be privately possessed by individuals who improve it with their labor. Genocidal removal polices cleansing lands of those in communal possession of them make such a claim to private ownership even more untenable. White rancher militias in

the U.S. today wanting access to Western BLM (i.e. public) lands harken back to the 19th century ranger militias who drove Native Americans from their traditional homelands. Public ownership and protection of traditional and monumental lands once owned by Indigenous peoples is one step toward reconciliation. Restoration of treaty-guaranteed lands is another. My philosophical framework proposes an ecological and ethical perspective on a new world system that can acknowledge the original ownership of the Americas by its Native peoples and has room to meet demands such as those of the Great Sioux Nation for the return of the Black Hills; likewise, to accommodate further reparations owed to Native Americans and other Indigenous peoples world-wide.

The Standing Rock Sioux have recently faced violent police reprisals for their leadership efforts as water protectors warning of the environmental dangers of the Dakota Access Pipeline. I shall treat this further in Chapter 7. One of the most highly-regarded literary and political voices of the Standing Rock Sioux (Yankton Dakota), is that of the late Vine Deloria, Jr. Despite colonial settler efforts to extirpate Native peoples, Deloria writes with wry irony: "[I]t is the white man with his careless attitude toward life who is actually in danger of extinction" (Deloria [1992] 1995, 250).

> The native peoples of the American continents … have managed to survive. Now, at a time when the virtues they represented, and continue to represent, are badly needed by the biosphere struggling to remain alive, they must be given the participatory role which they might have had in the world if the past five centuries had been different.
>
> *(Deloria [1992] 1995, 252)*

Brian Davey (2012) has investigated the political potentials present in the traditions of the Indigenous peoples of the Andes. He finds that they model a "solidarity economy" blending ecology and socialism after a long history of colonial oppression, racism, and sexism. Such an ecology of commonwealth epitomizes what Aldo Leopold and Vine Deloria, Jr. also want us to learn: humans, wildlife, plants, and land form a larger inclusive and worthy community relationship—one to be held in the highest regard.

Dunbar-Ortiz criticizes in particular how U.S. militarism was axial to the many disgraceful and bloody realities of this country's colonial settler politics and history, in both domestic and foreign affairs: criminal offenses, which, as she says are "not past," but rather, are being "ramped-up" today (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, 230) —from Vietnam through Iraq to Afghanistan. Marcuse's perspective, and my own, are actually quite similar to the position of Dunbar-Ortiz, who finds repellent how the U.S. has become a resurgent imperialist power projecting its military might around the globe oblivious to civilian casualties, war crimes, and ecocide. She is sickened that, in the contemporary parlance of the U.S. armed forces, the enemy's territory, no matter where, is commonly referred to today as

"Injun Territory" (Dunbar-Ortiz, 2014, 219–220). I would also add in this regard my radical opposition to U.S. support for Israel's illegal occupations of Palestine, which function as settler outposts did in U.S. colonialist history. These are real continuities to which all of us must face up, certainly first and foremost would-be radicals. Hardt and Negri, while discussing the plight of Native Americans in U.S. history (Hardt & Negri 2000, 169–170), assert that today the "United States does not, and indeed no nation state can today, form the center of an imperialist project. Imperialism is over" (Hardt & Negri 2000, xiv). Herbert Marcuse's critique of the counterrevolutionary power of U.S. militarism and empire-building in foreign policy stands in sharp contrast; my work emphasizes Marcuse's ongoing relevance. I highlight the demands by Marcuse (and Marx) for the decommodification of labor and the economy as necessary preconditions to the restoration of nature from the devastation wrought by advanced industrial society.

Several books by Gar Alperovitz raise the profile of the commonwealth idea; he demonstrates historically how this has inspired numerous, small-scale, cooperative efforts. His 2013 volume, *What Then Must We Do? Straight Talk about the Next American Revolution, Democratizing Wealth and Building a Community-Sustaining Economy from the Ground Up* focuses on the system as the problem and calls for system change in a manner that resonates with my analysis. I agree explicitly with his stated purpose: devising a change in ownership modes in order to effect system change. I see Alperovitz's emphasis on co-ops etc. as inspiring, yet also as piecemeal gradualism. His "pluralistic commonwealth" seems a narrowly socio-legal concept, rather than the fuller socio-ecological concept I propose.

My perspective develops a labor theory of commonwealth derived from Marx and Marcuse. In this volume, Chapter 4, I connect my idea of commonwealth in with the axial values of world's wisdom traditions, which I see as grounded in a commonwealth form of labor. Commonwealth labor is not only a social and productive force, but also labor that is liberated, labor that is meaningful, labor even in aesthetic form. Thus, I see commonwealth as a kind of ethico-aesthetic as well as a social-ecological formation. I understand commonwealth (in reliance on the metabolic relation between human society and nature that Marx describes) as a particular kind of human partnership relation and as a particular kind of social-ecological formation in the tradition of Aldo Leopold's land ethic discussed more fully below. I move from the concept of commonwealth to the concept of public ownership, and by *public* I mean a form of eco-humanist governmental stewardship, consistent with the basic democratic tenets of Marxism, not necessarily as a dictatorship of the proletariat. My concept has a special affinity with Marcuse, who thought of himself as a Marxist, and was very interested in council communism and in humanism as the radical form of socialism. I encompass within my notion of GreenCommonWealth the multiple dimensions of racial equality, women's equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, peace.

Marxist Ecological Materialism

I find congenial the recent publication of a series of books by the Monthly Review Press on Marxism and ecology. For example, a compendium of essays on the global architecture of wealth and resource extraction grounded in Marx's perspective on capitalism's "ecological rift" dividing humanity from the natural world by John Bellamy Foster, Brett Clark and Richard York (2010). These authors, like others, for example Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams (2017), stress the dialectical unity embodied in an historical materialist approach to the scientific study of nature and society and Marx's philosophically realist ontological and epistemological dimensions.

> The world is being subjected to a process of monopolistic capital accumulation so extreme and distorted that not only has it produced the Great Inequality and conditions of stagnation and financial instability, but also the entire planet as a place of human habitation is being put in peril in order to sustain this very system. Hence the future of humanity—if there is to be one at all—now lies with the 99%.
>
> *(Foster & McChesney 2012, 26)*

Concerns arising from the transformation of the natural environment by human beings are not new. Yet the increase in the rate of consumption of natural resources from the industrial revolution to the present has sounded the alarm regarding the magnitude of the consequences for the environment in the near term as well as over decades. The concern is ultimately about the environment's ability to continue to renew and rejuvenate itself in the long run. The intensity of the debate today across the globe is unprecedented. To address these most urgent issues we must address the influence of powerful classes in society and undertake a collective politics in the collective interest.

The notions of ecological metabolism and ecological rift are elucidated by Foster et. al. via Marx's discussion of "wood thieves." Ecological metabolism refers to the interchange of matter and energy between humanity and nature through life-sustaining social structures. Because of the enclosures of the common forest lands as private estates, the taking of dead wood by peasants, as had been common practice, was criminalized by landowners who asserted that this wood supply (never before sold or exchanged) had an economic value as a commodity which they owned and for which they must be paid. Thus, the peasantry was separated from the natural and social world it had inhabited. Likewise, today most of the resources of the earth and cultural assets of its people (including labor, leadership and learning), that once sustained humanity in common, are now privatized, marketed as scarce commodities, often grotesquely distributed involving patterns of privilege and waste. The rift between nature and the capitalist global order is expressed as generalized commodity dependency, i.e., massive economic

and political unfreedom, i.e., alienation. See also Kohei Saito's *Karl Marx's Eco-socialism* (2017) which effectively argues against those in the ecology movement who have previously regarded Marx's philosophy only in negative terms, seeing him as a "productivist" unconcerned with the environment: "The significance of 'Marx's ecology' is now positively recognized on both theoretical and practical levels, to the point that allegations on Marx's Prometheanism are now generally regarded as having been proven false" (Saito 2017, 11).

According to Foster, Clark and York, "[t]he essential problem is the unavoidable fact that an expanding economic system is placing additional burdens on a fixed earth system to the point of planetary overload" (2010, 17). These co-authors supply an historical context by discussing some of the manifold manifestations of earth exhaustion: ocean acidification, pollution of the globe's freshwater supply, overexploitation of ground water in industrial food production, biodiversity loss, atmospheric aerosol loading, chemical pollution, the energy crisis from coal to oil, the climate/carbon metabolism crisis, i.e. climate change. Each of these rifts is shown to be a result of the expansion of capitalist production and the squandering of natural resources via capitalism's unstinting architecture of accumulation. Foster and Clark (2004) hold that even our understanding of imperialism has been

> impeded by the underdevelopment of an ecological materialist analysis of capitalism in Marxist theory as a whole. Nevertheless, it has long been apparent—and was stipulated in Marx's own work—that transfers in economic values are accompanied in complex ways by real "material-ecological" flows that transform relations between city and country, and between global metropolis and periphery.
>
> *(Foster & Clark 2004, 187)*

Today's intensifying levels of global soil and water exhaustion coupled with intensified economic exploitation and resurgent social inequalities (of class, race, and gender) necessitate intellectual and political growth on the part of every one of us. I go beyond the current eco-Marxists with my explicit stress on a new communal mode of holding property and the decommodification of economic sectors, such as housing, health care, education, etc. With Marcuse, I also stress a view of labor as the fundamental mode of being human. The liberation of labor from commodification is the ground of authentic dis-alienation and freedom, freedom "within the realm of necessity," where meaning is restored to the processes of social labor and social wealth production, *not* in terms of greater, more efficient production, but in terms of Marcuse's New Sensibility: an ethics of partnership, racial and gender equality, satisfaction from work, earth admiration, and ecological responsibility. The convergence of the environmentalist and labor movements is essential in terms of a unified emancipatory praxis if the human species is to go on living.

Leopold and Marcuse on Social and Environmental Destruction: Ecological Critique of Private Property Rights in Land

Marcuse's widely regarded call for a "New Sensibility," for the radical as opposed to the minimal goals of socialism (1972, 5), is fused in my account with the hitherto largely unheralded ecological vision of Aldo Leopold that embraces all living things as an earthly community capable of measured and dignified coexistence with our planet and its surroundings.

> When god-like Odysseus returned from the wars in Troy, he hanged all on one rope a dozen slave-girls of his household whom he suspected of misbehavior during his absence …. The girls were property. The disposal of property was then, as now, a matter of expediency, not right and wrong … . The ethical structure of that day covered wives, but had not yet been extended to human chattels …. Land, like Odysseus' slave girls, is still property.
>
> *(Leopold [1949] 1966, 217–219)*

Aldo Leopold, a forester, nature writer, and the nation's first professor of wildlife management at the University of Wisconsin in 1933, is renowned as one of the world's foremost philosophers of conservation and ecology. He knew the earth was awesome, knew the earth was radical. Above and beyond its beauty, he saw that living on the face of our planet with dignity is possible, and holds the promise of ethical, political, and aesthetic meaning for human communities.

Leopold explicitly developed what he called a "land ethic" that led him to a logic of protection, love, and respect for nature—both in recreation and in social production. He replaced a view of humanity as conqueror of the land-community with a vision of human inhabitants of a green commonwealth. *GreenCommonWealth* is my term, not his, but it encapsulates his conviction that ecological science can lead to ecological conscience: to conservation and cooperation.

Leopold argues that "for the purposes of a liberal education ecology is superior to evolution as a window through which to view the world" (Leopold [1942] 1991, 305). "Land … is not merely soil, it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals" (Leopold [1953] 1966, 231). It is a fundamental constituent of a "biotic pyramid."

> Plants absorb energy from the sun. This energy flows through a circuit called the biota … . A plant layer rests on the soil, an insect layer on the plants, a bird and rodent layer on the insects, and so on up through various animal groups to the apex layer, which consists of the larger carnivores … Each successive layer depends upon those below it for food and often for other services, and each in turn furnishes food and services to those above … The

> lines of dependency for food and other services are called food-chains. Thus soil-oak-deer-Indian is a chain that has largely been converted to soil-corn-cow-farmer.
>
> *(Leopold [1953] 1966, 230–231)*

> Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist … must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise.
>
> *(Leopold 1993, 165)*

To Leopold, nature was considered to be a community to which humanity belongs: "The culture of primitive peoples is often based on wildlife. Thus, the plains Indian not only ate buffalo, but buffalo largely determined his architecture, dress, language, arts, and religion" (Leopold [1949] 1966, 195). Ultimately Leopold comes to replace the term "wildlife" with the term "land," because he sees the former as inextricably bound to the latter. "Ecology is the science of communities, and the ecological conscience is therefore the ethics of community life" (Leopold [1947] 1991, 340). Ecological science discloses "the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of cooperation …. All ethics so far evolved rest upon a single premise: that the individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts" (Leopold [1949] 1966, 218–219).

Leopold was dissatisfied with any merely lyrical romanticizing of nature, as in Goethe's "Mailied" [May Song]: *"Wie herrlich leuchtet mir die Natur"*—"How stirring and splendid Nature can be!" Instead, he pursued Alexander Humboldt's "everything is interconnected" approach, recognizing how humanity's inner capacities adapt to the world's ecosystems, and that our insight into these ecosystems builds our fuller, more comprehensive understanding of life as a whole, i.e., including aesthetics, ethics, and politics. Humboldt's writing on plant ecology, geography, geology, and much more, of necessity also condemned sugar plantation slavery as a denatured and disfiguring economic form where he found it in Cuba (Foner 1983). Humboldt maintained the unity of the human race, against Agassiz, who promoted racial hierarchy. Humboldt's work also was a manifest or a latent background influence on Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, and a generation later, Herbert Marcuse.

Finding an Aesthetic Form of Labor in Commonwealth

The appeal of Marxist socialism according to Marcuse derives from its concomitant humanism: "In the Marxian conception, socialism is humanism in as much as it organizes the social division of labor, the 'realm of necessity' so as to enable men to satisfy their social and individual needs without exploitation and with a minimum of toil and sacrifice" (Marcuse 1965b, 98). Despite a well-known history of socialist

economic deformations, I will argue that only a socialist commonwealth has even the potential to become the aesthetic form of a liberated society.

As Marcuse sees it, art works offer the promise of liberation, a re-humanized future to replace a de-humanized past. The experience of beauty furnishes the "promesse du bonheur" (Marcuse [1958] 1961, 115). This is the promise of bliss, good fortune, genuine civic satisfaction, and success in life. Yet great works of art, understood most fully and concretely, are deeply dialectical. They unite the opposites of gratification and pain, death and love, freedom and repression. Only because of this can art honestly represent what Marcuse takes to be the conflicted, tragic, and paradoxical substance of human life. Addressing the promise of art for life, he notes in *The Aesthetic Dimension* (Marcuse, 1978), his final book, that:

> If art were to promise that at the end good would triumph over evil, such a promise would be refuted by the historical truth. In reality it is evil which triumphs, and there are only islands of good where one can find refuge for a brief time. Authentic works of art are aware of this: they reject the promise made too easily; they refuse the unburdened happy end.
>
> *(Marcuse 1978, 47)*

Art works alone (great literature, architecture, paintings, music drama) cannot fulfill the promise of liberation, yet in Marcuse's view, the insights provided by study of the humanities are the intellectual precondition to any political transformation of alienated human existence into authentic human existence.

An Essay on Liberation (Marcuse 1969) tells us what the aesthetic dimension does offer: a new sensibility (1969, 23) and insight into an *aesthetic ethos* (1969, 24) that subvert the existing one-dimensional order.

> Released from the bondage to exploitation, the imagination, sustained by the achievements of science, could turn its productive power to the radical reconstruction of experience … the aesthetic … would find expression in the transformation of the *Lebenswelt*—society as a work of art.
>
> *(Marcuse 1969, 45)*

The aesthetic reality is a concrete reality which recovers a sense of the human species essence in its universal aspects. "The universal comprehends in one idea the possibilities which are realized, and at the same time arrested, in reality" (Marcuse 1964, 210). I would see this universal as embodied in Marx's concepts of *Gemeinwesen* and *Gattungswesen*, which I take as substantive precursors of green commonwealth. In Marcuse's view, the concrete and critical dimension of art discloses the inevitably conflicted condition of human culture. At the same time, the aesthetic ethos restores humanity's most rational enterprise: seeking the convergence of gratification and universal human need, society and human dignity, art and politics, in commonwealth labor: "the development of the productive

forces renders possible the material fulfillment of the *promesse du bonheur* expressed in art; political action—the revolution—is to translate this possibility into reality" (Marcuse [1958] 1961, 115).

The current period is one of economic crisis, change, and danger. Today's global capitalist crisis is a crucial opportunity for a new political beginning. The goal of building a universal human community on the foundation of universal human rights must acknowledge the fundamental role of the labor process in the sustenance of the human community. Human labor has the irreplaceable power to build the commonwealth, past and future. Our current conditions of insecurity and risk make it imperative that we undertake a deeper understanding of the necessity of a humanist commonwealth alternative: an egalitarian, abundant, and green political-economy, through which humanity may govern itself honorably and beautifully in terms of our fullest potentials, mindful of the care and gratitude we owe to planet Earth.

Notes

1 Charles M. Blow, "Trump's Boogeymen? Women!" in *The New York Times* Monday, October 23, 2017, A21.

2 The Trump presidency is more than a little reactionary. Two excellent critical examinations are those of Kellner (2016) and Giroux (2018). See Jonathon Mahler, "All the Right People: How One Conservative Think Tank has Stacked the Federal Government in the Trump Era," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 24, 2018. The Establishment's Right Wing Heritage Foundation put forward hundreds of candidates who have found positions in the Trump Administration including Scott Pruitt, Betsy DeVos, and Jeff Sessions.

3 I utilize the term *world system* independently of the analytical legacy of Immanuel Wallerstein. Wallerstein is rightly credited with a transformation of social science *conceiving its basic unit of analysis to be the capitalist world-economy* in *The Modern World-System* ([1974] 2011). He is said to have "stimulated historically minded social scientists as no other in recent memory" (Goldfrank 2000, 152; quotations that follow are also Goldfrank). As a student he interacted with Columbia University luminaries, including Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, and C. Wright Mills. What ostensibly sets him apart is his "conception of the modern world-economy as the necessarily inclusive totality from which the analysis of change in any individual country should proceed." He utilizes three basic structural categories: "mini-systems, world-empires, and world-economies." At the same time, he emphasizes the importance of "geo-ecological regions" as units of analysis, and the significance of the rural countryside as a provider of economic surplus. In his world-systems theory, core-periphery conflicts are examined to understand the core country as well as peripheral ones. I agree with Wallerstein in appreciating that accumulation, as a global process, depends on the exploitation of both waged and unwaged labor. I also find desirable his goal of socialist world-government. I see the validity of Wallerstein's overall perspective, which seems amenable with Marcuse's critical theory and historiography in a Marxist mode. Yet, given his contention that Marxist approaches *cannot* explain the complicated details of social change, he generally veers his methodology in the direction of Dilthey and the French Annales school of history writing. Dilthey, building upon Kant, argued that historical writing was anecdotal and *ideographic* rather than productive of generally valid insights or *nomothetic*. This was to assert anew Aristotle's contention that it lacked universality. Wallerstein's approach to historical analysis, is materialist and critical, and consciously

aimed to mediate these contradictory dimensions through quantification. Still, his work tends to eschew the study of advanced urban industrial social formations and forfeits larger nomothetic understandings frequently sliding into a localized, almost ideographic, description, mitigated by a recognition of economic cycles over the long term. This is still *social* history, and actions of individuals are *not* decisive (Iggers 1975, 66). Yet the analysis often has the defect of being overly deterministic: "Annales historians have very largely ignored the role of political factors and have underplayed the role of conscious direction in social process" (Iggers 1975, 68). I appreciate that Avery F. Gordon (2016) has compared Wallerstein's "utopistics" to Marcuse's conception and treatment of the utopian dimension of revolutionary theory and practice, finding Wallerstein's to be less viable than Marcuse's. Like Gordon, I find that Marcuse's dialectical rationality of philosophy stresses much more than the patterns the facts configure. Marcuse's work envisions from the structural realities of the present, the possibilities following from them, like the decommodification of labor and life, that make freedom (nowhere now to be found) attainable in accordance with an aesthetic ethos, i.e. society as a work of art (Marcuse 1969, 45), with art as a "*gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft*," a social and productive force (Marcuse 1969, 126).

4 Mitchell Franklin, "Infamy and Constitutional Civil Liberties," in *Dialectics of the U.S. Constitution, Selected Writings of Mitchell Franklin*, edited by James M. Lawler (Minneapolis, MN: MEP Publications, 2000). On "Unconstitutional Mass Infamy" see Gene Grabiner and Virginia E. Grabiner, "Where Are Your Papers, Operation Zebra, and Constitutional Civil Liberties," *Journal of Black Studies*, March 1982. Racism, sexism, ageism, antisemitism, antihomosexuality, anticommunism are forms of such institutional caste subjugation and degradation in the history of the U.S., just as was settler colonialism's stigmatization and oppression of Indigenous people.

5 Chief Justice Earl Warren quoted by Jean Van Delinder, "Ernest Manheim, Social Science, and the *Brown* Case," in *Authority, Culture, and Communication: The Sociology of Ernest Manheim,* edited by Frank Baron, David N. Smith and Charles Reitz (Heidelberg: Synchron Pubishing, 2005).

6 Elwin H. Powell, "Revolution Aborted, Society Sacralized, Class War in Buffalo, 1910–1920," in *The Design of Discord* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970) p. 101. On the Palmer Raids as unconstitutional mass infamy see also Grabiner and Grabiner, op. cit., p. 337.

7 "In the early 20th century, state-sanctioned collective violence targeting African Americans was a common occurrence in the United States. 1919 was an especially bloody year."—David Krugler, "America's Forgotten Mass Lynching: When 237 People Were Murdered In Arkansas," *Daily Beast*, February 16, 2015. https://www.thedailybeast.com/americas-forgotten-mass-lynching-when-237-people-were-murdered-in-arkansas, retrieved February 16, 2018.

8 Stacey Patton, "White People Understand Exactly How Racism Works," *DAME Magazine*, January 16, 2018. https://www.damemagazine.com/2018/01/16/white-people-understand-exactly-how-racism-works/ Retrieved January 17, 2018.

9 On the role of waste in capitalist economies, especially its origins within the productive system, see the focused discussion in Magdoff and Williams (2017, 108–115). Seymour Melman writes in *Pentagon Capitalism* of the "depleting consequences" of military spending for the U.S. economy and society: "Since the end of the Second World War, the United States government has spent an astronomical $1,000 billion for military purposes" (1970, 184). His *Permanent War Economy* establishes the thesis that "Industrial productivity, the foundation of every nation's economic growth, is eroded by the relentlessly predatory effects of the military economy" (1985, 7). Andrew Feinstein (2012) comments on contemporary world military spending: "An inestimably large amount of public money is expended on the arms trade. This is not only in direct government expenditure, which totals trillions of dollars a year, but in the massive state

subsidization of R&D, export and other incentives, wastage on unnecessary weapons systems, overspending by contractors and bailouts to badly run companies" (Feinstein 2012, 524–25).

10 Barack Obama on July 13, 2012, in Roanoke, Virginia. https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4568668/invested-roads-bridges-build-that

11 Yanis Varoufakis, June 28, 2016 discussion with Noam Chomsky at the New York Public Library, https://www.yanisvaroufakis.eu/2016/06/28/full-transcript-of-the-yanis-varoufakis-noam-chomsky-nypl-discussion/

12 See also Ann E. Davis, "Fetishism and Financialization" *The Review of Radical Political Economics* Vol.49, No. 4 Winter, 2017 p. 552: "The whole of social labor is only represented by the total value produced by employment in a given period measured by the market value of total production, or GDP in modern terminology."

13 Susanne Craig and Ben Protess, "A Bigger Paycheck on Wall St.," *The New York Times*, October 10, 2012, p. B1.

14 Ben Protess, "Wells Fargo Reports a 22 percent Jump in Profit," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2012, p. B2; Jessica Silver-Greenberg, "Mortgage Lending Helps JP Morgan Profit Rise 34 percent," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2012, p. B1.

15 *The New York Times*, November 24, 2010, p. B2.

16 See *The New York Times*, July 11, 2011, "Weak Results are Projected for Wall Street" p. B1. However, by March 8, 2013 Wall Street was again flying high, with a nominal rise to pre-2007 levels, though still 10 percent below that when adjusted for inflation. See Floyd Norris, "A Long Way Back for Dow Industrials" *The New York Times*, March 8, 2013, p. B3. See Monika Bauerlein and Clara Jeffery, "Speedup. All Work and No Pay," the cover story in *Mother Jones* July and August 2011, pp. 18–25. Also Ben Agger, *Speeding Up Fast Capitalism* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers 2004). See also "Companies Spend on Equipment, Not Workers," *The New York Times,* June 10, 2011, p. A1. Sabrina Tavernise, "Poverty Reaches 52-Year Peak, Government Says," *The New York Times*, September 14, 2011, p. A1.

17 Eduardo Porter and Karl Russell, "It's an Unequal World; It Doesn't Have to Be," *The New York Times*, December 14, 2017.

18 Oxfam International, *Reward Work, Not Wealth*, Briefing Paper for Davos World Economic Forum, released January 22, 2018. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/reward-work-not-wealth-to-end-the-inequality-crisis-we-must-build-an-economy-fo-620396

19 Sabrina Tavernise, "Recession Study Finds Hispanics Hit Hardest: Sharp Wealth Decline," *New York Times,* July 26, 2011, p. A-1. The impact of institutional relationships of racial inequality on wage-related income disparities has been classically demonstrated in the study by Michael Reich, *Racial Inequality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). See also Sharon Smith, "Race, Class and 'Whiteness Theory'" *International Socialist Review*, Issue 46, March-April 2006.

20 Oxfam International, *Reward Work, Not Wealth*, Briefing Paper for Davos World Economic Forum, released January 22, 2018. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/reward-work-not-wealth-to-end-the-inequality-crisis-we-must-build-an-economy-fo-620396

21 Jonathan O'Connell, Renae Merle, and Aaron Gregg, "Stock Markets Wrap Up Best Year Since 2013 As Investors Shrug Off Bad News." *The Washington Post,* December 30, 2017.

22 James B. Stewart, "The Dow Hits 25,000: The Party Will End One Day, but When?" *The New York Times*, January 5, 2018. A1.

23 Of course I say this ironically to mean "pitiful." See Jed Kolko, "This has been a year in which some of the gaps in the economy that had been growing narrowed a bit" in Natalie Kitroeff, "More Laborers See Pay Gains As Jobs Climb," *The New York Times* January 6, 2018 A1. Current measures of unemployment also substantially undercount

those actually unemployed, since discouraged workers who have given up actively seeking employment are not counted.

24 Paul Krugman, "A Moveable Glut," *The New York Times* August 24, 2015, A19.

25 https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ASM_2014_31GS101&prodType=table

26 For example, in 2008, *$2,274,367 million* was distributed into the two basic reproduction categories: 1) as income to the workforce—as *payroll* (wages and salaries) — *$607,447 million*; and 2) as income to owners and investors—as *profit, rent, dividends, and interest — $1,666,920 million*. See Table 1006. Manufactures—Summary by Selected Industry, 2008. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011,* p. 634. This meant that in 2008 the gap of the share of the added value between labor (26.7 percent) and capital (73.3 percent) was not quite as large as the 25 percent / 75 percent gap in 2016.

27 Louis Uchitelle, "The U.S. Still Leans on Military Production," *The New York Times,* September 24, 2017, BU5.

28 Annie Lowrey, "Costs Seen in Income Inequality," *The New York Times,* October 17, 2012, p. B1.

29 Annie Lowrey, "Incomes Flat in Recovery, but not for the 1%," *The New York Times,* February 16, 2013, p. B1.

30 Ibid., p. B4.

31 The abstract philosophical (i.e. *a*-historical and *a*-sociological) quality of Rawls's theory renders it oblivious to other issues, especially the important impacts of racial inequality. Arnold L. Farr, a contemporary Marcusean philosopher with deep appreciation for the work of Charles Mills, makes a trenchant critique of latent racism even in Rawls, liberal democracy's foremost political theoretician (Farr 2009).

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2

THE TRAJECTORY OF MARCUSE'S PHILOSOPHY

In Herbert Marcuse one encounters what was lacking in other members of the Frankfurt School: a vision of the most radical goals of socialism and a willingness to link critical theory with radical struggle. (Farr 2017, Marcuse 1972, 5) Marcuse is one of the most illustrious and radical thinkers of his time—the author of the highly acclaimed and influential volumes, *Eros and Civilization* (1955), *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) and *An Essay on Liberation* (1969a). His life's work offers much more that is brilliant and constitutes his matchless contribution to the field of Frankfurt School critical theory. In this chapter, I shall expand upon the many strengths of Marcuse beyond those already emphasized in Chapter 1 (holding in abeyance certain criticisms until Chapters 5 and 6 below).

Often characterized as the "philosopher of the student revolts," his intellectual impact has been connected most closely to the campus-based turmoil of the 1960s in the U.S. and Europe. At that time (at the age of seventy) he was seen by many as a key academic spokesperson in solidarity with the student anti-Vietnam war movement, the insurgent movements for democratic socialism, and against racial and gender-based inequality. His radical political philosophical positions were grounded in his critical analysis of global capitalism's wasted abundance, its forms of alienated labor, oppression, and war—and the latent utopian possibilities of this society, arrested under current conditions, yet attainable through a socialist revolutionary struggle for a future of freedom.

Early Years (1919–1922)

Born into an upper middle-class family of Jewish descent in Berlin in 1898 Herbert Marcuse (Figure 2.1) was classically educated and of that generation of young men in

Germany caught up in World War I. When the war ended in 1918, Marcuse was witness to the ensuing political tumult in Berlin. A revolutionary uprising of soldiers and striking workers, with whom he empathized, sought to establish self-governing socialist republics in Berlin and Munich. These efforts ended in defeat, and Marcuse became politically demoralized by what he understood as the complicity of the conservatively Marxist German social democrats, whom he had supported, in the assassination of the revolutionary communist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Disillusioned with his own political activism Marcuse turned in his twenties to university study to reflect upon the troubled condition of the world and the very limited possibilities he saw for a truly socialist revolution. The dissertation he was then preparing would not look to economic analyses or party-oriented political action, but rather to works of art from the history of German literature for advice in the struggle against the alienating conditions of social life.

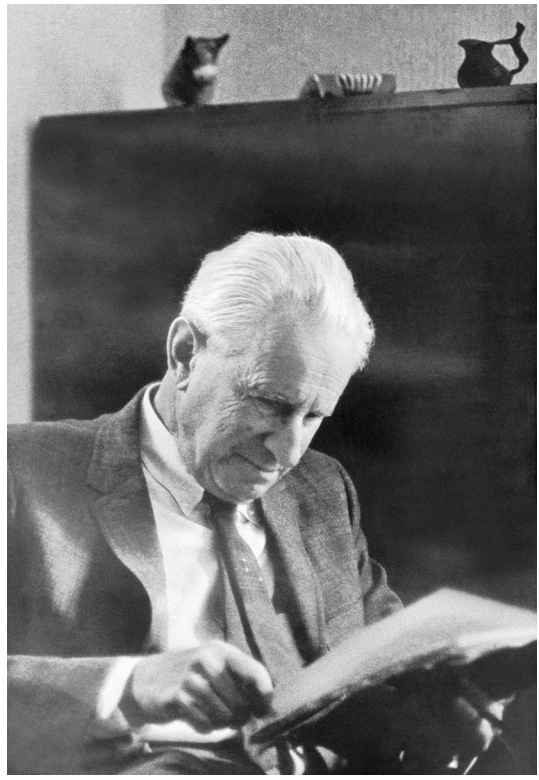

FIGURE 2.1 Herbert Marcuse, no place or date, probably at his LaJolla home near the campus of the University of California San Diego

Source: Herbert Marcuse Special Collection, Archive Center, Goethe University Library, Frankfurt. Courtesy of Peter Marcuse with special thanks to Peter-Erwin Jansen.

The German Artist Novel (1922)

Promoted to "Dr. Phil." in Freiburg in October 1922, his dissertation, *Der deutsche Künstlerroman—The German Artist Novel*—focused on the recurrent issues addressed in modern German fiction dealing with the artist's stress and frustration at the incompatibility of an aesthetic life and the painful exigencies of everyday existence. Marcuse's approach was consistent with that of historian Wilhelm Dilthey and the then-prevailing *Geisteswissenschaftliche Bewegung,* the reform movement in German higher education. This emphasized the post-war renewal of German culture through study of the humanities and social sciences (the *Geisteswissenschaften*) rather than through what in the U.S. today are called STEM disciplines, Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. The ostensibly neutral logical positivism and empiricism of the latter fields were thought to have left unchallenged the technocratic and dangerously imperial leadership mentality of Germany's recent militarist past. Dilthey proposed that the *Geisteswissenschaften* served as an organon of critical reflection on historical human reality and that human existence in society could best be understood out of historical works of literature.

The concluding sentence of Marcuse's dissertation highlights this same conviction, "Above and beyond the literary-historical problems, a piece of human history becomes visible: the struggle of the German people for a new community [*Gemeinschaft* rather than *Gesellschaft*]" (Marcuse [1922] 1978c, 333, my translation). His analysis is most striking when it assesses Goethe's concept of the artist's educated ripeness, maturity, and self-controlled sublimation. To Marcuse, the testimony of literature shows that a person's self-confidence and aplomb require a certain distance from any uncritical surrender to empty convention, immersion in a subjectively Romantic aestheticism, or engagement in radical mass organizations and social movements. In contrast Marcuse becomes critical of Germany's conservative and traditional liberal arts education in an essay of the mid-1930s "On the Affirmative Character of Culture" (Marcuse [1937] 1968a). German high art and high culture tend to "affirm" or replicate the repression of the established social order through a poetization and exoneration of the society's problems. Marcuse remained nonetheless convinced that there is a ground of reason in great literature and continued to pay close attention to educational philosophical issues throughout his life's work.

Hegel's Ontology and Heideggerian Marxism (1932)

After a brief hiatus compiling a bibliography on Friedrich Schiller at a publishing house back in Berlin, Marcuse returned to Freiburg from 1929 to 1933 to do post-doctoral work with Husserl and Heidegger. To qualify for an academic career the German university system required a post-doctoral dissertation directed by an academic chair. Thus, Marcuse completed his first Hegel book, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity,* with Heidegger.

The influence of a fundamental ontology upon Marcuse during this period was tangible and later gave rise to the term "Heideggerian Marxism" (Habermas [1978] 2013; Piccone & Delfini 1970) to describe Marcuse's thought (see also Wolin and Abromeit in Marcuse 2005a; Feenberg 2005). With the publication of *Hegel's Ontology* in 1932, Marcuse sought to have Heidegger sponsor it. Heidegger had reservations that were anti-Semitic, given Heidegger's explicit embrace of Nazism and his ascent from Chair of the Freiburg Department of Philosophy to the university chancellor's office in 1933. On the affinities of Heidegger's philosophy and fascism, Heidegger's antisemitism, and his recently discovered "Black Notebooks" see Richard Wolin's *The Politics of Being* (2016) and Olafson's (1977) interview with Marcuse about Heidegger (also in Jansen 1989 and Marcuse 2005a). Max Horkheimer offered to undertake the academic sponsorship of Marcuse at Frankfurt, home of the Institute for Social Research, but political circumstances led him to assist Marcuse with emigration instead. Horkheimer invited Marcuse to become associated with the newly established branch of the Institute at Geneva, and when the Frankfurt center moved to New York City's Columbia University in 1934, Marcuse joined its staff there.

The Frankfurt School in New York City (1934–1941)

At Columbia during the 1930s and 1940s, Marcuse wrote several essays, first published in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, but republished in 1968 as *Negations* (Marcuse 1968b). Thus, this academic refugee from the *Gleichschaltung* [legally enforced political conformity] during the Third Reich, began to elaborate his vision of critical theory of society.

The work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and their colleagues, will always be rightfully known as the work of the Frankfurt School, but the very concept "critical theory" is a product of the New York period of the Institute. The term was not utilized at all in Frankfurt and was first coined in the U.S.A. in essays written by Horkheimer ([1937] 1972) and Marcuse ([1937] 1968b). Marcuse developed a remarkable series of books, each an English-language original, that represented to the world the Frankfurt School's critical social theory: *Reason and Revolution* (1941), *Eros and Civilization* (1955), *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), *An Essay on Liberation* (1969a), and *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (1972). "Critical theory" for Marcuse was more than an Aesopian substitute for Marxism. He sought to raise the philosophy of Marx to its highest level.

Reason and Revolution (1941)

Reason and Revolution, Marcuse's second Hegel book, centers on the need for a transformed revolutionary philosophy. Much of the substance of *Hegel's Ontology* (1932) was incorporated into its first sections. In both books Marcuse highlights the convergence of Hegel's early writings on the ontological concept of "life"

(see Carneiro 2014; Reitz 2000) with the more mature Hegelian concept of mind (*Geist*). In the former, a turning inward of the mind (*Er-innerung*) is counterposed to a loss of mind in external phenomena of alienation (*Ent-fremdung*). In the latter, inwardness and introspection are thought to provide a key intellectual warrant for the "revolution." *Hegel's Ontology* had concluded with a section explicitly on Dilthey's theory of the humanities and social sciences, the study of which is required to grasp the meaning of being. *Reason and Revolution* was to think in a new way about the "and" in "reason and revolution" and transform Marx's primarily *economic* theory of the material human condition into Marcuse's culturally broadened critical theory.

> An *immediate* unity of reason and reality never exists …. As long as there is any gap between the real and the potential, the former must be acted upon and changed until it is brought into line with reason.
>
> *(Marcuse [1941] 1970, 11; see also Anderson & Rockwell 2012)*

The Frankfurt School in Washington (1942–1951)

By the time of the publication of *Reason and Revolution*, the Institute's self-funded budget was stressed, and Horkheimer encouraged Marcuse to find additional employment and to reduce his reliance on Institute resources. Horkheimer lowered Marcuse's salary in 1941 as a means of pressuring him into finding other sources of income and ultimately into separating himself monetarily from the Institute and its foundation, while continuing to identify intellectually with it (Wiggershaus 1988, 295, 331–332, 338). Thus, Marcuse took a position with the research branch of the Office of Strategic Services during WW II doing assiduous intellectual work against fascism. Archived projects from this period like "The New German Mentality," "State and Individual Under National Socialism," "German Social Stratification," have been published (Laudani 2013; Kellner 1998; Jansen 1998) and are treated at length in Müller (2010). Following the war, Marcuse continued to do research with the U.S. State Department on the new Soviet adversary.

Brandeis University, Eros and Civilization (1955)

From 1954 to 1965, Marcuse taught at Brandeis University, where he published *Eros and Civilization* (1955). This took up the dialectical frame of mind elucidated in *Reason and Revolution* in combination with the Left Freudian pursuit of a more humane society in which the social and psychological necessities of life and their fulfillment could coincide. In this work Marcuse explores Freud's metapsychology and the relationship between life instincts (Eros) and death instincts (Thanatos). Marcuse contends that life regulated by capitalism's performance principle is compatible with needless alienation. He contends that an alternative logic of

gratification needs to supplant the logic of domination. The pleasure principle is thought to persist as a subconscious memory of past states of fulfillment and joy; these also belong essentially to the worlds of art and literature. Marcuse argues the economic obsolescence of scarcity and the political obsolescence of domination, such that societal suffering could be replaced by the general societal satisfaction of human needs. Elaborating Schiller's *Letters on Aesthetic Education*, he propounds a militant aesthetic humanism to advance against alienation.

Soviet Marxism (1958)

In 1952, Columbia University's Russian Institute and, from 1954–1955, Harvard's Russian Institute supported the research and subsequent publication of Marcuse's study, *Soviet Marxism* (SM), in 1958. This depicted Soviet philosophy and politics as expressions of an untenable bureaucratism, technological rationality, aesthetic realism, etc. In this project Marcuse did something quite unique and unexpected, which set him apart from Cold War-fueled political writing at the time: having sharply and objectively criticized culture and politics in the Soviet Union, he fearlessly risked censure in the U.S. in explaining that both the Soviet and Western forms of political rationality had in common the prevalence of technical over humanistic elements in the development of the relations and forces of production.

Marcuse did not back away from profound criticisms of U.S. culture in SM that in 1958 might clearly have led him to be branded as "anti-American." This was a major departure from the much more cautious politics of the Horkheimer inner circle as well as from the conventional wisdom in the U.S. academic sphere. Marcuse felt confident enough to develop a clearly dialectical perspective, and in this manner, SM was crucial in the development of his critical theory. With the 1964 publication of *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM), Marcuse consolidated his key and most characteristic arguments to the effect that U.S. society and culture were likewise politically, economically, and intellectually, unfree.

One-Dimensional Man (1964)

Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM) addressed the problems of alienation and social control in advanced industrial societies as well as the closed universe of discourse and thought in modern ways of life. It continues today as his most influential work (Maley 2017; Lamas 2016 and *Radical Philosophy Review* 2016). Much of what I have to say about ODM and other of Marcuse's works (the "Repressive Tolerance" essay) I have already indicated in Chapter 1. Some slight repetitions may be noted in the following.

Marcuse believed alienation theory required revision because advanced capitalism had become a society of plenty rather than scarcity and because the condition of the working class had fundamentally altered. ODM is centrally concerned

with the new aspects of alienation resulting from the increasingly sophisticated exercise of the social control apparatus of corporate capitalism. According to its famous first sentence: "A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress" (Marcuse 1964, 1).

Marcuse argues the wholesale integration of the individual into mass society. Alienation consists in the total absorption of the personality into the processes and systems of capitalist commodity production. This gives rise to a new kind of totalitarianism, unlike that formerly characteristic of fascist societies.

By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic political coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc. (Marcuse 1964, 3).

Thus, emerges a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behavior in which ideas, aspirations and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. (Marcuse 1964, 12)

In *Eros and Civilization* Marcuse had specifically criticized schooling in advanced industrial societies, writing in opposition that "… the overpowering machine of education and entertainment … [unites us all] … in a state of anaesthesia…" (Marcuse [1955] 1966, 104). Even more troubling was the suppression of any vision of a genuinely democratic socialist society among intellectuals. "The intellectual and emotional refusal 'to go along' appears neurotic and impotent" (Marcuse 1964, 9). Theory is rejected as foreign and useless—

> The intellectual is called on the carpet. What do you mean when you say …? Don't you conceal something? You talk a language which is suspect. You don't talk like the rest of us, like the man on the street, but rather like a foreigner who does not belong here.
>
> *(Marcuse 1964, 192)*

ODM thus began a vital new way of understanding of the ideology of advanced industrial societies, building also on insights from his experience with, and critical study of, fascism in Germany. Marcuse had the civic courage to break through paralysis of critique, and he had the philosophical means due to his association with the thought of the Frankfurt School, Marxism, and classical German philosophy. "The fact that the vast majority of the population accepts, and is made to accept, this society does not render it less irrational and less reprehensible"

(Marcuse 1964, xiii). The critical Marxism of ODM sought to break through the "pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose" (Marcuse 1964, 19).

Technological Rationality and Reification. The technological achievements of advanced industrial systems are thought to have contributed to the establishment of one-dimensional social realities and social philosophies from which all contradiction has been eliminated. "Technology has become the great vehicle of reification—reification in its most mature and effective form" (Marcuse 1964, 168). This reification, as a reduction of rationality to calculative and operationalist modes, is *the* epistemological phenomenon characteristic of the oppressive tendencies in advanced technological cultures, wherever practice and theory have forsaken the human dimension of experience and reason in favor of a strictly instrumentalist or functionalist logic of discourse and action. Reason alienated in this manner may assume even the most inhuman tasks through the technological rationalization of methods of domination directed against society and nature. Andrew Feenberg argues that Marcuse's critical theory "seized on Lukács' concept of reification, which … became the basis of [his] critique of positivism and its dialectical reformulation of Marxist theory …. [His] aim is the establishment of a dialectical paradigm of rationality suited to the task of social self-understanding and human liberation" (Feenberg 1981, xii-xiii; see also 1991 and 2014). The critique of advanced industrial society's technological rationality becomes the revolutionary task of reason.

It was Marcuse who identified the political tendencies of advanced industrial societies toward the manipulation and indoctrination of the public mind, and who challenged the "total administration" (i.e. the closing) of the established cultural and political worlds. "At nodal points of the universe of public discourse, self-validating, analytical propositions appear which function like magic-ritual formulas. Hammered and re-hammered into the recipient's mind, they produce the effect of enclosing it within the circle of the conditions prescribed by the formula" (Marcuse 1964, 88). Today we might think of the familiar political phraseology of "No Child Left Behind," "Right to Work," "Equal Opportunity Employer," "Job Creators," etc. Marcuse castigated earlier forms of this one-dimensional thinking: "The meaning is fixed, doctored, loaded" (Marcuse 1964, 94).

Repressive Desublimation. ODM also introduces Marcuse's notion of repressive de-sublimation. Following a line of thinking from *Eros and Civilization,* he theorizes that the "… mobilization and administration of libido may account for much of the voluntary compliance … with the established society. Pleasure, thus adjusted, generates submission" (Marcuse 1964, 75). He explains that society's control mechanisms become even more powerful when they integrate sexually suggestive and explicitly erotic and violent content into advertising and the mass media and infuse these into the content of mass entertainment and popular culture. The unrestrained use of sex and violence by large-scale commercial interests accomplishes more effective social manipulation and control in the interest of capital accumulation than had repressive sublimation. Repressive *de*sublimation

substitutes reactionary emotional release in place of rebellion, and counter-revolutionary illusion in place of freedom.

As a critical philosophical work, ODM foregrounded and combated the empiricism, behaviorism, and the British and American perspectives on linguistic analysis that framed the ascendant functionalist schools of social and political thought. In England Ernest Gellner (like Marcuse a Jewish intellectual in exile from Nazi Germany) confronted the linguistic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Gilbert Ryle at Cambridge University through his 1959 book, *Words and Things,* which Marcuse (1964, 173) acknowledges in ODM. Gellner's book was supported by Bertrand Russell, and a huge row developed between Ryle and his defenders on the one side and Russell and Gellner on the other. This revealed the built-in theoretical blinders, silences, repressiveness, and false concreteness of our prevailing ways of thinking and acting.

It should be recalled that in the 1930s and 1940s Marxism found a variety of viable oppositional forms in the U.S.—from the black Marxists W.E.B. DuBois and Eugene C. Holmes (see Harris 1983) to Upton Sinclair, Herbert Aptheker, and Barrows Dunham. The near-Marxist "social reconstructionist" perspective in politics and education of George Counts, Merle Curti, and Theodore Brameld also thrived at Teachers' College, Columbia. By the 1950s and the Cold War, the situation had changed with the anti-communist mobilization in labor law (Taft-Hartley 1947) and in the culture at large (blacklisting of the Hollywood Ten, Paul Robeson, Pete Seeger, HUAC). "As late as 1959, the FBI's New York field office had only ten agents assigned to organized crime compared to over one hundred and forty agents pursuing a dwindling population of communists" (see Hortis in Gladwell 2014, 40). A U.S. form of *Gleichschaltung* was coordinating U.S. politics and culture with the general commodification and commercialization of social life. Wiggershaus (1988, 432) has emphasized that Horkheimer, especially, saw himself as a guest in this country that he was naturally sensitive about being seen as promoting "unAmerican ideas." Horkheimer and Adorno would also see the U.S. and German student movements as "anti-American," so they were careful to distance themselves from activist students, and from Marcuse. Marcuse was the subject of several FBI background investigations. The earliest was in 1943 in connection with his work for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). A second wave of inquiries, with regard to his loyalty to the U.S. during his 1950s employment by the State Department, discloses that the FBI consulted with HUAC concerning his case. During the 1960s he was also under surveillance in connection with his ties to the New Left and international student movements (see Gennaro & Kellner 2009).

Critical Theory and Bloom's "The Closing of the American Mind"

Marcuse understood the limits of liberal democracy (Farr 2009, 119–136; Marcuse 1972, 1), and how the notion of the "affluent society" actually masked a gravely unequal, patriarchal, and monocultural form of domination. Of course,

the conventional wisdom within the nation itself was largely oblivious to its own racism and other forms of prejudice. In 1987, conservative culture warrior, Allan Bloom, published *The Closing of the American Mind,* a bizarre attempt to turn the political tables and attack Herbert Marcuse's critical and cosmopolitan perspective. Bloom attributed a general decline in U.S. culture to what he considered the illegitimate popularization of German philosophy in the U.S. in the 1960s, especially Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Marcuse. Bloom argued that U.S. culture, entertainment, and education have imported "a clothing of German fabrication for [our] souls, which … cast doubt on the Americanization of the world upon which we had embarked" (Bloom 1987, 152). Kors and Silverglate joined in this attack and asserted that the philosophy of Herbert Marcuse is the intellectual progenitor of what they deplore as the contemporary tendency toward what they regard as "political correctness" in higher education (i.e. "closing the American mind" against the thinly veiled discriminatory views of Bloom that students and teachers alike recognized and rejected without difficulty as sexist and racist).

During the mid-1960s, Marcuse began an intellectual/political relationship with his student Angela Davis (Davis 2013, 2004). He also published his anti-racist essay, "Repressive Tolerance," at that time.

Conservative reform approaches to the humanities and a liberal arts education traditionally see them as serving universal aims and goals but fail to acknowledge that a discriminatory politics of race, gender, and class have distorted not only the curriculum, but also patterns of faculty hiring and student recruitment and support. As Marcuse knew, this is doubly ironic because the liberation movements which resisted each of these forms of political oppression were inspired *not* primarily by a politics of difference and special interests, but rather an intercultural (Fuchs 2005, 107–108) politics of solidarity and hope for human rights universally. In his essay "Marxism and Feminism," for example he writes:

> There can be discrimination against women even under socialism …. But the very goals of this [feminist] movement require changes of such enormity in the material as well as intellectual culture that they can be attained only by a change in the entire social system.
>
> *(Marcuse [1974] 2005, 166)*

Art in the One-Dimensional Society (1967)

Herbert Marcuse gave a lecture at the School of Visual Arts in New York City in March of 1967 entitled "Art in the One-Dimensional Society." He held that art provided a definite negation to the social status quo in that it remained committed to an instinctually fulfilling and emotionally gratifying socioeconomic order.

> If we can do everything with nature and society, if we can do everything with man and things—why can one not make them the subject-object in a pacified

> world, in a non-aggressive, aesthetic environment. The know-how is there. The instruments and materials are there for the construction of such an environment, social and natural, … for the creation of the beautiful not as ornaments, not as surface of the ugly, not as museum piece, but as expression and objective of a new type of man; as biological need in a new system of life.
> *(Marcuse [1967] 1973, 65)*

Marcuse argued for the redirection of the course of technological progress and for the subordination of scientific-technical goals to the fulfillment of the mature, material, sensual, and aesthetic needs of the human race. "Not political art, not politics as art, but art as the architecture of a free society" (Marcuse [1967] 1973, 65–66). Art acts against alienation and de-humanization; aesthetic activity is a starting point for the rehumanization of history. This is a strong statement of the interventionist mission of the artist into the transformation of society. Of course, "The rest is not up to the artist. The realization, the real change which would free men and things, remains the task of political action" (Marcuse [1967] 1973, 67).

Demonstration, Confrontation, Rebellion (1969)

What the aesthetic dimension does offer is a new sensibility (Marcuse 1969a, 23), an insight into an *aesthetic ethos* (Marcuse 1969a, 24), that subverts the existing one-dimensional order. The aesthetic reality recovers a sense of the human species essence in its universal aspects. "The universal comprehends in one idea the possibilities which are realized, and at the same time arrested, in reality" (Marcuse 1964, 210). The concrete and critical dimension of art discloses the inevitably conflicted condition of human culture. The aesthetic ethos restores humanity's most rational enterprise: seeking the convergence of gratification and universal human need, society and human dignity, art and politics: "the development of the productive forces renders possible the material fulfillment of the *promesse du bonheur* expressed in art; political action—the revolution—is to translate this possibility into reality" (Marcuse 1958, 115). This is the promise of bliss, good fortune, genuine civic satisfaction, and success in life. Yet art unites the opposites of gratification and pain, death and love, freedom and repression. Only because of this can art seriously represent what Marcuse takes to be the conflicted, tragic, and paradoxical substance of human life.

An Essay on Liberation (1969a) is among Marcuse's most militant and hopeful works. It furnished a scorching attack on the culture of corporate capitalism and the destructiveness of imperialist aggression:

> This society is obscene in producing and indecently exposing a stifling abundance of wares while depriving its victims abroad of the necessities of life; obscene in stuffing itself and its garbage cans while poisoning and burning the scarce foodstuffs in the fields of its aggression; obscene in the words

> and smiles of its politicians and entertainers; its prayers, in its ignorance, and in the wisdom of its kept intellectuals.
>
> *(Marcuse 1969a, 7–8)*

Marcuse dedicated this book to the protesters who took to the streets of Paris in May and June 1968. He emphasizes the need for a "radical change in consciousness" (Marcuse 1969a, 53) as a prerequisite to emancipatory social activity: "Historically, it is again a period of enlightenment prior to material change—a period of education, but education which turns into praxis: demonstration, confrontation, rebellion" (Marcuse 1969a, 53) (Figure 2.2).

FIGURE 2.2 Marcuse stood in solidarity with student protesters, no place or date, but probably on the campus of the University of California at San Diego
Source: Herbert Marcuse Special Collection, Archive Center, Goethe University Library, Frankfurt. Courtesy of Peter Marcuse, with special thanks to Peter-Erwin Jansen.

The Aesthetic Ethos as a Social and Productive Force

Economic processes today divest us of our own creative work, yet these also form the sources of our future social power. A comprehensive critical social theory must stress the centrality of labor in the economy. It must theorize the origins and outcomes of economic and cultural oppression and be engaged politically by the labor force to end these abuses. Within this context Marcuse also theorizes the "aesthetic ethos of socialism" (Marcuse 1969a, 48).

> Released from the bondage to exploitation, the imagination, sustained by the achievements of science, could turn its productive power to the radical reconstruction of experience … the aesthetic … would find expression in the transformation of the *Lebenswelt*—society as a work of art.
>
> *(Marcuse 1969a, 45)*

Marcuse's aesthetic ethos was to function as a "*gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft,"* a social and productive force (Marcuse 1969a, 126). Marx's 1844 *Paris Manuscripts* poignantly highlighted that human beings could also produce in accordance with the laws of beauty. Marcuse would likewise stress, "The socialist universe is also a moral and aesthetic universe: dialectical materialism contains idealism as an element of theory and practice" (Marcuse 1972, 3).

Counterrevolution and Revolt (1972)

I indicated earlier in this volume that global economic polarization and growing immiseration brought to an end the "comfortable, smooth, democratic unfreedom" that Marcuse had theorized earlier: "the capitalist system requires the organization of counterrevolution at home and abroad …. Torture has become a normal instrument of 'interrogation' around the world" (Marcuse 1972, 1). The news media brought us recently disclosures almost daily about the U.S. military's use of torture and prisoner abuse (Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo), civilian massacres and war crimes (Fallujah, Haditha), and the loaded intelligence that the U.S. Defense Department desired as a pretext for the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Today the preventive counterrevolution entails intensifying political economic repression and inequalities (see Kellner 2003; 2012).

Transvaluation of Values and the Radical Goals of Socialism (1972–1974)

New Left radicals were conscious of the economy's potential to eliminate want and misery, and they had a new emphasis on quality of life, not just a secure subsistence. Marcuse prized this "emergence in the individual of needs and satisfactions which can no longer be fulfilled within the framework of the capitalist

system, although they were generated by the capitalist system itself" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 53). These included the struggle for the restoration of nature, women's equality, racial equality, and reduction in profitable waste.

> The New Left has spread the awareness that the whole thing is outdated, crooked, humiliating. That it does not *have* to be: that one can live differently . . . live without . . . the plastic beauty and real ugliness of capitalism. In other words: change—not as replacing one system of domination by another, but as the 'leap' into a qualitatively different stage of history, of civilization, *where human beings, in solidarity, develop their own needs and faculties*.
>
> *(Marcuse [1966–1976] 2017, 59–60)*

This New Left was radical because it represented the Great Refusal and because it projected the potentialities in the objective conditions; it anticipated possibilities not yet realized:

> The inner dynamic of capitalism changes, with the changes in its structure, the pattern of revolution: far from reducing, it extends the potential mass base for revolution, and it necessitates the revival of the radical rather than minimal goals of socialism.
>
> *(Marcuse 1972, 5)*

Socialism is a philosophy of authentic human existence and the fulfillment of both human needs and the political promise of our human nature, where creative freedom provides the foundation for satisfaction in all of our works. For a start human emancipation requires the decommodification of certain economic minimums: health care, child care, education, food, transportation, housing, and work, through a guaranteed income. These are transitional goals. Revolutionary goals envisage a more encompassing view of liberation and human flourishing flowing from a transvaluation of values.

Global Capitalism and the Radical Opposition (1974–1975)

A few years ago, Peter-Erwin Jansen discovered Herbert Marcuse's 1974 Paris lectures at Vincennes University in the Frankfurt Marcuse archive, which he and I have since co-edited and published (Marcuse [1974] 2015a). The lectures were delivered following the global upheavals characterized by the emergence of the New Left, the counterculture, the women's movement, ecology movement, gay and liberation movement, and other widespread, organized efforts of the day. These lectures possess an uncanny applicability today. Given the crisis of global finance capital, higher education must encourage students and faculty alike to examine the conditions that serve to perpetuate the increasingly volatile realities of political, economic, and cultural life in the U.S. and the militarized processes

of U.S.-led global polarization. Marcuse's analysis discerns a dialectic of ripening and rotting:

> I suggest to analyze this problem in the classical Marxian terms, namely, that the very forces which make for the preservation and for the growth of the capitalist system are also the forces which make for its decline and eventual collapse. This is the classical dialectical conception, and I've found that it is the only one that gives, or may give us, an adequate understanding of what is going on.
>
> *(Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 37).*

American society represents the "highest stage in the development of monopoly capitalism" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 21): the U.S. is exporting production itself from the metropolitan countries to other capitalist and pre-capitalist countries with lower production costs. There is a fusion of political, economic, and military power in which the representatives of particular corporate interests lead the government. The population, generally managed without overt force through advanced forms of political economic manipulation, is controlled through the systematic increase in the power of the police. Enforcement keeps itself within the framework, although reduced framework, of the patterns of unfreedom that pass for American democracy. Further, "You know too well, I suppose, the progress which by virtue of the electronic industry has been made in surveilling an entire population secretly, if desired" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 23). These points are quite prescient given our new awareness of the regularity of police killings of unarmed black men in the U.S. after incidents such as Ferguson and Baltimore and Edward Snowden's revelations.

These lectures valorize a classical Marxian view of political economy. Today this has won wide acceptance among a range of anti-globalization activists and in the more radical circles of the Occupy movement and Black Lives Matter. Marcuse's comprehensive view of the Left sees in it: "the opposition in the labor movements, the opposition among the intelligentsia, and the opposition in the women's liberation movement. They all have one thing in common, namely … new motives for revolution, new needs for revolution, and new goals for revolution" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 53–54). He argues that abundance and peace, as revolutionary goals, are attainable and realistic.

The key question he poses is whether radical and oppositional forces are gaining power. Increasing numbers of individuals are no longer adhering to the operational values that essentially help keep the system going. Prospects for radical change and the "possible advent of a free socialist society" are warranted expectations (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 69).

Marcuse warned against the theory that "knowledge workers" were becoming a new class. While knowledge was becoming a decisive productive force, "the application of knowledge in the process of production remains dependent on the actually ruling class" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 15).

In the last publication undertaken in his lifetime, "The Reification of the Proletariat," Marcuse announced a valorization and vindication of the proletariat: "Can there still be any mystification of who is governing and, in whose interests, of what is the base of their power?" (Marcuse, 1979, 23).

In addition, the women's liberation movement is key to the transformation of civilization's traditionally patriarchal values, and central to the "new goals and possibilities of the revolution" (Marcuse [1974] 2015a, 60; 2005b).

The Aesthetic Dimension (1977–1978)

Near the end of his life Marcuse reconsidered the emancipatory potential of great art. His final book, *Die Permanenz der Kunst* (1977)—*The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978a), moves away from the radical notion of the aesthetic as *gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft*. Great art is revolutionary instead because it is "an indictment of the established reality [and] the appearance of the image of liberation" (Marcuse 1978a, xi). "[T]he world formed by art is recognized as a reality which is suppressed and distorted in the given reality" (Marcuse 1978a, 6). The aesthetic form, as such, invalidates an oppressive society's dominant norms, needs, and values:

> The aesthetic transformation is achieved through a reshaping of language, perception, and understanding so that they reveal the essence of reality in its appearance: the repressed potentialities of man and nature. The work of art thus re-presents reality while accusing it.
>
> *(Marcuse 1978a, 8)*

Great works of art disclose life's dialectical permanencies and universals and are always a manifestation of the struggle for liberation (Tauber 2015; Kangussu 2006). The aesthetic form preserves the unchanging internal conflicts of human life, spanning the contradictions between illusion and reality, falsehood and truth, joy and death. This inner aesthetic dimension involves a sensitivity to the "inexorable entanglement of joy and sorrow, celebration and despair, Eros and Thanatos" (Marcuse 1978a, 16). These contradictory forces constitute reality "for every human being" (Marcuse 1978a, 6). The sensuous power of beauty imaginatively subordinates death and destructiveness to non-aggressive life instincts and heralds a logic of gratification that is required precisely because of its societal absence.

If some forms of art are estranging and transcendent their ambivalence may be taken as escapism, yet it retains its power of opposition (Guadalupe-Silveira, 2010). Critique and protest are inherent in the separation of art from life.

Art's critical task is the disclosure of the tragical-beautiful paradox in life, and this is the hallmark of its truth.

Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society (1979)

It is not aestheticism, but (as I have indicated in my Introduction to this volume) a critique of the domination and violation of the earth and its people that occupied much of Marcuse's final year of life. See his essay, "Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society" (Marcuse [1979] 2011 in Kellner & Pierce 2011; see also Surak 2018). It is worth repeating his contention that:

> Under the conditions of advanced industrial society, satisfaction is always tied to destruction. The domination of nature is tied to the violation of nature. The search for new sources of energy is tied to the poisoning of the life environment.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 209)*

Marcuse had written earlier of ecological ruin in "Ecology and Revolution" ([1972] 2005b). Given the general destructiveness of modern society, Marcuse recognizes the need for a reconciliation of alienated humanity with the natural world, a pacification of the struggle for existence. This requires a change in the conditioned needs of individuals—away from that generated by the mechanism of repressive desublimation, which promises compensatory satisfactions for a totally commercialized and commodified life—toward new sensibilities. As noted in the previous chapter, Marcuse emphasized that the existing structure of needs is being subverted. "Marcuse rooted his philosophy in the early Marx's philosophical naturalism and humanism" and "the struggle for a society without violence, destruction, and pollution was part of Marcuse's vision of liberation" (Kellner & Pierce 2011, 217, 219).

Marcuse's Challenge to Education

Marcuse's social philosophy and aesthetic philosophy have become quite widely known (Miles 2012); his work on ecology and women's liberation less so. His philosophy of education deserves much wider recognition. Recent contributions include the book by Douglas Kellner, Tyson E. Lewis, and Clayton Pierce *On Marcuse: Critique, Liberation, and Reschooling in the Radical Pedagogy of Herbert Marcuse* (2009); the essay collection, *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (edited by Kellner, Cho, Lewis, and Pierce 2009); works by Arnold Farr (2015) and Reitz (2016a, 2015, 2009a, 2009b, 2000).

I have mentioned in Chapter 1 that Marcuse's ([1968] 2009) educational philosophy is rooted in the need for a transvaluation of values:

> [It is] no longer sufficient to educate individuals to perform more or less happily the functions they are supposed to perform *in this* society or extend "vocational" education to the "masses." Rather … [we must] … educate men and women who are incapable of tolerating what is going on, who have really learned what *is* going on, has always been going on, and why, and who are educated to resist and to fight for a new way of life.
>
> *(Marcuse [1968] 2009, 35)*

Teachers and students in the liberal arts and sciences were admonished to be critically engaged with the materials under study, to "become partisan, that is, against oppression, moronization, brutalization" (Marcuse 2009, 38) and for the better future condition of the human race as Marcuse characterized the Enlightenment goal of Kant's educational philosophy (Marcuse 1972, 27).

Marcuse's Philosophical and Political Legacy

Marcuse's critical theory has led to a recovery of the emancipatory dimension of philosophy in key sectors of the humanities and social sciences. A "Legacy of Herbert Marcuse" conference was held at UC Berkeley in 1998, and the contributions published (Abromeit & Cobb, 2004) offering a rich context of critical scholarship. The International Herbert Marcuse Society, founded in 2005, conducts bi-annual conferences attracting theorists and activists from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Mexico, and Brazil (see: marcusesociety.org). A substantial online resource — http://marcuse.org/herbert/index.html — the "Herbert Marcuse Official Homepage" is maintained by Marcuse's grandson, Harold Marcuse. The *Radical Philosophy Review* (2013, 2016, 2017) has published four issues devoted to new Marcuse studies of which the general editor maintains: "The revival of interest in Marcuse's work in recent years is occurring amidst a resurgence of radical politics and radical theory testifies to its continuing relevance for conceptualizing and challenging the forces of oppression and domination" (Andrew Lamas 2016, 2; see also Lamas 2017). The five new lectures, *Transvaluation of Values and Radical Social Change,* (Marcuse [1966–1976] 2017) just published by Jansen, Surak, and Reitz for the International Herbert Marcuse Society, further demonstrate that Marcuse's critical theorizing continues to rouse the political ingenuity and action to advance materially toward humanity's non-alienated character, conscience, and culture.

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3

THE ACTIVIST POLITICAL LEGACY OF *ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN*

One-Dimensional Man (ODM) has been often misunderstood as an anti-manifesto of the paralysis of the critical mind, oppositional politics, and a deep philosophical pessimism.[1] There are reasons for this in Marcuse's text, for example the heading to his Introduction: "The Paralysis of Criticism: Society Without Opposition." Another recurring reference in secondary literature is to the final line of ODM, a quotation from Walter Benjamin, given in German with Marcuse's English translation: "Nur um der Hoffnungslosen willen ist uns die Hoffnung gegeben. It is only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us."[2]

We are given hope for the sake of those without it. Yet, hopelessness is often taken to be ODM's overriding theme. Arnold Farr gives a more balanced account: "I have claimed that this book represents one of Marcuse's apparent pessimistic moments, but Marcuse never gives in to pessimism."[3] Largely on the basis of ten newly discovered guest lectures presented at various universities between 1966 and 1976 (Marcuse 2017, found in the Frankfurt Marcuse Archive by my colleague, Peter-Erwin Jansen, and recently published with my co-editors, Jansen and Sarah Surak) I will show in this chapter how Marcuse challenged the reader to recognize that the most important duty of the intellectual was to be serious: to work hard, to care—to investigate destructive social circumstances—and to be engaged in activities of transformation toward the most radical goals of liberation and human flourishing. I will also add historical context for a more concrete understanding that ODM contributed vitally to a new way of understanding U.S. culture by bringing de-provincializing insights from Marcuse's experience with fascism in Germany and through Marcuse's solidarity with the U.S. civil rights movement.

Marcuse's essentially hopeful activism (that allowed him to be heralded as the philosopher of the student revolts of the 1970s) was rooted in the "transvaluation

of values", which he saw as already embodied within the radical opposition forces of the late 1960s. Our 2017 publication, *Transvaluation of Values and Radical Social Change*[4] and our 2015 volume, *Herbert Marcuse's 1974 Paris Lectures at Vincennes University*[5] document Marcuse's appreciation for the growth of the radical opposition to global capitalism.

In a provocative lecture to students at UC Berkeley in 1967 entitled "Protest and Futility" Marcuse acknowledged and repudiated late capitalism's systems of social control and its ability to "administer" the population. Furthermore, he railed against a deluded optimism of inevitable future progress (17; numbers in parentheses that follow refer to Marcuse's *Transvaluation of Values,* 2017) and a population which is "willing to buy the goods and buy the system which produces the goods. They are willing to pay the price in money—the price in human lives is paid by others and far away" (19). He also makes clear: "All protest appears futile vis-à-vis the monolithic power of the whole" (24). And yet:

> Is perhaps the talk of futility itself a rationalization, or the effect of indoctrination and propaganda? And is there not another catalyst of change—potential catalyst to be sure—appearing in the productive process itself?
>
> A group which holds indeed key positions on which the material reproduction of the society depends, namely: the scientists, technicians, experts who project, construct, and check the apparatus of production and destruction. Nightmare of the Old Left: are they perhaps the historical heir of the proletariat? The weakest link in the chain of control?
>
> Certainly not today; but they might become aware of the fact that technique and science and not only applied science, are used as political and material weapons against humanity. Already today, they could stop the slaughter—if they would act in solidarity, if they feel the vital need for solidarity! (24–25)

In his 1974 *Paris Lectures* he continues with his broadened view of the Left seeing in it:

> unorthodox forms of the opposition. The facts are well known: An unheard of degree of absenteeism, simply staying away from work . . . . disgust simply with the work . . . this is still imposed upon the worker in spite of the ever more obvious obsolescence of these conditions (63).

In his estimation the number of individuals who no longer adhere to the operational values that replicate the system is growing. Marcuse discusses the historical agents and subjects of social change under three headings, each of which he sees as having primarily a preparatory, educational function:

The Working Class

> What is actually happening at this stage of capitalist development is not the emergence of a new working class but a vast extension of the working class, an extension of the working class to strata of the middle classes which at previous stages of capitalism have been independent (46; numbers in parentheses that follow refer to page numbers in Marcuse's *Paris Lectures,* (1974) 2015).

Within this, in 1974, wildcat strikers and small groups of blacks and Chicanos were the most radical. "This small minority may very well be the beginning of a process which may well threaten the system as a whole" (67). Working class for Marx and Marcuse meant all those, whether employed or unemployed, whose income is dependent upon wages and salaries in exchange for labor, rather than those whose income flows primarily from property holdings, in the form of dividends, interest, profit, or rent, i.e. as returns to capital. Despite attempts by "capital to intensify and enlarge the division within the working class itself," (67) … "a potentially revolutionary attitude expresses itself outside and against the trade union bureaucracy" (62–63).

Marcuse makes clear that he never said that the working class could be replaced by any other force (i.e. a "knowledge class") in the transition from capitalism to socialism. His discussion here is lengthy and makes his analytical position absolutely clear. Labor's recognition of the obsolescence of alienated toil has become more and more palpable, even if workforce rebellion has noticeably quieted. "In the place of a still not actually revolutionary working class, the preparatory educational political work of such groups as students assumes all-important significance" (8). He sees the composition of the workforce as changing, and its opposition is still not organized on a mass scale. Yet within it, in 1974, there were evident forms of unorthodox opposition: absenteeism, sabotage, unauthorized strike actions by militant autoworkers, etc. There had emerged the widespread "new sensibility," which he believed heralded and constituted a "realm of freedom, joy, creative work" (52). "No specific group can substitute, can replace the working class as the subject and agent of radical social change" (60).

The Intelligentsia, Mainly the Student Movement

"I have never said that … students could be a replacement" (8) for the working class. In fact, Marcuse recognizes that the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s had quite collapsed; that it needed to regroup after disappointment and prepare for the long-haul. Yet movement students and public intellectuals as independent and critical thinkers could educate the nation! Marcuse warned against the theory that "knowledge workers" were becoming a new class. While knowledge was becoming a decisive productive force,

> the application of knowledge in the process of production remains dependent on the actually ruling class. The vast majority of these so-called knowledge

> workers do not by themselves make decisions which actually would control the development of the economy. Their knowledge and at least the application of their knowledge remains subordinated to this interest (15).

The Women's Liberation Movement

Marcuse also underscores his belief that the women's movement is potentially one of the most important political forces for system change. This movement is seen as key in the transformation of civilization's traditionally patriarchal values, and this is central to what he sees as the "context of the enlarged depth and scope of the revolution, of the new goals and possibilities of the revolution," (60) such that the movement for the liberation of women finds momentous significance. In the same year in which he delivered these Paris lectures, Marcuse's essay, "Marxism and Feminism," stressed that the feminist movement required "changes of such enormity in the material as well as intellectual culture that they can be attained only by a change in the entire social system" (Marcuse [1974] 2005, 166).

In a mock statement that he pretended was "off the record, because all of these things [recording devices in the Vincennes lecture hall] are on," Marcuse made a clear declaration:

> I do believe, as I said, there will be a socialist revolution. I do believe that in order to be really global and successful it will have to occur, as Marx foresaw, in the most highly-developed industrial country in the world, and in order to come about it will take a time of at least 75 to 150 years. Now there you have it (34).

The production of luxuries and waste, planned obsolescence, was taken as an indication that capitalism is producing its own negation, that a society of authentic abundance requires liberation from the logic of capitalist accumulation.

> In other words, it is not the threat of impoverishment, it is not dire material privation and need, but on the contrary, it is the reproduction and recreation of increasing social wealth, it is the high standard of living on an enlarged scale, which ushers in the end of capitalism. This is the Twentieth Century form of the Marxian concept according to which the law of capitalist development is at the same time the law of the decay and eventual breakdown of capitalism (48–49).
>
> If this is correct, it would mean that we have to become aware of the real possibility of a revolution in the most advanced industrial countries taking place not on a basis of poverty and misery, but rather on the basis of wasted abundance. And if this paradoxical concept is correct, it would mean that we

have to become aware of new motives for revolution—new motives for revolution and new goals of revolution (49).

[I]t seems to me that only a decisive redirection of production itself would in this sense be a revolutionary development. A total redirection of production, first of all, of course, towards the abolition of poverty and scarcity wherever it exists in the world today. Secondly, a total reconstruction of the environment and the creation of space and time for creative work; space and time for creative work instead of alienated labor as a full-time occupation …. The abolition of waste, luxury, planned obsolescence, unnecessary services and commodities of all kinds may well mean a lower standard of living, which may not be a price too high to pay for the possible advent of a free socialist society (69).

One-Dimensional Man and the Backdrop of Fascism

Herbert Marcuse was a Jewish-German academic refugee from the *Gleichschaltung*[6] and worse during the German Third Reich. The *Gleichschaltung* was the fascist practice of forcing everyone in society to "toe the line" and all political opposition to submit. In 1933 Marcuse was acutely aware of the damage this did to the culture that promoted it, and he fled. In 1934, he was the first member of the staff of the Frankfurt Institute to arrive in New York City and represent it in exile at Columbia University.[7]

With the 1964 publication of *One-Dimensional Man* (ODM), Marcuse consolidated his key and characteristic argument that U.S. culture is likewise politically and economically manipulated and controlled. Alfred Schmidt's German translation of ODM actually uses the German word, *Gleichschaltung*, where Marcuse writes of *coordination*

> not only a terroristic political coordination [Schmidt: *Gleichschaltung*] of society, but also a non-terroristic political coordination [Schmidt: *Gleichschaltung*] … operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. *(Marcuse 1964, 3)*

Marcuse's experience with fascism in Germany contributed to a new way of understanding U.S. culture. Where Allan Bloom had attributed a general decline in U.S. culture to what he considered the illegitimate popularization of German philosophy in the U.S., I contend, in contrast, that the life and theory of Herbert Marcuse led to a profoundly needed deprovincialization of the American mind: he offered a profoundly open, multidimensional, proto-multicultural, and Marxist social analysis to the essentially single-dimensional Anglo-American view of the world. That is to say, he offered a comparative and multidisciplinary approach, drawing from works of literary art and heterodox perspectives in political economy, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and history.

Deprovincialization

"Deprovincialization" is a concept I encountered in a talk by Washington University (St. Louis) literary historian and Germanist, Egon Schwarz. After WW II, German departments everywhere were infused with elements *critical* of German fascism and German nationalism. Schwarz acknowledges how this led to progressive seminars on Heine, expressionism, Marxism and the Frankfurt School, etc., and to the hiring of progressive cosmopolitan faculty. Schwarz was born into a Jewish family in Vienna and as a young man took refuge in the Americas during the Nazi period. He was keenly aware of the cultural inadequacy of the Austrian or German *Spiessbürger*, the narrow-minded and self-satisfied conformists susceptible to nationalist political illusions and manipulation. Yet the easy espousal of the Vietnam War by nice and "loyal" and gullible Americans in the 1960s also deepened his understanding of the support given by the "good" Germans to Hitler during the 1930s.[8] It was his conviction that the great migration of refugee scholars from Europe and elsewhere to the U.S. after WW II brought a much needed deprovincialization to academic life in the U.S.A. This deprovincialization hinged on the process of building a larger historical and social context for the understanding—necessary both in authentically democratic politics and critical literary scholarship. This process thus has connotations of *Bildung, Bildungshumanismus*, and *paideia*. When these classical ideals of education function as forms of critical multicultural pedagogy, we come to know ourselves as members of a cosmopolitan human community such that we can celebrate our diversity and seek equality and empowerment within a democratic partnership polis.

"Deprovincialization" is to be found in no list of termini technici that I know of. Let me further define it then as a philosophical countercurrent to the logical fallacy and obstacle to critical thinking of provincialism. According to Howard Kahane's and Nancy Cavender's (2006) *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric*, provincialism is the tendency to see things only from the point of view of those in charge of our immediate in-groups.[9] This generates an easy (if in many respects ethnocentric, and ultimately specious) loyalty to the local and customary.

Hegel has some observations that are pertinent with regard to provincialism: "What is familiar is not known simply because it is familiar." […] "God, nature, the understanding, the sensibility, etc., are presupposed as familiar and valid foundations without having been scrutinized, and they are accepted as fixed points of departure and return." Against this kind of lack of sophistication, he says: "the spirit that educates itself matures slowly and quietly … dissolving one particle of the edifice of its previous world after the other."[10]

Hegel thus drew upon Kant's Enlightenment philosophy of education that saw such parochialism as a species of humanity's *selbstverschuldeten Unmündigkeit,*[11] our congenital reluctance (and hence our common incapacity) to think beyond the given, such that we cede our own agency and lend our consent and "voluntary compliance" (ODM, 75) to forms of political and religious subordination. "It's so

comfortable to have others lead us"[12] says Kant, foreshadowing Heidegger on inauthenticity, Fromm on the escape from freedom, and Marcuse on single-dimensionality.

Kahane and Cavender (2006) note that provincialism is instantiated at various levels, in terms of individuals, families, towns, nations, and institutions such as the corporate media. They emphasize that we Americans, for instance, pay relatively little attention to the peoples of the rest of the world and misconstrue what is happening there. Thus, we fail to notice how the U.S. government has toppled several democratically elected governments around the world (Iran, Guatemala, and Chile come to mind), yet we believe that we are a nation founded upon principles of democracy and fair play. My colleague Lloyd Daniel has addressed this issue as well: "From the beginning when we murdered the people who were here first, the Native people, we were sure it was a democracy. When we enslaved African people to pimp their backs for profit, we were sure it was a democracy. When half the Americans had no right to vote, for over 100 years after the beginning of the nation, we knew it was a democracy …. And now that we engage in a genocidal air war against the people of Iraq, we are sure that it is in the name of democracy."[13]

So deprovincialization, for me, carries with it a notion of the demythologization of a range of American myths that taken together in their unreconstructed form comprise a hagiography of "The American Pageant" (as many high school and college history texts are similarly titled) giving us Horatio Alger on meritocratic individualism and limitless opportunities; Manifest Destiny and American moral supremacy; WASP-conformity and its monocultural emphasis on the covert and overt racial superiority of whites (discussed also in the summary assessment of ODM in Chapter 2). In short, deprovincialization through multicultural education reform counteracts the dominant order's necessary illusions about class, race, and gender.[14]

The Recovery of Philosophy

Marcuse's efforts to deprovincialize U.S. culture and education actually led to a recovery of philosophy in some quarters of the academy in the post-1960s United States, especially among a new generation of scholars in the humanities and social sciences who became more conscious than ever of issues arising from conflicts involved in our political, moral, and academic culture.[15] Philosophy itself has of course never been wholly in the possession of any single school of thought; instead, it has developed out of a clash of opposing views.

After World War II, empiricism, logical positivism, and ordinary language philosophy generally prevailed as the underlying scholarly methodology in U.S. graduate schools and within the undergraduate curricula as well. European approaches such as phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, and critical theory tended to be suppressed at several of the most prestigious private and the largest state universities.

Although Marcuse died in 1979, the philosophical upheavals which developed throughout the 1980s in the American Philosophical Association (APA), for example those splitting "analysts" and "pluralists,"[16] were due, in definite measure, to his wide influence. Marcuse's perspective was of course one of those championed by the pluralists in the 1980s, and Marcuse himself had articulated the criticisms voiced in ODM also in his address as president of the APA's Pacific Division in 1969 mentioned in this volume's Introduction.

Critics of the APA's leadership argued that the association was administered by an entrenched set of philosophers for whom a narrowly conceived technical analysis of logic and language is taken to define the most valuable approach to the discipline. The dissenters argued that the Deweyian heritage of looking at philosophical issues in the context of actual social, political, and cultural conflict had been driven underground. Continental European influences and venerable non-Western approaches were seen as being too often relegated to the margins of the profession. Today, the pluralists have gained entry to APA circles and are influential in programming and leadership, but these issues are far from being fully resolved. Letters in the APA *Proceedings* have contended that this debate was exaggerated and unfruitful, and some even denied that there was such a thing as an analytic school. In a 1981 account published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Bruce Wilshire commented: "Analysts tend to believe that there is a single right method or technique for attacking all philosophical problems." In the same space Wilfred Sellars recalled as well that: "When I was a student at Harvard in the late 1950s and early 1960s it never occurred to me to study Hegel. It was an axiom that it didn't amount to anything."[17]

I take the phrase "recovery of philosophy" from Yale professor and Dewey scholar, John E. Smith, who adopted it from Dewey himself.[18] Dewey had characterized this recovery as an attempt to liberate philosophy from its customary treatment in the American academy and to orient it anew to genuine societal problems, assessing complex questions of causality and the amelioration human suffering.[19] Smith was a leading advocate for the pluralists. His ally in this regard, Charles M. Sherover,[20] professor of philosophy at Hunter College, was quoted with reference to these controversies in a page one article in the *New York Times*. Sherover's contention was that the gatekeepers of the philosophy profession in the U.S.A. have admitted for the most part only persons with little philosophical inclination and interest: "You're much more likely to find philosophically inclined people outside of philosophy, because if you're philosophically inclined, you've probably been excluded."[21] The APA's own kind of *Positivistenstreit*[22] was underway at the end of 1989.

Of course, during the last three decades of the culture wars in the American academy, some forms of postmodernism (especially those predominately *a*sociological and anti-foundationalist) have again brought the categories of essence, ontology, so-called grand narratives, even science, into disrepute in favor of the social and linguistic gaming profoundly criticized by Marcuse in ODM. Even as

postmodernism was making sizable academic inroads however, ODM was republished in 1991 with a new introduction by Douglas Kellner—further testimony to its ongoing pertinence to continuing controversies.[23] In 2014 the ODM translation by Alfred Schmidt was also republished in Germany with commentary by Peter-Erwin Jansen.[24]

Emancipatory Education

The general framework of Marcuse's critical social theory dialectically sublated (through negation, preservation, and elevation) a central assumption of classical European philosophy: higher education may cultivate the political desire to help us accomplish our humanization. Philosophy, art, and social theory (i.e., the humanities and social and political history) can, by virtue of their admittedly elitist critical distance, oppose an oppressive status quo and furnish an intangible, yet concrete, revolutionary telos by which to guide both personal growth and emancipatory social practice.[25]

Marcuse was no sheer advocate of a *Bildungshumanismus*. He had been more than dubious of the traditionally conservative and politically apologetic or affirmative quality of high-serious German art and education in a 1937 *Zeitschrift* piece, "On the Affirmative Character of Culture," but he did believe that the traditional liberal arts philosophy also had a critical dimension. The liberal arts and humanities are not seen simply to transmit or to preserve (or as he says, to "affirm" or apologize for) the dominant culture. They make possible the very development of critical thinking and human intelligence itself.

Marcuse is attracted to the humanities, social philosophy, and political theory because their subject matter and methodology are thought to focus upon questions of the meaning of human experience, rather than on the sheer description of conditions (this latter procedure being rejected as the non-philosophical approach of behaviorism and empiricism). He regards classical learning by means of discourse and reflection on history, philosophy, literature, drama, music, painting, sculpture, etc., as liberating insofar as these propel humanity beyond the "first dimension" (the realm of conformity to what is). "The substantive universal intends qualities which surpass all particular experience, but persist in the mind, not as a figment of the imagination nor as mere logical possibilities, but as the 'stuff' of which our world consists" (Marcuse 1964, 213). Learning involves insight into the multidimensional world of significance and meaning that allows us to re-create life in accordance with the highest potentials of human beings. The rational work of man is man, to become who we are (Marcuse 1964, 24).

Marcuse stressed anew the necessity of addressing the radical goals of socialism. I argue here and elsewhere that he envisioned the most radical aims of socialism as the liberation and human flourishing that can only come from the revolutionary passage from work for wages and salaries to what I have called common*work* for the common*wealth*.[26]

I have touched on this before, but the very last piece that Marcuse published (in 1979) argues against his previous emphasis in *One Dimensional Man* on the system-integration of the consciousness of the workforce. His essay, "The Reification of the Proletariat,"[27] discusses Rudolf Bahro's theory of "surplus consciousness"[28] and in his estimation, under the changed socio-economic conditions of 1977–1978, a "counter-consciousness" was already emerging that made it possible for the awareness "of the underlying population [to be] penetrated by the inherent contradictions of capitalism."[29] "Can there still be any mystification of who is governing and in whose interests, of what is the base of their power?"[30]

On the educational front, Marcuse advised critical educators and students to continue to take risks and struggle to infuse the curriculum with analysis of the "critical, radical movements and theories in history, literature, philosophy."[31] He believed that education could act against our one-dimensional culture and our economic oppression.

Marcuse saw within the classical liberal arts philosophy critical impulses toward multiculturalism, social history, and critical social theory. Since the venerable liberal arts tradition has been historically (and inseparably) tied to a realistic and normative concept of eidos and essence (as per Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas, Hegel, and Husserl), we should not be surprised to find some modification of classical realism (and *not* the value relativism the conservative culture warriors claim) in Marcuse's aesthetics and ontology. Indeed, Chapter 3 of *One-Dimensional Man* highlights the importance of the aesthetic Form as the dimension where both reality and truth are disclosed. He also generally shares with Plato and Schiller the philosophical conviction that the most meaningful and beautiful works of art are also the soundest foundation for an education to political justice. ODM's Chapter 8 argues the historical reality of universals: "The universal comprehends in one idea the possibilities which are realized, and at the same time arrested, in reality" (Marcuse 1964, 210).

For Marcuse the curriculum must afford a world-historical, international, and multicultural perspective that examines the pivotal social struggles that have led to the emergence of various standards of criticism in ethics, in logic, in the worlds of art, physical science, production, technology, and politics. These standards constitute the historical and material (i.e. not merely abstract) philosophical criteria of judgment (norms) which intelligent social and political action requires.

Herbert Marcuse's writings as a whole display a caustic condemnation of U.S. military aggression, its need for an "enemy," the irrationality of U.S. economic waste, destruction, and wealth distortions, etc. They are all particularly timely and deserve invigorated attention across this nation's campuses as well as in other cultural and political circles today. We must credit it to Marcuse that the work of the Frankfurt School did become a prominent feature in key segments of American academia, albeit a feature now largely overtaken by the capitalist-driven degradation of education at every level. We must acknowledge, as Joseph Cunningham (2013) and Tanya Loughead (2015) have rightly stressed, the critical

landscape of academia has been levelled by capitalist ideology and the rise of the corporate university. While the Occupy movement was powered in part by college students, many of whom were familiar with Marcuse's texts, Marcuse's work and critical social theory more generally are now themselves exiled from the increasingly single-dimensional curriculum.[32]

And still!—Real necessity is building: lack of jobs and the economic crisis show the inadequacy of the existing paradigm. At the same time the continuing power and ongoing relevance of Marcuse's critical theory of society is remarkable: over the past decade a veritable Marcuse Renaissance has occurred through many new scholarly publications and conferences. These include several volumes of his posthumous papers, critical engagements with his thought, political/biographical accounts, and educational philosophical essays, etc. Marcuse's work helps us grasp theoretically, and possess politically, the economic processes that today divest us from our own creative work and communal wealth. This is the revolutionary legacy of *One-Dimensional Man*.

Notes

1 Allan Graubard, "One-Dimensional Pessimism," *Dissent,* May-June 1968; Stephen Whitfield, "Refusing Marcuse: 50 Years After One-Dimensional Man," *Dissent*, Fall 2014.
2 Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964) p. 257.
3 Arnold Farr, *Critical Theory and Democratic Vision: Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009) p.78.
4 Herbert Marcuse, *Transvaluation of Values and Radical Social Change: Five New Essays, 1966–76,* edited by Peter-Erwin Jansen, Sarah Surak, and Charles Reitz (Philadelphia: The International Herbert Marcuse Society, 2017).
5 Herbert Marcuse, *Paris Lectures at Vincennes University, 1974, Global Capitalism and Radical Opposition*. Philadelphia: The International Herbert Marcuse Society, [1974] 2015.
6 On the *Gleichschaltung* as the attempt to absolutely control public political discourse and legitimate the totalitarian rule of the Nazi state, see, Franz Neumann, Chapter 1.3, "Die Gleichschaltung des politischen Lebens" in his *Behemoth: Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus, 1933–1944* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988) pp. 79–85. Alfred Schmidt, German translator of ODM, chooses *Gleichschaltung* to render Marcuse's word, *coordination*, in the first paragraph of ODM. "Dass diese technische Ordnung eine politische und geistige Gleichschaltung mit sich bringt …" Herbert Marcuse, *Schriften 7, Der eindimensionale Mensch* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989) p. 21.
7 The Institute was housed at Columbia University through the efforts of sociologist Robert S. Lind and the good graces of Columbia's ostensibly conservative president, Nicholas Murray Butler, who was nonetheless proud of the distinguished reputations Columbia's progressive faculty in the 1930s (Charles Beard, Frank Tannenbaum, George Counts, and others). See Martin Jay's now classic history, *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973). Also, Rolf Wiggershaus, *Die Frankfurter Schule* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988).
8 Egon Schwarz, *Keine Zeit für Eichendorff* (Frankfurt: Büchergilder Gutenberg, 1992) p. 270.
9 Howard Kahane and Nancy Cavender, *Logic and Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth, 2006) p. 121.

10 G.W.F. Hegel, "Preface to the *Phenomenology,*" translated by Walter Kaufmann, (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1986) pp. 48, 20.
11 Immanuel Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung?* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1974) p. 9.
12 Kant, ibid.
13 Lloyd Daniel, "The Second Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr," in Charles Reitz (Ed.), *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren.* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, [2013] 2015) pp. 237–238.
14 One especially vibrant and critical multicultural anthology for English literature confronts the mythology of the model family, education as empowerment, true women and real men, the melting pot, land of liberty, etc. See Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lise (Eds.), *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). Also see, Tom Chrisoffel, David Finkelhor, and Dan Gilbarg (Eds.), *Up Against the American Myth: A Radical Critique of Corporate Capitalism Based Upon the Controversial Harvard College Course, Social Relations 148–149* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1970).
15 Already renowned in the 1970s as the "philosopher of the student revolts," Marcuse's philosophy of protest within *higher education* needs to be credited with having led many graduate students and faculty to challenge the increasing use of behavioral objectives in teaching and learning, performance-based criteria of intellectual competence, and the managerial language characteristic of the multiversity vision of the University of California's Clark Kerr.
16 For further background on this dispute see Bruce Wilshire, "The Pluralist Rebellion in the American Philosophical Association," in his *Fashionable Nihilism: A Critique of Analytic Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2002). Wilshire does not mention Marcuse; however, his own critique is essentially that of Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*. According to a negative review of Wilshire's account by David Hoekema, in 1984 President of the APA, the pluralists were "a loose alliance of adherents of post-Hegelian Continental philosophy or American pragmatism came together to challenge the continued dominance of analytic philosophers in the largest of the APA's three regional divisions [the Eastern Division], whose influence they perceived not only in selection of papers for publication and presentation but even in the work of regional accrediting agencies. Many of the outsiders represented graduate programs at Yale, Fordham, SUNY at Stony Brook, the New School for Social Research, and other programs with a significant non-analytic presence. Tired of watching the leading analytic philosophers place their friends and protégés in key positions on other graduate faculties and association committees, they decided to take action.

They were, in a word, mad as heck, and they weren't going to take it any longer." See David Hoekema, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* [online] 2002.10.04.

https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23083-fashionable-nihilism-a-critique-of-analytic-philosophy/
17 *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 21, 1981, p. 3.
18 John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy" in: John Dewey, *Creative Intelligence: Essays in the Pragmatic Attitude* (New York: Holt, 1917) pp. 3–69; Thomas P. Kasulis and Robert Cummings Neville (Eds.), *The Recovery of Philosophy: Essays in Honor of John Edwin Smith* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997).
19 Marcuse had areas of agreement with Dewey, but also at many junctures substantive differences with him (see Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1964) p. 167).
20 As far as I can ascertain no relation to Erica R. Sherover, Herbert Marcuse's third wife.
21 Charles M. Sherover in Richard Bernstein, "Philosophical Rift: A Tale of Two Approaches" *The New York Times*, December 29, 1987, p. A1. [Not to be confused with Richard J. Bernstein, philosophy professor at the New York City's New School of Social Research.]

22 The epistemological and ontological disputes between representatives of positivism in science, social science, and philosophy, like Karl Popper, and representatives of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, like Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse. See also this volume, Chapter 5 on the Popper-Adorno controversy.
23 The wide-spread admiration for Marcuse's critical perspective on the political concerns of philosophy had also been reflected in the manifold essays in his honor (twenty-six in all) published by Kurt H. Wolff and Barrington Moore, Jr., *The Critical Spirit* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1967).
24 Herbert Marcuse, *Der eindimensionale Mensch* (Springe, Germany: zu Klampen Verlag, 2014).
25 See Arnold Farr, "An Essay on Repressive Education: Marcuse, Marx, Adorno and the Future of Emancipatory Learning," in Charles Reitz (Ed.), *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015). Also, Charles Reitz, "Herbert Marcuse and the Humanities: Emancipatory Education vs. Predatory Capitalism," in Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce and K. Daniel Cho, *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009). Further, Charles Reitz, *Art, Alienation, and the Humanities: A Critical Engagement with Herbert Marcuse* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000).
26 Reitz and Spartan, in Charles Reitz (Ed.), *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015) p. 36. See also Charles Reitz, "A Labor Theory of Ethics and Commonwealth: Recalling a 'New' Marcuse" in Charles Reitz (Ed.), *Crisis and Commonwealth: Marcuse, Marx, McLaren* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, [2013] 2015). Elements of the latter work are included as this volume's Chapter 4.
27 Herbert Marcuse, "The Reification of the Proletariat," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory / Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Winter/Hiver) 1979.
28 Rudolf Bahro, *Die Alternative (*Köln/Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1977) p. 376ff. Also, Bahro, "The Alternative in Eastern Europe," *New Left Review,* No. 106. November–December, 1977.
29 Marcuse, "Reification …" op cit., p. 21.
30 Ibid., p. 23.
31 Herbert Marcuse, "Lecture on Education, Brooklyn College, 1968" in Douglas Kellner, Tyson Lewis, Clayton Pierce, K. Daniel Cho. *Marcuse's Challenge to Education* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009) p. 37.
32 Joseph Cunningham, "Praxis Exiled: Herbert Marcuse and the One-Dimensional University," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* [Britain], Vol. 47, No. 4, 2013. Tanya Loughead, *Critical University* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).

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4

A FOUNDATION FOR ETHICS IN COMMONWEALTH LABOR

> Work is love made visible.
>
> —*Kahlil Gibran*

> At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.
>
> —*Che Guevara*

> When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.
>
> —*Dom Hélder Câmara, former Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, Brazil*

This chapter utilizes a dialectical and materialist perspective to develop its understanding of an ethical core common to the wisdom traditions of the world's major religions as well as non-theistic humanist philosophy.[1] Through an examination of the essentially economic features of the human condition and the history of our species as socially active human beings, I have sought the pivotal criteria of conscience that can ascertain the concrete common goods undergirding the evaluation of moral practice. These are theorized as emerging from our sensuous practical activities, our subsistence strategies, and our earliest forms of communal labor in egalitarian partnership societies.

Our humanist ethical sensibilities arise within the fundamentally social and economic dimensions of our being. The theoretical starting point for this study is a critical examination of two of Herbert Marcuse's earliest essays, "On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics" and "New Sources on Historical Materialism."[2]

My engagement with Marcuse's philosophy is intended to reclaim *the critical* in his critical theory. I am pursuing a critical appreciation of what I call "Marcuse's

dialectic of commodity fetishism and reification" here and in Chapter 6. My perspective will illumine Marcuse's dialectical approach and locate a latent historical materialism in certain of his early writings, which are customarily regarded as having almost exclusively Heideggerian and phenomenological qualities and methods. I will emphasize his underappreciated understanding of the power of sensuous living labor to liberate itself from commodification and exploitation in order to make commonwealth the human condition. The details will be developed as this chapter unfolds.

Sensuous Living Labor

I have indicated in Chapter 1 that I find within the social philosophies of Marx and Marcuse a reconceptualization of the labor process and its meaning. Sensuous living labor is the elemental form of the human material condition. To recap my view:

Labor here is not to be reduced to any form of class circumstance. Sensuous living labor is the substrate of our being as humans. It is the foundation of our affective and intellectual capacities (and vulnerabilities), bio-ecologically developed within history. As a species we have endured because of our sensuous appreciation of our emergent powers: the power to subsist cooperatively; to create, communicate, and care communally within that form of society that I call a commonwealth. Humanity's earliest proverbs, fables, and riddles teach the survival power of partnership and cooperation and the categorical ethical advantages empathy, reciprocity, hospitality, and respect for the good in common. Humanity experiences the satisfactions / dissatisfactions derived from our bio-ecologically generated economic, aesthetic, intellectual, and moral standards gravitating toward the humanism of a communally laboring commonwealth. Having brought into being these universalizable value criteria, our cultural, political, and emotional conditions can be characterized as authentic (when consistent with the fullest potentials of our species being, i.e. what Marx called our *Gattungswesen),* or as alienated (when social power structurally distorts or denies humanity such authenticity).

Marcuse has been most notably recognized for his contention that the work force generally lacks a critical appreciation of the potential of a philosophy of labor to transcend existing society. "Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole" (Marcuse 1964, 2). Given capitalism's tendency toward periodic crisis, Marcuse certainly understood that this "smooth operation of the whole" is *not*, however, a permanent condition. In spite of dominant state of system-stability, regular episodes of economic collapse disclose that: "… forces and tendencies exist which may break this containment and explode the society" (Marcuse 1964, xv).

Marcuse's less-well-publicized analysis of the alienation and commodfication of labor acknowledges the power of the workforce to enact and lead social change (Marcuse 2015a, 1979, 1973a, 1973b). His assessment undergirds a theory of labor humanism aiming at the dis-alienation of our essentially sensuous and creative practical and productive activities. Public ownership of socially produced wealth is the revolutionary starting point[3] for labor that can transform the contemporary human condition and re-create the labor process to reflect fully our human potential. I stress in addition that incomes must be de-linked from private property ownership and reconnected to human needs, public work,[4] and public wealth.

According to Marcuse, socialism in its most radical sense is more than a theory of democratic government. It is a philosophy of authentic human existence and the fulfilment of both human needs and the political promise of our human nature, where creative freedom provides the foundation for satisfaction in all of our works. I have already indicated my contention that Marcuse and Marx asserted a radically materialist conception of the essence of socially active human beings: seen from the outside, we are the ensemble of our social relations; seen from the inside, we are sensuous living labor. As I shall elaborate later in this chapter, this core sensuousness is tended by our empathic human capacity to care, a capacity more primordial than Heidegger's *Sorgestruktur* [ontological care structure], going back to the empathic "humanism" found in the behavior of primates (de Waal 2013). Humanistic sensibilities characterize the social core of our being, our sensuous practical activities, our subsistence strategies, our communal labor.

Douglas Kellner's 1973 essay with regard to the concept of labor in the development of Marcuse's thought is a remarkable exception to a general neglect of this material and has been a key stimulus to my own commentary. During the 1930s and 1940s Marcuse ([1933] 1973) elaborated an "ontology of labor"—a philosophy grounded in the human condition as living labor. This ontology of labor is said to have its source, not in Heidegger, but in Marx and Hegel themselves, and this is reprised in Marcuse's little-known last publication dealing with the nature of the "proletariat," and his final thoughts reinforce the labor humanist and commonwealth foundations of the critical philosophy that he shares with Marx: "The working class still is the 'ontological' antagonist of capital" (Marcuse 1979).

Marcuse early on developed a critical study of work and social alienation looking at economic activity within the total complexity of other human activities and human existence in general. In his 1933 essay "On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics" labor is seen as the key activity by which humanity exteriorizes itself and also humanizes the world. In addition to persons directly involved in production, others like politicians, artists, researchers, and clergy also *do work,* and in his estimation are members of the labor force. He contends that "labor is an ontological concept of human existence as such" (Marcuse [1933] 1973a, 11). We enhance our self-expression and

flourishing through labor, and this can take many forms. Marcuse builds upon Hegel's theory of the laboring consciousness overcoming its alienated existence and attaining an emancipated perception of its authentic self (Marcuse [1930] 1976, 36). He tied this also to Marx's historical and dialectical theory of socialist revolution as having the primary purpose of the eradication of "capitalist commodity production" (Ibid., 38), and especially the deformation and commodification (i.e. alienation) of labor.

Marcuse likewise honors Marx's philosophical humanism as "The Foundation of Historical Materialism." In his essay having that title Marcuse ([1932] 1973b) emphasizes that Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts, as is now widely known, repeatedly identifies a genuine concept of communism with a humanist worldview, and that the alienation theory articulated there by Marx looks to the supersession of alienation through the actualization of the human essence (Marcuse [1932] 1973b, 7–8). Both Marcuse and Marx saw economics as a philosophy of human activity in which "… labor was seen as the living subject bringing all contradictions to a head and making socialism 'inevitable'" (Dunayevskaya 2012, 96).

I have indicated above that human beings are not only the ensemble of our social relations, we are sensuous living labor, a view I derive from Marx and Marcuse in the following manner. Marx's first thesis on Feuerbach reads: "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism—that of Feuerbach included—is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively" (emphasis in original). Marx criticizes the lack of labor theory in the sensualism of Feuerbach, and Marcuse cites Marx in *Reason and Revolution* ([1941] 1960) on the centrality of *labor* to human existence:

> Because he conceived human existence in terms of sense, Feuerbach disregarded this material function of labor altogether. "Not satisfied with abstract thought, Feuerbach appeals to sense-perception [Anschauung]; but he does not understand our sensuous nature as practical, human-sensuous activity." Labor transforms the natural conditions of human existence into social ones. By omitting the labor process from his philosophy of freedom, therefore, Feuerbach omitted the decisive factor through which nature might become the medium for freedom.
>
> *(Marcuse [1941] 1960, 272, with internal quotations from Marx)*

A New Conception of Human Essence and its Alienation

Marcuse, as we have seen above, like Marx emphasized that labor must be understood as a central dimension of human life beyond its narrow confines within a commodified economy. Marx's "labor theory of culture" (Woolfson 1982) is grounded in *Capital* Volume 1. As Marx writes, "Labor … is a condition of human existence which is independent of all forms of society; it is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature" (Marx [1867] 1976, 133).

In Chapter 7, he connects his theory to that of Benjamin Franklin, whom he credits with defining humanity as a tool-making animal:

> As soon as the labor process has undergone the slightest development, it requires specially prepared instruments. Thus we find stone implements and weapons in the oldest caves. In the earliest period of human history, domesticated animals, i.e. animals that have undergone modification by means of labor, that have been bred specially, play the chief part as instruments of labor along with stones, wood, bones, and shells, which have also had work done on them. The use and construction of instruments of labor, although present in germ among certain species of animals, is characteristic of the specifically human labor process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a "tool-making animal."
>
> *(Marx [1867] 1976, 286)*

Marx also quite famously connected the human labor process with human insight into forms of the ideal, even an aesthetic ideal:

> A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many an architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labor process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally.
>
> *(Marx [1867] 1976, 284)*

What Marx believed was true for all authentically free productive labor was also true for art—a point not lost on Marcuse who in 1969 would come to highlight the possibility of the aesthetic as a *gesellschaftliche Produktivkraft* (Marcuse 1969, 26, 45), a social and productive force (Reitz 2000, 113).

Marx and Marcuse saw capital as congealed labor or dead labor—living labor that had been objectified into productive equipment, the means and tools of production. Abraham Lincoln expressed the same view—consistent with Locke, Smith and Marx—of the relationship of labor to capital: "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration."[5]

Both Marx and Marcuse understood human alienation as estranged labor: sensuous living labor's separation from: 1) its product, 2) the process of production, 3) from our species need for the gratification of our sensuous, intellectual, political and ethical faculties [our Gattungswesen], and 4) other producers, whom we tend to see as competitive units of commodified labor (Marx [1844] 1975b).

Employing Rudolf Bahro's theory of "surplus consciousness" (Bahro 1977a, 376ff; 1977b) Marcuse argues against his previous emphasis in *One Dimensional Man*

(1964) on the system-integration of the consciousness of the workforce. Bahro held that often even state functionaries in the U.S.S.R. or Eastern Bloc did not fully identify with the apparatus of government or its political imperatives. Group-think in those places was easily undermined when social contradictions became politically heightened, and a surplus consciousness (*überschüssiges Bewußtsein*, literally a "spilling over of consciousness") ensued in a widely disseminated fashion (Bahro 1977a, 381). During the final stages of his own intellectual development, Marcuse believed Bahro's insight was immensely significant. Douglas Kellner concludes: "In effect, Bahro and Marcuse are arguing that critical consciousness and emancipatory needs are being developed by the contradictions in the social conditions of advanced industrial society—capitalist and state socialist" (Kellner 1984, 308–309).

Under the changed socio-economic conditions of 1977–1978, what Marcuse called a "counter-consciousness" was already emerging that made it possible for the consciousness "of the underlying population [to be] penetrated by the inherent contradictions of capitalism" (Marcuse 1979, 21). This echoes his essays on labor humanism (1932) and the concept of labor in economics (1933) discussed above.

Zvi Tauber's 2013 essay on Marcuse's aesthetics of liberation focuses on an appreciation of the trans-historical dimension of art within its specific-historical content. He develops an understanding of the classic question of how the existence and consciousness of modern humans and the ancient Greeks, for example, can be interlinked such that we can recognize and enjoy the great art of antiquity. Utilizing Hegel, Marx, and Marcuse as sources, Tauber highlights Hegel's view that the phenomena of human existence, understood in their historical totality, develop a sense of truth about the human condition that is trans-historical, general, and universal. He then explains how Hegel's historical analysis of the phenomena of human existence is translated by Marx into sociological language. The conscious expression of this sense of humanity's real social existence in great art, such as in Greek tragedy, is to be seen as both a disclosure of life's real possibilities and a denunciation of life's real limitations. I would like to propose in a manner of my own, yet analogous to Tauber's treatment of art, that trans-historical insights can also emerge from a non-religious, demystifying reading of the history of ethical thought in the world's traditions of moral philosophy.

Communally Laboring Humanity: The Ethics of Cooperation and Partnership

Following Woolfson's *Labor Theory of Culture* (1982), I understand ethics here as rooted in specific-historical realities and practices and at the same time as a negation of these realities raised to a higher, ideal level. The ideals are themselves practical: aiming at the transformation and pacification of everyday conflict. Understanding such ideals in social and historical terms is pivotal to a materialist theory of ethics and commonwealth.

The feminist anthropologist Riane Eisler (1987) introduced the term "partnership power" to describe cultural patterns in which men and women have different roles, yet these are *not* unequal. Though Eisler studied early Minoan civilization, similar qualities of ethical and political partnership have been noted as characteristic of the gathering and hunting societies and other largely egalitarian social formations prior to agriculture in which all persons were more alike than different (Nolan & Lenski 2005). Solidarity and partnership power generally characterized human relationships, rather than what Eisler criticizes as the later appearance of dominator power.

Douglas P. Fry and Geneviève Souillac (2017) have recently reported research findings that resonate with Eisler under the title "The Original Partnership Societies: Evolved Propensities for Equality, Prosociality, and Peace,"

> [W]e are now at the threshold of an evolutionary paradigm shift that fully recognizes how cooperation, sharing, caring, reconciliation, and restraint against violence also have strong evolutionary bases (de Waal 2009; Fry 2012; Fry et al. 2010; Fuentes 2004; Hrdy 2009; Verbeek 2008). For example, Nowak (2011) recently dubs human beings "supercooperators" and reviews multiple lines of evidence as to why cooperation actually represents the centerpiece on the human evolutionary table (see also Dyble et al., 2015). Obviously, humans possess the capacity for competition, cruelty, and violence, but a growing corpus of evidence shows that human nature is much less violent and selfish than has long been presumed under the traditional evolutionary paradigm (de Waal 2009; Ferguson 2011; Fry 2006; Hart & Sussman 2009; 2011; Nowak 2011).
>
> *[Fry and Souillac 2017, 2.]*

> On the basis of the extant nomadic forager data, it seems likely that humans have in fact evolved predilections for using restraint against lethal aggression; developed species-typical inclinations to empathize, care, share, and cooperate in prosocial activities ranging from communal childcare to the quest for food; engaged in reciprocal exchanges of goods and services which resulted in net gains for the participants; favored nonviolent conflict resolution and avoidance over violence; employed social control mechanisms to maintain cooperation, equality, and peaceful social life; and respected the personal autonomy of the individual (Fry 2006; 2012; Fry & Szala 2013; Hrdy 2009).
>
> *[Fry and Souillac 2017, 3–4.]*

Africa and China: Universal Humanist Teachings of Partnership, Reciprocity, Benevolence

Humanity's first explicitly ethical maxims emerged as the proverbs that in a general way regulated life in the earliest African partnership cultures. These cultures centered on the customary sense of *ubuntu* or showing "humanity toward others," through empathy and principles of reciprocity and solidarity in communal life,

team work *(ujamaa)*, modesty and mutuality. African proverbs included the first formulations of the golden rule. Philosophy professor, Godwin Azenabor (2008, 234), of the University of Lagos has argued for the underlying identity of African proverbs and Kant's categorical imperative. Of course, there could be conflict within and between tribes. Nonetheless, these proverbs constituted universalizable humanist, i.e. not narrowly tribal, teachings for the guidance of practical life, and can in no way to be confused with purely religious teachings. "The cotton thread says that it is only as a team that you can carry a stone." "Many hands make light work." "It takes a whole village to raise a child." Not gods, but communally laboring humanity can be seen as the source of ethics here. "I am who I am because of who we all are." We work for the good in common because it is through our community that we each flourish (see Dorothy R. Jolley, 2011).

Today many observers consider African cultures to be notoriously religious, some also profoundly misogynistic. Yet the secular humanistic foundations of African moral philosophy are soundly attested to by scholars such as Kwame Gyekye (2010), Kwasi Wiredu (1991) and Alfred T. Kisubi (2015).

In ancient China, the Dao was regarded as the "way" of the world. Opposites interpenetrated and emerged out of the other in a dialectical manner (centuries before Hegel and Marx developed their elaborations of the notion). Understanding the interconnectedness of all things, the yin/yang dynamics of both nature and human life, was necessary for concrete thinking and itself a social product. "Lay plans for the accomplishment of the difficult before it becomes difficult; make something big by starting with it when small" (*Dao De Jing*, LXIII). Today information processing would call this methodology a form of enhanced decision-making through systems analysis. Daoism's dialectical naturalism and humanism taught harmony, balance, gentleness, and equanimity with regard to life's changes. It accepted significant social inequalities yet was skeptical of official knowledge. Political authority was considered legitimate only if it assured the material well-being of the masses as the "mandate of heaven" required. Heaven was thus a metaphor for the satisfaction through politics of human needs. When the policies of the prevailing powers did not or could not meet the economic needs of the people, the people's rights of rebellion and overthrow were to be exercised (Mèng Zǐ [Mencius], in Chan 2012).

For Kong Fuzi (Confucius) "heaven's" mandate regarding the welfare of the common people also defined the purpose of government. An early form of a labor theory of ethics and justice may also be extrapolated from his *Analects:* "The head of a state or noble family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution … where there is even distribution there is no such thing as poverty" (*Analects* XVI.1). Humanist principles of benevolence, mutual regard, fairness, and humility are elaborated as *ren* or "human-heartedness." This was illustrated through the Principle of the Measuring Square: if there are those behind you, treat them as you would have those in front of you treat you; if there are those below you, treat them as you would have those above you treat

you. With regard to religious practices, Kong Fuzi advised: "[W]ork for the things the common people have a right to and keep one's distance from gods and spirits while showing them reverence" (*Analects* VI.22). If one does not know how to serve one's comrades, how can one presume to serve gods (*Analects* XI.12). Rites in ancient China were observed in virtually all human affairs. They clearly went well beyond religion and were part of everyday etiquette. Kong Fuzi taught open-mindedness, even in religion, with regard to these rites: "The asking of questions is in itself the correct rite" (*Analects* III.15). The golden rule appears as the injunction: "Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire" (*Analects* XV.24).

Plato and Dialectical Humanism

Plato's dialectics were borrowed from Socrates and derived from the high-level conversations, actually social debates, which could arrive at truth. Plato, as political educator in the *Republic,* furnishes us with his key cave allegory. Its first sentence raises the issue: to what extent have we become enlightened or unenlightened about our being? "Let me tell you in a parable about whether the mind of humans is educated or uneducated about human nature and the human condition" (Steph. VII, 514a). Plato understands the propensities of our sensuous living substance toward illusion, delusion, dishonor, and disgrace. At the same time his dialectical humanism stresses that to be enlightened/educated about our being and reality means we are capable of constructing from within ourselves dialectical rationality addressing our uncertain general condition and resolving the dissatisfaction/fulfilment conundrum in terms of an idea or model of the moral good to be pursued and obtained in our individual lives—including a "platonic love" or heartfelt care for learning, wisdom, the good society, and the good life. In sharp contrast to divine command theories of ethics and politics, which taught obedience to a supernatural protective authority above all else, Plato taught that critical thinking, rather than the unfathomable and arbitrary will of the gods, could determine morally careful conduct.

Plato argued that conventional beliefs about the visible and intelligible worlds are subject to question, and if not examined, they often lead to a shallow, disillusioned life. Education should remove the chains of illusion. An education to ideals as criteria of judgment makes possible the realization of our dignity and our greatest (intellectual and political) satisfactions. Rational minds learn through dialogue and debate as well as through logical deduction (mathematical reasoning). Study and inquiry can disclose how the best possible human relations and human communities may be constituted. He theorizes that justice is the characteristic of the public work of the leaders of the ideal city/state insofar as this political entity is governed by equal numbers of men and women educated to awareness of the (conflicted) human condition, living communally, with intelligence moderating appetite and spirit, disinterested and detached from lust for

property, power, fame, etc., devoutly acting in accordance (not with God's will, but) with principles we have deciphered as to what is substantively advantageous for the pacification of our conflicted species life.

Today we are aware of the African and Asian roots of Plato's view of the world (Bernal 1991): how the *Republic* and the *Meno*, especially, share with Egyptian, Indian, and Buddhist philosophies cultural notions of communal harmonization, transmigration of souls/reincarnation in a caste system, enlightenment and equanimity. Plato's *Republic* did not include the general public as participants at any level of government, unless they first met educational qualifications, and this reflected existing aristocratic practice. Thus, many have seen his particular political and educational recommendations as authoritarian and conservative. His guardians seem legitimated as elite human beings. Still, in the *Meno,* Socrates was able to help a common slave-boy fully comprehend the highest forms of mathematical reasoning; thus, if virtue and justice are knowledge, they might likewise be taught. Ordinary children might thus learn of the ideal of the Good as well, and hence participate in political leadership. An early work of Plato, the *Meno* holds that no teachers of virtue are to be found, however. Persons who exemplify virtue seem to get this through divine dispensation. Plato's *Republic,* on the other hand, does acknowledge that virtue and the ideal of the Good can be imparted: dialectical pedagogy can make this and a vision of the just society possible.[6]

Marcuse stresses the practical and subversive nature of Plato's philosophy: "[T]he authentic, basic demand of idealism is that this material world be transformed and improved by knowledge of the Ideas. Plato's answer to this demand is his program for a reorganization of society" ([1937] 1968, 91–92).

Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism on Enlightenment and Consecrated Labor

Likewise, we need to comprehend the proto-humanistic elements embedded in other ancient wisdom traditions such as Judaism and Hinduism. Judaism requires us to do well the labor that confronts us as a necessity, to make amends annually to those we may have offended or to whom we may owe a debt, and it also supplies dozens of proverbs for right conduct. So too its veneration of the exodus from oppression and escape from slavery (a political-economic denunciation and liberation ethic which also abides in Islam and Christianity).

Hinduism teaches the ideal and power of *Dharma*: that benevolence is to be engraved in human hearts, and people are to live such that they might become worthy of immortal bliss. The instrument of this ideal is the ostensible power of karma, the doctrine of reciprocity and the rise in the long run of the indestructible human species essence (Atman) within an individual to attain fulfilment, happiness, and nirvana. Only honest labor/action, consecrated by good will in work/struggle, detached from consequences, can lead to good fortune. A version of the golden rule rises once more in the *Mahabharata* in Dharma's famous

questioning of Yudhishthira (in the "Virata"): "What is honesty?—That is to look and see every living creature as yourself, bearing your own will to live, and your own fear of death … What is it that humanity calls good fortune?—That is the result of what they have done honestly" (Buck 1973, 121).

The doctrine of karma has legitimated dramatic and devastating social inequality. Like the caste system itself, these features have been negated and superseded through struggle in modern India. The idea of karma may nevertheless be seen as a metaphor for the real social interconnectedness of the conditions facing newer generations as these have been impacted by the work, for better or worse, of older generations. This may also be seen as a token of the moral principle of reciprocity analogous to the Confucian doctrine of the Measuring Square. Nirmal Kumar Bose (1965) has stressed a view of Gandhi as a humanist and socialist, emphasizing his classic practice of *satyagraha,* the refusal to cooperate with unethical social conventions, and Gandhi's belief that honest labor undergirds a life worth living (Bose 1965, 90–91).

Buddhism, as a view of the world without gods, pursues the cessation of human suffering. Gotama Siddhartha, its founder, taught that we might become enlightened as to the human condition. At its root, therefore, Buddhism is an ethics of humanism, expressed most concisely in its *Four Noble Truths* [Proverbs]: life is suffering; suffering has its cause(s); these causes can be overcome; act/work/live in that manner which relieves the suffering in oneself—and that of others (as does the socially activist figure of the Bodhisattva).

Aristotle and the Ecology of Care

Buddha, Socrates, and Kong Fuzi preceded Aristotle by a full generation or more. Ancient humanism in each of the forms above, was *not* a philosophy of the natural and unmediated goodness of human beings, as in the Romanticism of Rousseau. It was a philosophy of the humanizing influence of parents and teachers, customs, culture, and laws within a conflictual societal context. Aristotle likewise saw humanity as a political animal, the *zoon politikon,* and politics the master art in the proper fashioning of human life and human society. As Marcuse explains:

> The doctrine that all human knowledge is oriented toward practice belonged to the nucleus of ancient philosophy. It was Aristotle's view that the truths arrived at through knowledge should direct practice in daily life as in the arts and sciences. In the struggle for existence, men need the effort of knowledge, the search for truth, because what is good, beneficial, and right for them is not immediately evident.
>
> *(Marcuse [1937] 1968, 88)*

Aristotle theorized that our highest happiness derived from the actualization of our essentially human capacities, powers, and potentials: speech/thought; worthy

conduct, integrity, character, and moderation by way of the golden mean. Our task was to become intellectually and politically accomplished. To this end one's upbringing, parenting, education, and the social structure supportive of these nurturing forces, were the most crucial factors. Aristotle's naturalism and humanism inquired into the ways and means by which our species might thrive and flourish. In economics and ethics, a chief vice was the boundless pursuit of property accumulation; a chief virtue, the pursuit of the well-being of the community (*Politics* Chapter IX).

Among the key social teachings of medieval Islam, Christianity, and Judaism were those that preserved essential elements of Aristotle's philosophy of moderation in economic pursuits (condemning excess and insufficiency, the charging of interest, etc.). Ibn Khaldun is said to have adapted Aristotle's concept of moderation to politics in the fourteenth century. His central notion of *asabiyyah* emphasized the sense of shared social purpose and solidarity making for community cohesion, and he developed a perspective on political economy rooted in the idea that all earnings derive from the value created through labor.

Bertrand Russell's essay, "Why I am Not a Christian," ([1927] 1967) treats Jesus as a non-divine, human teacher. In the Sermon on the Mount, once again, the golden rule holds an honored position. This and other precepts and proverbs, however, are attested to by Russell as, by and large, a reprise of earlier teachings of the Daoist master, Laozi, as well as Buddha and Socrates on humility, forgiveness, loving-kindness, and generosity to the poor.

According to Heather Igloliorte (2016) of Concordia University, Montreal, the Inuit of the North American Arctic are direct descendants of the Thule people, who lived in the circumpolar region from 900 to 1200 CE. Their traditional knowledge and value system is known as the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. This encompasses ecological and environmental knowledge, societal values, and cosmology. It focuses on social and collective well-being. "It is a knowledge gained from time on the land and in the company of elders and family members. . . . [I]t emphasizes respect, reciprocity, sharing and serving others" (Igloliorte 2016, 8). Consensus-based decisions are based on the collaborative group dynamics of fishing and sealing parties. Contributions to the common good are regarded as the highest form of leadership.[7]

Kantian Enlightenment Humanism

In the modern epoch Kant is thought to have philosophized about benevolence, good will, and the golden rule most prodigiously. He transfigures these into the proverbial categorical imperative: Never act except in such a way that your practice models what you would desire as the universal behavioral ideal. Against the notion of the supernatural origin of ethical standards, in his view humanist standards are the origin of everything that might be called truly "sacred":

> God is not a substance existing outside me, but merely a moral relation within me … The categorical imperative does not assume a substance issuing its commands from on high, conceived therefore as outside me, but is a commandment or a prohibition of my own reason … The categorical imperative represents human duties as divine commandments not in the historical sense, as if [a divine being] had given commands to men, but in the sense that reason … has the power to command with the authority and in the guise of a divine person … The Idea of such a being, before whom all bend the knee, etc. arises out of the categorical imperative, and not vice versa.[8]

Kant saw enlightenment as education to autonomy and freedom. Individuals, having formerly been content to remain silent with regard to political affairs and policies, could emerge from this consensual subordination and disfranchisement by using their own intellectual faculties to weigh and evaluate circumstances free of the partisan political guidance of the prevailing religious and governmental authorities. A chapter criticizing the traditional arguments for the existence of god is included in his *Critique of Pure Reason* and is considered a highpoint of that volume.[9] Enlightenment autonomy and freedom, attained on a person by person basis, could gradually bring humanity closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship. This is indispensable for the attainment and maintenance of the global public's human rights, and hence also world peace. Though there was no talk of rights in early forms of ethical thinking, there is today a common language of human rights epitomized in the UN Universal Declaration (1948).

Kant's 1784 "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent" argues the theoretical warrant for the emergence of a "universal cosmopolitan state" (Kant [1784] 1983, 38). In "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" he acknowledges in advance that this proposal will inevitably be met by "worldly-wise statesmen" with smugness (Kant [1795] 1983, 107), and that they would deride and dismiss his political views as "mere theory." The "practical politician" would mock Kant's theory of the human duty towards peace and assert instead the "right" of the strong to make the weak obey them.

> Nonetheless, … reason absolutely condemns war as a means of determining right and makes seeking the state of peace a matter of unmitigated duty … A league of a special sort must therefore be established, one that we can call a league of peace … to end all wars forever.
>
> *(Kant [1795] 1983, 116–117)*

Hegel and Marx further developed the logic and strategy that undergirds today's commonwealth aspirations. Hegel taught that history is a way of learning, and he raised the contemporary philosophical issue of why humanity's social and intellectual life is still controlled by the powerful few rather than by the

multitude. Hegel argued the social evolution of reason from lower to higher which would absorb and complete the limited and alienated products of an earlier form of culture and education, attaining thereby an advanced level of intelligence, art, and civilization. Hegel's theory proposed that dis-alienation had to be the work of the alienated elements themselves, educationally and politically. It remained for Marx's labor theory of history to buttress Hegel on alienation and to call attention to the appropriative and expropriative economic and political processes of the past and those which we continue to confront today in advanced capitalist modes, as well as the re-appropriation challenges facing the global workforce. The tenth Feuerbach thesis tells us: "The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society; the standpoint of the new is human society, or social humanity." Marx replaces the bourgeois notion of civil society (which claims a spurious social status separate from the government and the economy) with the notion of social humanity as a governmental and economic power, i.e. human society as commonwealth.

The Material Human Condition

My sketch here of some of the features of the world's practical wisdom traditions is consistent with Marx's philosophical materialism: "The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness" (Marx [1859] 2009, 11). As we have seen, Marcuse emphasized that practical social problems gave rise dialectically to ideas subversive to the established reality. The source may be said to be within us insofar as social customs of empathy and solidarity find instinctual expression in the life-preserving force of Eros, longing for the pacification of the struggle for existence. The primatologist Frans de Waal (2013, 2009, 2006) has demonstrated quite convincingly how morality evolved, and has argued the emergence of an instinctual sense of empathy in certain primates and humans: "distress at the sight of another's pain is an impulse over which we exert little or no control; it grabs us instantaneously, like a reflex, with no time to weigh the pros and cons" (de Waal 2006, 51).

Herbert Marcuse's 1969 *Essay on Liberation* with its consideration of "A Biological Foundation for Socialism?" actually presages de Waal's perspective. Human existence is seen as a function not only of one's ensemble of social relations, but also in terms of the gratification and/or the frustration of our essential sensuousness. This historical and material dynamic propels a politics of labor ownership of wealth as the liberation of the repressed political potential of the human species.

Thus, Richard Wolin and John Abromeit also remind us of Marcuse's discussion in *Essay on Liberation* of the biological and instinctual foundations of socialism:

> Prior to all ethical behavior in accordance with specific social standards, prior to all ideological expression, morality is a disposition of the organism, perhaps rooted in the erotic drive to counter aggressiveness, to create and preserve "ever greater unities of life." We would then have, this side of all "values," an instinctual foundation for solidarity among human beings—a solidarity which has been effectively repressed in line with the requirements of a class society but which now appears as a precondition for liberation.[10]

Marcuse's 1965 essay "Socialist Humanism?" argued that the prospects of a socialist humanist politics needed to be investigated once again. He criticized the ostensible humanism of the then-U.S.S.R., but not as this was usually done, i.e. rejecting it because its policies were implemented through violence and duress. Marcuse emphasized how the American and European imperialists likewise used their war machines to advocate human rights in foreign places, while on the home front it simultaneously reduced and restricted these rights. In his estimation, Marxism stresses correctly that humanism can only be realized through the expropriation of the expropriators, the elimination of commodity exchange, the reduction of the work week, the transformation of the labor process itself, and the dismantling of the military industrial complex. Humanism can begin, however, Marcuse says, within the existing capitalist society itself if it becomes a vital need of human beings who stand ready to liberate humanity and revolutionize human relationships. This need must then come to direct economic and political praxis as a component of material culture.

Che Guevara's famous statement on the ethos of platonic love in the socialist revolutionary vanguard is also worth recollecting here:

> This vanguard was the catalyzing agent that created the subjective conditions necessary for victory … Every one of the fighters of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his credit. They attained their rank on this basis … they competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty …. At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must make an ideal of this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible …. In these circumstances one must have a big dose of humanity, a big dose of a sense of justice and truth in order not to fall into dogmatic extremes, into cold scholasticism, into an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.[11]

Of course, Guevara understood that revolutionaries need and have friends, wives, families whom they love in the usual sense, and that it is *from* these relationships that a revolutionary love is forged.

As emphasized in Chapter 1, Aldo Leopold's ecological conception of land as a biotic system—to which we belong—led him to a logic of husbandry, love, and respect for nature in recreation—and production, consumption, and ownership. The land is healthy if it has the capacity for self-renewal. Leopold's concept of ecology embraces people, soils, water, plants, animals, and air. His land ethic binds all of these components together within the enlarged boundaries of the concept community. Humanity is not to be the conqueror of the land-community, but a citizen of what I call a GreenCommonWealth. Conservation and cooperation are the effects of an "ecological conscience."

> [E]thics, so far studied only by philosophers, is actually a process in ecological evolution. Its sequences may be described in ecological as well as in philosophical terms. An ethic, ecologically, is a limitation on freedom of action in the struggle for existence. An ethic, philosophically, is a differentiation of social from anti-social conduct. These are two definitions of one thing. The thing has its origin in the tendency of interdependent individuals or groups to evolve modes of cooperation …. cooperative mechanisms with an ethical content.
>
> *(Leopold [1949] 1966, 217–218)*

His "Land *Aesthetic*" elaborates this view: "What is art? Only the drama of the land's workings."[12] Aside from humans, does any other living being on the face of the planet appreciate its beauty, its ethical promise?

> The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people …. Economic provocation is no longer a satisfactory excuse for unsocial land use … for ecological atrocities …. I have no illusions about the speed or accuracy with which an ecological conscience can become functional.
>
> *(Leopold [1947] 1991, 345)*

Multiple modes of moral reasoning (and rationalization) have emerged over the course of human history. These can be rivals to what I have called the labor theory of ethics. The latter, as humanism, negates divine command theory, yet absorbs and preserves aspects of character-based and duty-based approaches, as well as essential elements the social utilitarianism of Mill. The personal utility calculus of Bentham is regarded by Marx as a form of moral egoism consistent only with bourgeois

philistinism, as was the theory that even private economic evils can contribute—through the magic of the market—to the public good. Max Stirner, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Ayn Rand fall into similar categories of egoist illegitimacy.

Obsolescence of Humanism?

Cognizant of the prevalence of malevolence and cruelty, conquest, unjust imprisonment, torture, starvation, that have continually destroyed and damaged human lives and the human promise throughout history, the socialist humanist vision of an egalitarian and partnership society (like that of Marcuse and Marx) with an economic foundation informed by ethics, may appear to be obsolete. How can this vision be defended against its usual rejection as impossibly utopian, at best good in theory, but of no practical political-economic value? How may we vindicate what has been said above about the ecology of care?

In 1962, Marcuse similarly confronted a core humanist conundrum:

> Today the words "humanity" and "humanism" cause us some perplexity. Clearly something about them has not worked. It seems as though these ideas, these concepts, are of only antiquarian value, that humanism and humanity belong only to history. But what does that mean: that they belong only to history? If something happened just thirty years ago, that is history, and yet it conditions the present and will also affect our future. What we have learned during these thirty years that we had not earlier known, is this: what human beings can be made to do. They can be made into inhuman beings.
>
> *(Marcuse [1962] 2015b)*

The dialectic of enlightenment as elaborated by Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno ([1944] 1972) profoundly undermined philosophical and political confidence in the trans-historical truths of high German art. Adorno, as is well known, questioned the very possibility of poetry after Auschwitz. This is quite possibly what led Marcuse to endorse Thomas Mann's call in *Doctor Faustus* (1947) Mann for the revocation of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which incorporated Schiller's "Ode to Joy" [Alle Menschen werden Brüder—Human beings are comrades all—CR]. Marcuse also found this sublime artwork to be an illusion that justified the "no longer justifiable" (Marcuse [1967] 1973, 66; Reitz 2000, 202). Are the values preserved in a humanist ethics also "bright shining lies," at best only abstract criteria of judgment, trans-historically insightful perhaps, yet impotent in terms of the formation of moral and political praxis? Must the categorical imperative and golden rule also be revoked? Or in some manner can they be considered to retain a significance on a par with the dignified, if tragically conflicted, view of humanity and world found in much profound and great art?

Marx's dialectics teaches us that groups can and do have contradictory material interests. Sometimes these are completely antagonistic, and the context will not

allow a resolution of the conflict. Antagonism is certainly not a necessary feature of societies that are internally differentiated. How to live in society in ways that are just and sustainable is not self-evident, and this has been a trans-historical and critical challenge to human cultures.

Marx was aware, in an insight derived from Aristotle that the pursuit of private accumulation—beyond all bounds—was not compatible with the meaning of *oikonomia*, economics. *Oikonomia* referred to the concrete considerations undertaken to ensure the well-being or flourishing of the household, and by extension, the community.

Over against the misanthropic and cynical conservatism—that asserts inborn human aggression, the right of the stronger to economic exploitation, and imperial manifest destiny, etc.—Marx and Marcuse saw philosophical humanism *not* as politically powerless, but on the contrary: practical struggles for human dignity, respect, and empowerment have led to significant intercultural learning and social progress. The overarching aim of a humanist morality, in my view, is to offer an apt contribution to the project of human liberation and preservation; from the facts of crisis and suffering to discern their causes, eliminate their sources, alleviate the suffering, and stabilize a long-term resolution—in order to establish human dignity and a commonwealth culture as the radical goals of the global socialist rising of, by, and for sensuous living labor.

A dialectics of the particular and universal is the pre-condition for the fulfillment of our species being. Marcuse's perspective on the historical reality of universals is likewise essential for liberation. "The universal comprehends in one idea the possibilities which are realized, and at the same time arrested, in reality" (Marcuse 1964, 210). "The substantive universal intends qualities which surpass all particular experience, but persist in the mind, not as a figment of the imagination nor as mere logical possibilities, but as the 'stuff' of which our world consists" (Marcuse 1964, 213).

Today's intensifying levels of global economic oppression necessitate intellectual and political growth. The ethic of intercultural solidarity today is essential in terms of praxis if the human species is to go on living. The labor movement must be able to explain this praxis and the necessity of socialism and humanism. This is a matter of our very survival, as attested to by many writers but perhaps most vividly by Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco in *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*: "Corporate capitalism will, quite literally, kill us, as it has killed Native Americans, African Americans trapped in our internal colonies, in the inner cities, those left behind in the devastated coal fields, and those who live as serfs in our nation's produce fields" (Hedges and Sacco 2012, xii).

Commonwealth *versus* Counterrevolution

My contention (building upon Marx and Marcuse) is that an intercultural labor force humanism is not only necessary but feasible: it is the instinctual and

gravitational center holding social life together despite flare ups and explosions caused by the massive forces of careening corporate capitalism. The labor force can rely only upon itself and the world's commonwealth traditions to mobilize its fullest transformative power. Labor's humanism in this sense defines not only a revolutionary ethos like that described by Che Guevara, but the type of economic, social, and political structures that are needed for to provide human sustainability, justice, and peace.

The workforce is a resource with programmatic power. It is the creative force in the economy. Everything depends on labor. This realization stands at the heart of concrete, praxis-oriented philosophizing. Labor occurs in social relationships; it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing. Because social labor is the source of all socially created wealth, only the labor force, as a group, has a legitimate right to the ownership of this wealth.

As I have indicated in Chapter 1, a commonwealth arrangement of the economy would hold and control resources publicly, eliminate rent-seeking and the for-profit financial industry as modes of privilege, distribute incomes without reference to individual productivity according to need and as equally as feasible, substantially reduce hours of labor, and make possible, through socialist general education privileging no single culture or language, the well-rounded scientific and multicultural development of the young. Bertrand Russell proposes, only half sardonically, that labor is valuable not because work is intrinsically good, but because leisure is good. "A great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of *work* … the road to happiness and prosperity lies in the organized diminution of work" (Russell 1965, 227). Of course, Russell is referring to alienated labor. Nonetheless, as Marx and Marcuse also stress, a great deal of leisure in each person's life would be an irreplaceable resource for the free play of human energy and effort in one's own artistic or avocational projects and must be an essential element of any new labor-humanist or commonwealth arrangement. Artwork *is* work, as Marx himself emphasized.

Commonwealth combines unity with multiplicity. If we say the human species is a multicultural species because humans have lived in a variety of geographical settings in various historical circumstances, we mean to acknowledge that a diversity of cultures has emerged. Certain of these cultures, as with the Anglo-American imperium, have displaced and dominated others. Traditionally Anglo-conformist higher education in the U.S., with its entrenched and discriminatory politics of race, gender, and class, typified *mono*cultural and exceptionalist assertions of superiority and concomitant internal hierarchies. Horkheimer and Adorno in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* subverted the claims of a similar kind of arrogant self-regard, demonstrating how Germany's ostensibly enlightened monoculture was historically compatible with genocidal chauvinism, predation, and war.

Marcuse's writing counterposes a critical and multi-dimensional philosophical perspective against the single-dimensional qualities and economic deformations of cultures that reproduce oppression and inequality. Through explicit attempts to

overcome the dominant forms of monoculturalism and nationalistic exceptionalism, which only see differences as deficiencies, we can attain a deeper, more complete understanding and relationship to reality. In this sense, the reification and restriction of the consciousness of the labor force, identified as the central problematic or conundrum of Western Marxism since the writings of Lukács, preventing labor from comprehending its condition and acting to build beyond it, is receding in relevance in proportion to the advance of a more complete multicultural and intercultural understanding of the human condition. What have been recognized as the civilizing forces of our age: the labor movement, civil rights movement, women's rights movement, the anti-war movement, the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) movement, and widespread ecological efforts, have educated the general population about alienation, oppression, power, and empowerment as they have engaged in creative struggles for egalitarian social change.

Marcuse saw this coming, and in his last essay on "The Reification of the Proletariat," wrote of a "counter-consciousness" emergent "among the dependent population (today about 90% of the total?), an awareness of the ever more blatant obsolescence of the established social division and organization of work" (Marcuse 1979, 21). This counter-consciousness included a consciousness of growing frustration, humiliation, and waste that is tending to become "a material force" (1979, 22).

In Marcuse's final book, *The Aesthetic Dimension,* he concluded that great works, even given their apparently illusory qualities, were always and permanently a manifestation of the struggle for liberation. Likewise, I argue here the enduring value of those particular aspects of the world's traditions in moral philosophy, i.e., those consistent with the labor theory of ethics and socialist humanism, as furnishing trans-historical, material and intellectual warrants for humanity's as yet unfinished project of liberation and actualization.

The labor theory of ethics grounds its commonwealth criteria of judgment in the real and enduring material possibilities that concretely encompass all of our engagement and action. We have learned from the movements against racism and sexism in the United States that class relations do not wholly demarcate structures of dominator power. Racism, patriarchy, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination, disrespect, and inequality sorely inhibit our capacity for social- and self-actualization. Forms of persecution are multiplying amidst growing inequality. Reactionary forces reinforce bias of every sort in the hoary yet effective strategy of divide and conquer. While the general abolition of the wages-system is not absolutely sufficient to secure the conditions for each of us to become all that we are capable of being, the alienation and exploitation of labor is the enabling material core that today requires dominant cultures to subjugate innocent minorities.

Marcuse posed the question of whether the ascendency of a neo-fascist regime in the U.S.A. can be prevented. Among the reasons why he asked this was his conviction that since at least 1972 the U.S. had entered a period of preventive counterrevolution.

> According to Freud, the destructive tendency in society will gain momentum as civilization necessitates intensified repression in order to maintain domination in the face of ever more realistic possibilities of liberation, and intensified repression in turn leads to the activation of surplus aggressiveness, and its channeling into socially useful aggression. This total mobilization of aggressiveness is only too familiar to us today: militarization, brutalization of the forces of law and order, fusion of sexuality and violence, direct attack on the Life Instincts in their attempt to save the environment, attack on the legislation against pollution and so on.
>
> *(Marcuse [1974] 2005c, 167).*

Certainly, this tendency has only worsened after 9/11. Douglas Kellner (2003) elaborates the danger of this kind of conservative counterrevolution by citing foreign and domestic policy initiatives of the second Bush administration which wished to make "the global war on terror" the defining struggle of the era. Kellner re-named this policy Terror War because the key developments of the global war on terror are comprised of basically totalitarian components: bellicose nationalism and aggressive militarism, under the rubrics of "crusade" against enemy jihadists. Combating the "axis of evil" legitimated "preemptive strikes" and "regime change," as well as domestic police state powers under the U.S.A. Patriot Act and the National Security Agency. Kellner demonstrates, further, that these policies have propelled the U.S. into being itself a rogue state, a renewed imperialist power, whose projection of military might continue to be oblivious of civilian casualties and war crimes.

Today's global capitalist crisis is a crucial opportunity for a new political beginning. The goal of building a universal human community on the foundation of universal human rights cannot be accomplished by a renewed call for education to emancipatory consciousness alone. We must acknowledge the fundamental role of the labor process in the sustenance of the human community. Even though this can be dehumanized and degraded, we have learned that it also has the irreplaceable power to build the commonwealth, past and future.

Our charge is to expropriate the expropriators; eliminate commodity exchange; reduce the work week; guarantee incomes to all; dismantle the military industrial complex. Under system duress, continuing allegiances to crumbling structures of power will be seen as fatally misguided, because they entail real material loss and suffering; they can and will swiftly shift. Our duty over the long haul is to replace capitalist self-destruction with intercultural labor force activism and humanism—to create laboring humanity's self-governing cosmopolitan green commonwealth.

Notes

1 Many thanks to Kenneth Clark, Zvi Tauber, Stephen Spartan, Tamara Agha-Jaffar, Morteza Ardebili, Peggy Landsman, Richard Logan, and Fred Whitehead for valuable insights. Of course, weaknesses that remain are mine alone.

2 Republished recently by Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (Eds.), *Heideggerian Marxism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).
3 Marcuse's *Soviet Marxism* makes it clear that neither socialization nor nationalization of productive property, in and of itself, will preclude alienation (Reitz 2000, 165). Nonetheless he recognizes that public ownership of socially produced wealth is a necessary, if not sufficient, condition and starting point.
4 "Public work" is a concept developed by Harry C. Boyte and Nancy N. Kari (1996) which I extend in a socialist manner. Public work aims at the public interest and the public good, work's larger civic purposes, not private accumulation. It is oriented toward meeting human needs, rather than market or commercial requirements. It is work become as Marx envisioned it: life's prime want and fulfillment.
5 Lincoln's Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1861 cited in Michael Parenti, *Democracy for the Few* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) p. 10.
6 The *Meno* presents us also with Socrates's philosophical perplexity at this stage of his thought: he ultimately regards virtuous character and practice as stemming from divine dispensation (Steph. 100, a-b), *not* as something that can be taught. Some may well be on the right road, however, even if they do not actually know why or how. The *Republic* proposes nonetheless that it is dialectical philosophy that propels all higher learning.
7 Heather Igloliorte, *Inuit Art. The Brousseau Collection* (Quebec City, CAN: Musée national des beaux-arts du Quebec, 2016), p. 8.
8 Immanuel Kant, *Posthumous papers*, cited in Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization,* Volume X, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967) p. 550. Durant's lengthy quotation, while utilizing Kant's words and faithfully representing Kant's thought, is nonetheless a composite. The phrases are scattered throughout Volume 21 of Kant's posthumous papers. See: Immanuel Kant, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften, AkademieAusgabe*, XXI, *Handschriftlicher Nachlass, Opus Postum, Erstes Convolut*, edited by Artur Buchenar and Gerhard Lehmann (Berlin: Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1936) p. 145, line 3. https://korpora.zim.uni-duisburg-essen.de/Kant/aa21/145.html.
9 Walter Gölz, *Kants "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" im Klartext* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) p. 138.
10 Marcuse in Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (Eds.), "Introduction" to their *Heideggerian Marxism* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005) p. xxix.
11 Che Guevara, "Man and Socialism Speech (1965)" retrieved February 20, 2013 from www.hey-che.com/man-socialism-speech-1965/.
12 Ibid., p. 303.

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5

DIALECTICS RISING

Science, Philosophy, Marxism, Marcuse

> We know only a single science, the science of history … the history of nature and the history of men.
>
> —*Karl Marx,* The German Ideology *(1845)*

> *The Congenital Defect of Philosophy*: … A lack of historical sense is the congenital defect of philosophy.
>
> *The Chemistry of Concepts and Perceptions*: Philosophical problems of nearly every sort are today assuming the very form they took 2000 years ago—how can something emerge from its opposite, for example, the rational out of the unrational, the sensate out of the lifeless, the logical out of the non-logical, dispassionate observation out of ambitious striving, living for others out of egoism, truth out of error? Metaphysical philosophy made things easier for itself by denying the emergence of any of these things out of the others, and by presuming a magical origin for those aspects it deemed of higher value … Historical philosophy on the other hand—which cannot at all be thought of as separate from the natural sciences and which is the very youngest of all philosophical methods—demonstrates in quite another fashion … that there are no absolute contradictions, … and that an error in reasoning stands behind any presumed categorical exclusion.
>
> —*Friedrich Nietzsche,* Human, All Too Human *(1886) Paragraphs 1 & 2 (my translation)*

Nietzsche is the incendiary philosopher of moral transvaluation and liberation of mind; Marx the theorist of workforce transformation through critical human consciousness and communist revolution. Neither was a particularly avid adherent of Hegel's spiritual teleology, but they certainly did admire the dialectical method refined and developed by him. Nietzsche appropriated from Hegel's historical and dialectical philosophy the notion of the world as an Heraclitian flux, primarily characterized by becoming rather than being. He repudiated as metaphysical or

theological any non-recognition of change, as he felt this inevitably formed the basis for religious utopianism / nihilism. He proclaimed that god was dead, and also that liberated humanity could joyfully—and scientifically—begin to alter history. He traced a genealogy of morals, in which values underwent dialectical transformation—with feudal vices (like usury) becoming bourgeois virtues, and Christian "vulnerabilities" (sensuality, this-worldliness) becoming anti-Christian strengths. He thought that consciousness had a basis in biology, and his psychology noted that the soul could die even before the body. Nietzsche believed that ideological distortion was more than simple untruth: it was a definite form of socially necessary falsehood required by historical circumstances for the survival of a particular ruling group. Against ideological domination, Nietzsche called for the supersession of masters and slaves through the training of a qualitatively higher type of human being. He thought to have found the motor force of social change in the antithesis between the Apollonian (rational) and Dionysian (sensual) traits of humankind.

Quite apart from this Nietzschean anti-metaphysics, Karl Marx sought also to trace-out modern contradictions in history. Time itself was understood as a property of matter in motion, and the "timeliness" of this or that particular form of class rule was thought to hinge upon developments in material relations of production. Thus, certain Marxists, then and now, pointed to the historical necessity of socialized ownership ultimately catching-up with the fact of socialized production, and to the obsolescent character of free trade/free market economic relations, tending to make even the capitalist economy impossible and therefore living on borrowed time. In a materialist sort of "teleology" many Marxists saw the whole weight of existing affairs as pushing toward a world-historical rebellion against the social abuses connected with production for profit instead of human need. Recall Marcuse's employment of Hegel's dialectical perspective on the unhappy consciousness discussed in the Introduction to this volume: the unhappy consciousness is a consciousness of oneself as alienated from the fuller capacities of the time and place, which are not factually present in the here and now, though they could (and should) be. Marcuse took the unhappy consciousness as emblematic of the dialectical rationality of philosophical mindfulness:

> [P]hilosophy is first defined by a *specific experience*—not of "*something*," but of objectivity itself; —defined by a specific consciousness: the unhappy consciousness. It is not a personal, but rather an *historical, objective unhappiness* in which the need, the compulsion, to think philosophically arises.
>
> *(Marcuse [1966] 2017, 2, emphasis in original)*

Many Marxists theorized the historical, material, and philosophical warrants for communist revolutionary practice, and the labor force as the class with an historically-rooted future. Even if capitalism was then and is now sometimes described as digging its own grave, humanity's task remains: to see to it that it is

determinately negated and superseded. More on determinate negation and sublation below.

In order to make a critical assessment of the nature of dialectical materialist ontology, methodology, and science today, I step back to gain a wider view of the development of the philosophical problem Marcuse knew was central to human history, human learning, and human liberation—theoretical explanation and its relation to social and natural reality. The vicissitudes of alienation theory, the commodity fetish, and reification (to be discussed in Chapter 6), hinge for example on our ability to understand the contradictions and dynamics of material economic structures within any given political order. Likewise, a dialectical and materialist ontology and methodology revolve around Hegel's contention that history—not mathematics or positivism—is the model of scholarship, science, and rationality itself. Therefore, this chapter traces the broad outlines of the intellectual emergence of the view that not only social life, but also the natural world must be understood historically, dialectically, ecologically, in terms of its patterns of geological change and bio-ecological development. My reconstruction of these interconnected views contends that there has been an ongoing dialectification of method in science and philosophy. From Plato to Kant—from Renaissance humanism to the Frankfurt School—we have learned that knowledge comes not simply through the senses but is mediated through intelligent exertions toward explication and explanation in theory. Most importantly, dialectical and historical reality is what it is: it is obdurately there, even if also changing and not immediately knowable. The stubborn external world must not be misapprehended through subjectivist or relativist fallacies. A variety of dialectical theories has emerged even within the Marxist frame. These require detailed analysis and evaluation in order to establish reliable warrants for radical social change. But first some perspective.

Natural History and Social History

The Renaissance marked the modern beginning of a unified theory of the material world. Science was attempting to eliminate the "meta" from metaphysics and stress the "uni" in universe. Mind and humankind were starting to be understood as integral parts of nature. Comprehension, itself, was now thought to require broadly based scientific knowledge of the macrocosm, as well as humanistic expertise in such fields as art and anatomy. Indeed, the Renaissance recognition of the inherent interconnections linking different areas of theoretical endeavor and practical concern was the most remarkable event of all. The new cosmology emerging during the Renaissance was at odds with the older scholastic metaphysics interpreting its geocentric world. Copernicus opposed the narrow, common sense, reductionism of the Ptolemaic view of nature, as well as the mysticism of the Church, when he (re)asserted (1543) that the sun was the center of the universe. Everyone could empirically see that his theory was patently ridiculous—except to those who could follow his reasoned mediations.

The Renaissance demonstrated that knowledge could indeed develop over time, but not without struggle. The ex-monk turned scientist and philosopher, Giordano Bruno, was burned at the Inquisitors' stake (in 1600) for advocating a pantheistic doctrine of an infinite material universe governed by its own internal powers. Likewise, Galileo was persecuted for his 1638 defense of Copernicus in the *Dialogue on the Two Great World Systems*. His apocryphal drop of weights from the Leaning Tower of Pisa was in all likelihood a thought experiment. Rigorous scientific theorization, often at variance with common sense observations and theological views, was now being recognized as required for critical apprehension of obdurate, yet invisible, forces.

Francis Bacon undertook a complete re-examination of the sciences in 1605. His *Advancement of Learning* represented a theoretical excursion through the studies of medicine, psychology, politics, and philosophy, noting especially that each of these fields was inadequate taken separately. The *Advancement of Learning* also revealed an emergent methodological reflexivity in even Bacon's thought. In it he maintains that science cannot progress blindly: the true method of experience must light a theoretical lamp to illuminate the path to new experiments. In addition to all of this, Bacon saw also that "knowledge is power." There was a practical/political relationship between science and human life. Of course, Bacon was primarily a precursor of empiricism and the inductive method, still one might further say that a latent "sociology of knowledge" in the *Novum Organum* leads him to critique religious, political, and social "idols" in the manner centuries later of Karl Mannheim, namely "freeing" the scientist from apriori value commitments.

In 1637, Descartes' defense of the Christian metaphysics appealed to mathematics and the method of "radical doubt" to obtain renewed legitimacy. His starting point (under the challenge of modern science) could no longer remain "the Absolute." Instead, it became the rather more modest and lonely "cogitative act" of the individual human mind. John Locke went well beyond Descartes in rejecting the "innate" origin of thought altogether and positing an external source in experience. This was a decisive step toward establishing the interpenetration of thought and reality, in contradistinction to their supposed metaphysical separation. Newton highlighted the inherent relationality of matter in his "universal theory of gravitation" in 1687. And while his physics of action and reaction remained enmeshed in a mechanical materialism, it nonetheless aided progress toward a unitary and materialistic worldview.

With Kant, however, came the first decisive recognition that nature has a history (in a mundane, rather than mythological sense). Kant taught geography and the natural sciences, as well as philosophy, at the University of Königsberg, and his *Universal History of Nature and the Theory of the Heavens* (1755) hypothesized the emergence of the solar system out of a primordial gaseous mass, rather than from an exertion of a divine will.[1] Through reference to the natural forces of attraction and repulsion, he furthermore relocated the sources of physical change from

external to internal forms of causation. Because his teachings were contrary to scripture, Kant was officially intimidated by the Prussian government. Manfred Buhr (1974, 124) writes that Kant stood "at the threshold of the dialectic" because he had counter-posed the idea of a natural history to the merely mechanical and classificatory description of the world.

Epistemologically speaking, Kant foundationally criticized both pure empiricism and pure reason. He emphasized the interdependence of observation and conceptualization, maintaining that: "Thoughts without content are empty and perception without concepts is blind." Each needed the other in a dialectical fashion that remained totally beyond the (purely mathematical) grasp of Descartes and was only hinted at (ahistorically) in Locke. Thus, the Kantian theory of knowledge superseded both rationalism and empiricism. It also conditions the Kantian treatment of the epistemological problems involved when "pure" reason is separated from sense experience. Kant viewed apriori reason *(Vernunft)* as a grave source of intellectual error leading to the misconceived paralogisms, antinomies, and ideals discussed in his chapter on dialectic. The Kantian epistemology, then, is dialectical: reason itself was insufficient as a source of knowledge. Instead, sensibility and the analytic categories of the understanding were mutually required to make valid judgments about phenomena. Kant sided with Locke in claiming that knowledge stems from experience but added that human beings also possess a unique ability to understand, even if this ability is also empty taken solely by itself.

Kant's critique of rationalism and pure reason was directly extended by Hegel's chapter on "Historical and Mathematical Truth" in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (1807). Here Hegel criticizes (Cartesian) mathematics as a faulty method of science and logic. Hegel considers pure mathematics to be abstract, unphilosophical, and defective in attaining real knowledge. He rejected schematization and formalism because he thought science without history and the dialectic was unable to comprehend either experience or truth. A static, micro-analysis was simply not suited to grasping the motion, process and integrity of any complex and changing object of knowledge. Hegel's thoroughly historical analysis of nature and thought exposed the epistemological limitations of both mathematics and classical physics in ultimately appreciating the concrete totality of any developing situation. Mechanical, fixed categories and abstract principles were viewed as reductions of real historical processes, valid only within strict parameters. Hegel's elaboration of the dialectic was thus conceived as a scientific counter-movement to the increasing specialization and fragmentation of knowledge positivistically understood. That this historical approach to knowledge was also *realistic*, allowed Hegel to surpass Kant's reserved skepticism and subjectivism, affirming the objectivity of philosophical truth as an increasingly refined consciousness of the transformations of being. Hegel wrote of the "… complete worldliness of consciousness…." in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (Hegel in Kaufmann 1966, 54).

The clear-cut contribution of epistemology from Plato to Kant had been the recognition that one sees not only with one's eyes, but also with one's "mind's eye." Marx was later to assert that this insight does not necessarily entail idealism, but rather more strictly, an appreciation of dialectics. For Hegel also "the sensuous" (i.e. perceptible) had to be transformed into the "sensible" (i.e. meaningful), and it was precisely a realistic, historical, and dialectical theory of knowledge that afforded the "richly intelligent perception" required by science and philosophy. Hegel's *Science of Logic* (1812) noted that genuine knowledge must entail an appreciation for movement and history, rather than focus on the "dead bones" of an ahistorical conceptual scheme. The book's seminal theories on contradiction, i.e. the interrelationship of the abstract and the concrete, the unity and difference of opposites, and the determinate nature of negation (i.e. not just any negation or denial or opposition in thought or action, but that negation determined by the inner structure of the historical order, which, in negating the observable social negatives, can bring into being a newer and higher social formation, inherent, though previously blocked, within it, i.e. sublation). It is this determinate negation that is required, when contradictions are irreconcilable, as the negation of the negation, the cornerstone of a dialectical conception of emancipatory knowledge and revolutionary political practice.

Marcuse's appreciation for this aspect of the dialectic will also be made clear below in Chapter 7's concluding discussion of the specific kind of oppositional movement required of us today:

> Marxism must risk defining freedom in such a way that people become conscious of and recognize it as something that is nowhere already in existence. However precisely because the so-called utopian possibilities are not at all utopian [in the sense of impossible—CR] but rather the determinate sociohistorical negation of what exists, a very real and very pragmatic opposition is required of us.
>
> *(Marcuse 1970, 69)*

For Hegel, supposition in accordance with the elements of dialectical thinking was not considered mere conjecture, but a proper aspect of philosophical and scientific inquiry. Relational, dialectical, thinking was considered necessary to capture the essential interconnectivity upon which all developmental, yet realistic, truth was to be based. Hegel's *Philosophy of History* (1805) dealt with the "becoming of knowledge," and viewed consciousness as both temporal and social, i.e. limited by the level of civilization. His book traces not merely a chronicle of ideas, but their development from lower to higher. It also propounds one of Hegel's central contentions: that reason governs the world. This conviction was not flatly rejected by Marx or Engels or Marcuse. It was criticized, yet rethought, refined, and preserved at a higher level, in their materialist extensions of Hegel's philosophy. Dialectics was regarded as a rational guide in the thinking

of reality as a complete system. Recall Engels's remark: "In 1789 the French monarchy had become so unreal, that is to say, it had been so robbed of all necessity, so non-rational, that it had to be destroyed by the Great Revolution—of which Hegel always speaks with the greatest enthusiasm."[2]

In 1859, Charles Darwin also asserted the activity of matter per his theories of fortuitous genetic variation and organismic adaptation, not to mention his notion of the eventual evolution of the human mind. Even the categories of genus and species were no longer immutable, but inevitably subject to change. His contributions to science are however unthinkable without Hegel and the German natural scientist, Alexander Humboldt. Humboldt's *Personal Narrative* (1819–1829) of travels to the Americas is cited in Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle,* and Darwin's autobiography hails Humboldt's work as an inspiration to his own travels and research.[3] Humboldt emphasized that a descriptive study of plant life leads necessarily into a study of climatology, and this into a study of geography, etc., each reciprocally conditioning the other. Humboldt's subsequent encyclopedic description of physical nature, the *Kosmos* (first published in 1845), contains such Hegelian statements on methodology as: "My prime motivation was my effort to grasp the phenomena of the material world in their internal and universal interconnection—to see nature as a living whole moved by internal forces" (Humboldt [1869] 1969, vi). Further: "I was convinced early on through my dealings with highly gifted men of science that any grand and universal view of the world was empty speculation without a serious effort toward knowledge of the particular. The particulars in the natural sciences, however, are essentially quite capable of fructifying one another in a mutual way" (Humboldt [1869] 1969, vi).[4]

Modern science and philosophy have emphasized humankind as a part of nature and thought as a social product. The Kantian and Hegelian dialectic, as well as that of Marx and Engels, stress the activity of the mind in processing sense data, and currently most psychological theories assume that internal mental structures in some way regulate thought and behavior. At the turn of the century Freud propounded a developmental depth psychology involving conscious and unconscious personality structures and featuring a dialectic of life and death instincts. Freud noted that psychological stress could produce socio-physiological tensions, and that social or bodily injury could do damage to the mind.[5] As Russell Jacoby has emphasized: "The critical edge of psychoanalysis is rooted in this dialectic; it exposes the sham of the autonomous and private bourgeois individual with the secret of its socio-sexual-biological substratum" (Jacoby 1972, 5).

Because of the general dialectical recognition that the world cannot be adequately known through infinitely compartmentalized or highly specialized studies, an inter-disciplinary approach to knowledge has increasingly been advocated. Natural history and social history emerged in the 20th century as methodological guides that overcame the finality of mathematico-deductive logic and indicated a distinctive trend toward dialectification in the natural and social sciences.

Controversies within Marxism

There are those who assert that Marxism has broken down even before capitalism. They insist that Marxist theory no longer holds because contemporary historical developments have forced it to give so much ground that its positions are no longer defensible. The main problem with "orthodox" Marxism was considered to be its ostensible reductionism. The real world was just too complex to be understood in terms of a "vulgar materialism" or "economic determinism."

Lukács

Prior to the valuable perspective on reactionary prejudice provided in 1938 and discussed above in Chapter 1, Georg Lukács's contribution (1924) to the emergent lexicon of critical theory included the terms "totality" and "reification" (Mészáros 1972). These must be understood with special reference to the problem of epistemological reductionism: they attempt to grasp both the issue and its answer. To his mind, dialectics insists on the concrete unity of the whole. Without this, fetishized relationships between parts prevent thought from ever finding meaning. "Totality" is therefore seen as the (revolutionary) category that governs reality, while "reification" (*Verdinglichung*) is a reductionist distortion that gives a rigid, unhistorical, objective, and natural appearance to social institutions. According to Lukács these concepts are more germane to a Marxist analysis than even economic forces in historical explanation. "It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality" (Lukács [1924] 1971, 27). Marx (he contends) understood this in his analysis of the commodification and commercialization of human relationships in *Capital* and in his call for the abolition of the wages system. Lukács's chapter on reification begins with a robust explication of the significance of the commodity fetish for Marx, and he emphasizes that this is responsible for a "veil of reification" (Lukács [1924] 1971, 86). "Reification requires that a society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange" (Lukács [1924] 1971, 91). The strength of Lukács's analysis is his recognition that the proletariat may become the commodity that is critically conscious of itself as a commodity, and become a revolutionary subject. Despite this reliance on Marx, however, Lukács shifts his footing almost imperceptibly to Weber's theories critical of bureaucracy and rationalization. Bureaucracy and a calculative rationality are taken as the chief modes of reification or *Verdinglichung* under capitalism, both in thrall to capitalist commodification yet abstracted from all awareness of it. In a subsequent discussion of reification in ancient Greek philosophy and the epistemology of Kant, Lukács leaves the terrain of the commodity fetish altogether. Now treating reification as *Verdinglichung*, he admonishes Engels for thus unfortunately involving Marxist philosophy with the "mechanical" and objectivist correspondence theory

of knowledge. Against this he opposes an Hegelian hermeneutic approach, in which all real substance also knows itself as subject, citing Dilthey and Weber (and Rickert and Simmel) with much more approval than Engels. Such is Lukács's Copernican Revolution in critical Marxism, ultimately deflecting the capital/labor dialectic of Marx and Engel's into a neo-Kantian subject/object dialectic.

Like Lukács, Horkheimer, Fromm, Adorno—and Marcuse—rejected the epistemological theory of correspondence. Each of them attempted a critical "revitalization" of classical communist theory by infusing their versions of Marxism with elements from Kant and Hegel, *Lebensphilosophie* and hermeneutics (via Nietzsche and Dilthey), as well as the findings of Freudian psychoanalysis.

Marcuse

Marcuse responded directly to Lukács in a 1930 essay stressing the need for an historical dialectic in social science (Marcuse 1930). Yet his writings embody the vicissitudes of the dialectic among 20th century Marxists. During the 1930s, he warned that "it does not help to appeal to Marx, as long as the original meaning of the dialectic in Marx has not been grasped" (Marcuse [1930, 1931] 1976, 19). Also utilizing the concept "totality," he hoped to recapture an ostensibly truer Marxist understanding. This he sought to accomplish however with explicit reference to Dilthey and Heidegger. Marcuse studied in Freiburg under Heidegger and came to agree with him—for a time—that "not all being is dialectical" (Marcuse [1930, 1931] 1976, 22). Where Hegel had erroneously "absolutized" the dialectic (Marcuse [1930, 1931] 1976, 21), applying it to all things, Marcuse's early view was that Marxism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics limit the dialectic's application to the "life-world" of the human being.

Writing his first book-length work on Hegel in 1932, Marcuse completely shuns Hegel's key term, *dialectic*. Rather, he re-christens Hegel's philosophy as: *Hegels Ontologie und die Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit* [Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity] (Marcuse [1932] 1968). In 1932, Marcuse clearly preferred to philosophize about Hegel's concept of history following Heidegger in terms of *Geschichtlichkeit*. He traces Heidegger's use of *Geschichtlichkeit* back to Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie*, which he believed was rooted in Hegel himself. Hegel's early theological writings, the Jena *Logic* and the *Phenomenology,* were construed by Marcuse as developing the "*Seinsbegriff des Lebens als die ursprüngliche Grundlage der Hegelschen Ontologie*" [The existential concept of Life as the primordial foundation of Hegel's ontology] (Marcuse [1932] 1968, 227). Within Hegel's Jena *Logic* Marcuse asserts "Life" becomes the metasystem absorbing all particular subsystems within nature and determining the very being of nature as such (Ibid., 248). In his later works of course, including *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Marcuse 1941), Marcuse does recapture a sense of the dialectic for social philosophy.

Yet even during the 1930s, Marcuse assessed the dialectical relation between the structure of thought and structure of reality as having a common denominator:

> According to Hegel the traditional distinction between thought and its object is "abstract" and falsifies the real relation. Thought and its object have a common denominator, which, itself "real," constitutes the subject of thought as well as its object. This common denominator is the inherent structure and the *telos* of all being i.e. Reason.
>
> *(Marcuse [1930, 1931] 1976, 22)*

This was a promising insight that Marcuse would subsequently (1964) extend in *One-Dimensional Man*'s Chapter 8 on the historical reality of universals as I have mentioned in Chapter 3 above, as well as in his Inaugural Address at UCSD in 1966 and his essays on the ecology of 1972 and 1979. His views in the 1960s and 1970s mitigate his 1930s tendency to find a positivist reductionism in philosophical materialism. More on this in Chapter 7.

Manheim

Marcuse's 1932 Hegel book reviewed the then contemporary Hegel scholarship, and in so doing he noted that there was one new Hegel study that was especially worthy of attention because it attempted "to include the concrete activity of the comprehending human being within the concept of the 'concept,' and to unfold the categories of the *Logic* as modes of comprehending activity" (Marcuse [1932] 1968, 4). This noteworthy study was Ernest Manheim's *Zur Logik des konkreten Begriffs,* i.e., Manheim's 1928 Leipzig doctoral dissertation, *On the Logic of the Concrete Concept*. It sought to develop a paradigm for social research and social action that was both comprehensive and concrete. Ernest Manheim (a cousin of Karl Mannheim) was born in Budapest in 1900 and served in the Austro-Hungarian army as a lieutenant in World War I. After the conclusion of combat in Italy, he volunteered with the Red Army of Béla Kún and was taken prisoner defending the Hungarian Soviet Republic. War and upheaval evoked his great interest in sociological matters, and in 1923 he undertook graduate work with German social theorists Ferdinand Tönnies and Hans Freyer at Kiel and Leipzig. He completed his doctoral dissertation, but with the advent of German Nazism, Manheim, of Jewish background, was forced to flee to London. There he studied further with the famed anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski, then joined the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1937. Manheim was among the critical theorists who contributed to Horkheimer's *Studien über Authorität und Familie,* and in 1938 was selected as the founding chair of the sociology department at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, where he served for fifty years. In that capacity he differentiated himself from other more reluctant academics by his

willingness in the mid-1950s to deliver expert testimony on the deleterious effects of racial segregation on student development and learning in the Topeka, Kansas, civil rights case that became famous in U.S. educational history—*Brown vs. The Board of Education*.

Manheim's work explicitly helped to teach the 20th century very early on: logical concepts themselves develop, change, and mature—and much rigorous theoretical effort still needs to be expended in the direction of a more concrete logic (135; this and page numbers that follow are from his dissertation published in 1930).

Building on the concluding sections of Hegel's *Logic*, Manheim (122) roots dialectical thinking in Hegel's description of three types of change and becoming: mechanical, chemical, and teleological. Teleological processes and teleological thinking are crucial to Hegel's concept of the concrete. Manheim furnishes an illustration by way of a discussion of a concept's "extension." He asks us to construe a concept in its minimal extension, for example: "*ein Tisch, der keiner ist*" (47) [a table which is not one], and to label this concept of the table *A/1*. A concept in its maximal extension he tells us would be (authentically perfected and transformed) such that we would assert of the table that it is now a table that really is a table! ["*ist das ein Tisch*!" (47) "That is a table!"]. We are to label this concept of the table *A/3*.

A/1 is contradictory in-and-of-itself (a table which is not one).

A/3, with its inner negativity negated, is *A* fully extended, transformed, and perfected.

A = *A* is an abstract identity in conceptual form. A concrete concept is one that indicates the connecting, negating, and mediating linkages between *A/1* and *A/3*, call them x, and the fuller, concrete formula for conceptualizing *"A"* captures the transformative process: *A/1—x—A/3*.

For Manheim, it is precisely this type of dialectical thinking which can actualize the internal potential within a generative system (i.e. through concrete concepts, not though a simple or mechanical class consciousness), and that this is thus the basis for a realistic and practical approach to logic. Concrete, teleological relationships conceptually involve "reaching over" and "encompassing," including *A/3* in *A/1*, seeing *A/1* as necessary for *A/3* (54)—and thus these are concretely interrelated in a teleo-logic (cf. "The Inclusive Relationship and its Dialectic," 45–58).

Immediate relationships and mediated relationships dialectically constitute a totality that encompasses the appropriate purpose and the authentic good of what is, and thus may grasp politically what it has grasped intellectually and facilitate its actualization. Concrete logic involves the dialectification of any of our supposed or presupposed concepts of time, history, master/servant, capitalism, war, peace. Each of these concepts—like also the concepts of "being" and "non-being"—are in themselves one-sided, isolated, abstract. Truth requires the dialectical movement of thought that can mediate extremes and encompass the real in a more

comprehensive (more concrete) concept that includes even polar opposites, ingeniously envisioning their unity-in-difference. The concept of "becoming" is one of the most concrete (144) concepts according to Manheim. Through such mediating concepts we can grasp that dimension of the real that "is necessary even before it is possible" (149).

Though Marcuse's own approach diverged substantially from Manheim's analysis of Hegel, Marcuse indicated that Manheim's theoretical strengths needed to be more widely appreciated. Tipping his hat to Manheim for linking the theory of logic to the theory of social action, Marcuse also criticized Manheim for allegedly misinterpreting the significance and sequence of Hegel's categories, and for clinging to elements of traditional logic that were out of place in a reinvented logic of the concrete concept.

By 1964 Herbert Marcuse had tacitly incorporated an appreciation of Manheim's concrete logic into his own discussion of the historical character of universals: "The universal comprehends in one idea the possibilities which are realized, and at the same time arrested, in reality" (Marcuse 1964, 210). "The substantive universal intends qualities which surpass all particular experience, but persist in the mind, not as a figment of the imagination nor as mere logical possibilities, but as the 'stuff' of which our world consists" (Marcuse 1964, 213).

Horkheimer

Writing in the midst of the Nazi era, Max Horkheimer felt that the "weight of history" was not necessarily pushing the world toward socialism, but only into a new period of capitalist crisis and barbarism. Beyond that, nothing could be said with certainty. While the outcome of the war was uncertain, Horkheimer and Adorno (in U.S. exile) attempted to come to grips with fascism. Their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) reinterprets the basic social contradictions disclosed by classical Marxism as manifestations of a tragic paradox having increasingly pessimistic implications. The war and fascism were no longer to be understood as Leninist examples of the consequences of specific inter-imperialist rivalries and the intensified forms of class oppression these require. Critical theory saw them instead as the result of an epochal degeneration, an epochal display of human degradation and social injustice essentially grounded in the reductionist character of bourgeois intellectualism, science, and education. Their disappointment at the passivity of their academic colleagues and others, who "made it easy for the barbarians everywhere by being so stupid," (Horkheimer and Adorno [1944] 1972, 209) reinforced their conviction that even liberal cultural and political beliefs subjectively prevented any real opposition to Hitler from forming within Germany. As they considered traditional Marxist theory to have no explanation for this cruel turn of events, they undertook an hermeneutical[6] interpretation of the Odysseus myth and texts from DeSade and Nietzsche in search of a more meaningful understanding. They concluded that the all-pervading bourgeois spirit

of the Enlightenment limits the thought patterns of the masses to authoritarian and calculative modes. Thought is considered to have become so restricted to matters of administration and organization that most people have lost their power to "hear the unheard of" (Horkheimer and Adorno [1944] 1972, 34) and to conceive a world different from that in which they live.

Althusser

Louis Althusser published a series of articles in a Soviet-aligned French communist journal during the 1960s. These were later collected into *For Marx* (1965). In them he concludes that a dialectical Marxist epistemology has in large measure yet to be constituted. He notes that Marx never wrote a *Dialectics* to do for philosophy what his *Capital* had done for political economy. He asks if we even know what we mean should we speak of a Marxist philosophy, and if a Marxist philosophy exists, does it have a right to? He then proceeds to formulate his own notes on the materialist dialectic. The first question he believes must be settled is the specific difference between the Marxist and Hegelian forms of the dialectic. Of course, Marx was a materialist and Hegel an idealist; these truths, however, pertain to the substance of the dialectic rather than to its structure. Althusser feels that the philosophical development of Marxism depends precisely upon this elaboration of the structural differences in the Hegelian and Marxist notions of contradiction. In his view, Hegel's concept of contradiction is oversimplified: it reduces "… *the totality*, the infinite diversity of an historically given society … to a *simple internal principle* …. [T]his reduction … of *all* the elements that make up the concrete life of an historical epoch … to *one* principle of internal unity … [is] … abstract ideology" (Althusser 1970, 103).

The very structure of Hegelian contradiction is seen to reflect the "mystical shell" of his philosophy. It has led naive Marxists to postulate "… the beautiful contradiction between Capital and Labor" (Althusser 1970, 104). Althusser maintains that the Marxist theory of the dialectic cannot remain "the *exact mirror image of the Hegelian Dialectic*" (Althusser 1970, 104), for the capital/ labor contradiction is never pure and simple. It is "*always specified* by the historically concrete forms and circumstances *in which it is exercised*" (Althusser 1970, 106). The apparently simple contradiction is always actually "overdetermined." It is ultra-specified. Marcuse's very last publication in 1979, while not explicitly directed against Althusser, pushes back against this Althusserian view: "The working class still is the 'ontological' antagonist of capital" (Marcuse 1979).

Adorno

The Popper-Adorno controversy, begun in 1961, continued the critical Marxist polemic against positivism. Theodor W. Adorno defended a dialectical understanding of science against a positivistic reduction of reason emphasizing the

normative dimensions of both philosophy and science (Frisby 1972). According to Lorenzen (1970), this debate went back to Kant's critique of Descartes and abstract rationalism. In a marked advance over views critical of science and technology published in 1944 in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* Adorno here advocated a structural systems-analysis over logical atomism and empiricism. He saw the social world and social scientific knowledge as both being dialectical, consistent with Lukács's notion of the concrete totality.

Habermas

A critique of positivism is the main theme of Jürgen Habermas's *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968). To his way of thinking, positivism cuts off epistemological inquiry into the conditions of possible knowledge and the explication of meaning. This, he claims, leads to a scientistic understanding of science void of methodological self-reflection. In his estimation, philosophy becomes scientistic if it renounces epistemological reference to the knowing subject and thus loses itself in naive realism and objectivism. Like Heidegger, and others in the hermeneutic tradition, Habermas is concerned that positivism "does not think." Instead it "represses" the reflexive theories of the limits of knowledge (from Kant to Hegel and Marx), and monopolizes the philosophy of science. Habermas points to Charles Sanders Peirce and William Dilthey as philosophers occupied early on with transcending the positivistic conception of science through their pragmatic and hermeneutic theories of meaning. They, along with Kant, had an awareness of knowledge being rooted in subjective interest. Freudian psychoanalysis, as an interpretation of symbols and dreams after the hermeneutic model, also opened up an understanding of knowledge that positivism had closed-off. Little, if anything, in consciousness was a pure, unmediated, reflection of the external world. Much in fact could only be known "from within."

Habermas criticizes vulgarized Marxism for eliminating reflection as a motive force in history and replacing it with a scientistic conception of economic determinism. He supposes that traditional Marxist theory views its historical claims in exactly the same manner as the empirical findings of the natural sciences. Thus, a positivist "atrophy" of knowledge has rendered it lifeless. The crisis in Marxist theory can only be overcome if it is recognized that critique must represent the dialectical unity of knowledge and interest, not merely the blind and destructive practice or unreflective accommodationism that are said to be the dual aspects of an unmediated Marxist approach to knowledge.

Colletti

The problem of science and Marxist theory with particular regard to the nature of dialectical contradiction has been elaborated by Lucio Colletti (1975). Colletti begins by emphasizing that the Marxist conception of contradiction includes a

supposition of the inherent structural unity of opposites. Each aspect of a dialectical contradiction is regarded as necessarily related (determinately related) to its antithesis. Against this notion, Colletti introduces the idea of "real opposition," as denoting a flat opposition "without contradiction" (Colletti 1975, 3), such that they might be reconcilable after all.

In his estimation, material entities may be opposed to one another as contraries but never as aspects of a contradiction. "Contradiction" requires that both of its components be the negativity of the other, yet material things, objects, and factual data are in each case real and positive. Should they in some way conflict with one another, they do so as contraries, not contradictories. This is because "Each of the opposites is real and positive. Each subsists for itself … each had no need to be referred to the other" (Colletti 1975, 6). He claims that *Capital* operates within the framework of "real opposition," rather than dialectical contradiction, and is therefore valid as a positivistic analysis of capitalism and economic crisis.

In Colletti's view Marxism is thus valid as a science of society, however the *un*Marxist (Hegelian) theory of determinate negation of contradictions in the real world must be dismissed. Dialectics has relevance only to the realm of *ideas*, where one may quite correctly speak of contradictory thoughts each being irreconcilable with the other. A dialectical *materialism* is therefore ill-conceived and useless. It is "that 'philosophical romance' to which Marxism has been reduced" (Colletti 1975, 18). One recalls here Althusser's disparaging remark about the "beautiful" and "oversimplified" contradiction between capital and labor. Like Hobbes and the classical political economists, Colletti views worldly social conflict in terms of an abstract competition among essentially disparate, atomized, elements (groups or individuals). In so doing, he denies that profits *necessarily* require unpaid surplus labor, and intimates that wage-labor and capital are reconcilable positive realities.

Timpanaro

Noting the prevalence of philosophical idealism in bourgeois culture (it having undergone a twentieth century rebirth per Husserl's *Wesensschau*, Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften*, Weber's *Protestant Ethic*, etc.), Italian Marxist, Sabastiano Timpanaro (1974), asserts that some forms of "critical" Marxism likewise want to demonstrate in traditionally academic fashion that they are not crude, i.e. not materialist, at all:

> Perhaps the sole characteristic common to all varieties of Western Marxism is, with very few exceptions, their concern to defend themselves against the accusation of materialism. Gramscian or Togliattian Marxists, Hegelian-Existentialist Marxists, Neo-Positivistic Marxists, Freudian or Structuralist Marxists, despite profound dissentions which otherwise divide them, are at one in rejecting all suspicion of collusion with "vulgar" or "mechanical"

> materialism, and they do so with such zeal as to cast out, together with mechanicalism or vulgarity, materialism *tout court*.
>
> *(Timpanaro 1974, 3)*

Timpanaro asserts that this "self-purification" of Marxism typically devalues Engels because Engels "dragged Marxism down" from its "true philosophical heights" associating it with science and common sense. He rejects the Western Marxist reduction of philosophy to methodology or theory of knowledge and articulates the need for a philosophy that is a broader vision of the world, i.e. one that would view *nature* (and not merely knowledge) as historical, and *history* (and not merely science) as material. "What is needed is an ideological confrontation between Marxism and these tendencies, an antagonistic and not merely receptive stance … a critique of their anti-materialism" (Timpanaro 1974, 22).

Engels and Lenin

Classical Marxism's dialectics of nature combatted positivism as the "science" of nature or society. It was inspired by the rational kernel of the Hegelian system which saw both thought and the world as having an historical mode of existence. Thus, Lenin spoke of the "evolution of a stone," and of the "dialectics of things themselves, of Nature itself, of the course of events itself," in his 1914 "Conspectus on Hegel's Logic" (Lenin [1914] 1972, 111). A briefer essay, "On the Question of Dialectics," (1915) also strictly differentiated between mechanistic materialism and dialectical materialism. With specific regard to the correspondence theory of truth, he contrasted the "immeasurably rich content" of dialectical philosophy compared to the starkness of "metaphysical" materialism: "the fundamental *misfortune* of which is its inability to apply dialectics to the *Bildertheorie* [theory of reflection], to the process and development of knowledge" (Lenin [1915] 1972, 362). Lenin, then, was explicitly critical of Locke's empiricist theory of epistemological inscription. Lenin did not "uncritically" hold knowledge to be an unmediated reflection of the real, even if there was an undeniable agreement between thought and its object. In addition to his epistemological studies, Lenin also contributed a genuinely new dimension to Marxist philosophy with his research into inter-imperialist rivalries and the political supersession of the bourgeois state. His *What Is to Be Done?* asserted, well before Lukács, that there could be no revolutionary practice without revolutionary theory incorporating an analysis of the determinate negation of the negation.

Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* contends that nature is in motion and that science can discover and influence the contradictory structural relationships within this motion:

> The world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable no less

> than their mind images in our heads, the concepts, go through uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away, in which in spite of all seeming accidentality and all temporary retrogression, a progressive element asserts itself in the end.
>
> *(Engels in Lawler 1975, 364)*

Mao Zedong

Mao's piece, *On Contradiction* (1937), stresses the structural distinctions between internal and external forms of dialectical opposition. Internal to every single material entity is its own complex set of particular contradictions. These inherent tensions are the fundamental cause of its entire development. Matter itself is, thus, essentially active not passive. It changes over time, due to its own internal contradictions. A thing's interrelations and interactions with other things external to it are but secondary causes in its development. The pressure of external influences only becomes operative through the internal contradictions which are the basis for all motion. To use Mao's example: an egg when properly warmed may develop into a chick, a stone that is incubated forever will never do so. Likewise, internal social contradictions are the basis of historical transformations, and external forces are ultimately only operative as a function of them. Political action must thus have a determinate historical and material warrant if it is to succeed in practice in negating the negation.

Marcuse Once More

Contesting Mao, Marx and Hegel (at least provisionally) on the conception of internal negation, Marcuse raises the question of the importance of the external, outside quality of negative reason in a controversial paper "The Concept of Negation in the Dialectic" (Marcuse [1966] 2014) at a Hegel Congress in Vienna in 1966.

As to the concept of negation as overcoming (*Aufhebung*), for both Marx and Hegel, it is essential that the negating forces driving a system's self-evolving contradictions to a new stage develop *within* that very system. The development of the bourgeoisie within feudal society and the proletariat as a revolutionary force within capitalism are examples of determinate negation against the whole system and yet within it …. Against this concept of dialectics, I ask whether the negating forces within an antagonistic system develop with historical necessity in this progressive, liberating manner (Marcuse [1966] 2014, 129–130).

Here Marcuse is still theorizing after the fashion of *One-Dimensional Man,* a mode that he will subsequently revisit and revise (Marcuse [1974] 2015). Here he is implicitly supporting his notion of a "second alienation" and a "second dimension" in ODM's perspective on aesthetics. This stressed the aesthetic dimension as preserving the fuller potential of human experience and reality and

as being the external negation of societal alienation and the harbinger of liberation. Chapter 6 below will elucidate the vicissitudes of Marcuse's double line of interpretation involving on the one hand a hermeneutic or ontological orientation to the dialectic, and on the other a dialectics of history and radical economics that is expressed at several other junctures within his overarching oeuvre.

Brennan, House, Bhaskar

Irene Brennan, a British communist and professor of philosophy, argued in the 1970s that the concept of reflection is essential to a materialist analysis, and that "all the crucial debates about a Marxist theory of truth have centered on an analysis of the concept of reflection" (Brennan 1974, 120). She extended Timpanaro's evaluation of certain modifications of Marxism highlighting the tendencies toward hermeneutical subjectivism as well as toward anti-materialism. Marxism, she explained, cannot content itself with "understanding" the "meaning" of various "interpretations" of "phenomena" while at the same time disregarding questions of objective truth and falsity. That would mean adopting the reactionary side of the Kantian philosophy: its epistemological agnosticism. Doing so, she reminds us (as Lenin pointed out in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism)*, would open the door to religion and metaphysics, or the "divine dialectic" that ultimately sanctifies immediate knowledge and excludes the most important conclusions of mediated reflectivity: the existence of an objective world prior to our sensation of it.

Brennan (1974) underscores Lenin's adaptation of the theory of correspondence. Lenin was aware that material entities were in no way merely inert beings pursuing an unchanging, mathematical mode of existence. Rather, they were historical in their very nature. His use of the epistemological theory of reflection was therefore entirely distinct from the use made in a non-historical kind of materialism or empiricism.

J. D. House definitively demonstrated that positivism, from the classical Marxist point of view, has always been "bad science" (House 1976, 94) and that it is simply wrong to assume that positivism properly describes the modern methodologies in the natural sciences. Current forms of scientific theorizing are much more complicated than the simple inductive or deductive methods allow. A merely descriptive method, void of theoretical generalization, has long since lost its place in the actual practice of scientific circles, even if few theorists other than classical Marxism has succeeded in articulating a well-developed, counter-positivist philosophy of science. The British critical realist, Roy Bhaskar also worked out a promising counter-positivist theory of the generative systems undergirding empirical data in *A Realist Theory of Science* (1975) and *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979) although his efforts uncharacteristically took a non-materialist, metaphysical turn with *From East to West: Odyssey of a Soul* (2000) and works that followed until his death in 2014.

Science Without Dialectics?

Some will argue that 21st century science overall denies dialectics. The biggest, most powerful general ideas, those of thermodynamics (especial the law of entropy), astrophysics, and quantum mechanics ostensibly have no need for it. Engels's dialectics of nature is said to have denied the second law of thermodynamics, and thus to have denied the most contemporary general explanation of systems of matter/energy. Foster and Burkett (2008) show through careful textual analysis that Engels criticized not the entropy law itself but its extrapolation into an hypothesis of the "heat death theory of the universe …." (Foster & Burkett 2008). Contemporary creationists, for one, utilize their own brand "science"[7] without evolution to undergird theories of intelligent design: the second law of thermodynamics supposedly shows that the clockwork universe has been wound up by its designer, but is now winding down.

Gravitation, electro-magnetism, ecological interdependencies, rotational and reflectional symmetry in nature, seem nonetheless amenable to various uses of the concept of dialectic. Do these bodies of knowledge ultimately have no need for an account of a causal dynamism internal to, as well as external to, domains of matter/energy, time, and change? Even the case against Lysenko's notorious defense of a dialectics in nature, for example, is being rethought. According to Au (2017, 267) an entirely new field of biological research, epigenetics, focuses on the impact of environment on inheritance, consistent with Lamarckianism, and contends that acquired characteristics may be passed on to offspring. Given these developments, Loren Graham (2016), emeritus historian of science from M.I.T. and Harvard, has recently asked: "Was Lysenko Right After All? … In the light of the new evidence for the inheritance of acquired characteristics based on epigenetics, was Lysenko right in at least some of his scientific views? My answer is the following: Where he was right, he was not original; where he was original, he was not right. He was right in his belief in the possibility of the inheritance of acquired characteristics, but so were many of his predecessors and contemporaries. He was original in his claims that he could change one species into another, but his claims have not been replicated, and we must conclude that he was wrong" (Graham 2016, 271). Carl Zimmer also discusses research that claims to show that and how male human gametes *transmit experience*, "Changing Up What's Passed Down," *The New York Times*, December 8, 2015, D3.

Dialectic and the Advancement of Learning

Can we say that there is a crucial difference between a philosophical analysis of the world and a scientific analysis? A synoptic epistemological account, as yet unpublished, clarifies this issue. Michael L. Simmons, Jr. was in the 1980s Co-Director of the Center for Critical Studies in Education at the State University of New York at Buffalo. The findings from his study of dialectics were presented at that time. In

his view, dialectical research examines objects in the world in their motion, their many-sidedness, and their essence:

> Dialectic treats existence, whatever its domain, size, form, importance, as a totality (or a unity) comprising elements or factors that stand in opposition, in conflict, even contradiction, to each other. Movement of the object results primarily from the oppositions, etc. The particular relations of any oppositions, conflicts, or contradictions are the necessary condition of the existence and particular nature of the very totality which contains them (it *is* them, sic!).
>
> Dialectic contributes the concepts *negation* and *sublation* to our understanding of something with which we are all familiar: things change qualitatively but retain aspects of their former form/content. The retained elements or factors now, too, change in content, function, and significance in their new totality …. Thus, dialectic presents a world in which there is qualitative change, discontinuity, and continuity … and seeks some notion or kind of progress.
>
> Viewing our basic concepts as containing socio-historical content informed by conflict will lead us to a more comprehensive understanding of what meanings are present and what meanings we instantiate as we think, teach, inquire …. Dialectic gives organization to the material examined and helps us see what the material contains in concealed form.[8]

For Simmons dialectic is incipient critical social science and radical political education. It defines inadequacies in light of better human possibilities in order that these "be realized in restructured social relations." If science looks for lawfulness, Simmons tells us Bhaskar's critical realism lets us understand these as tendencies within the underlying structures internal to nature and social reality that generate empirical data. The tendencies can be understood dialectically as actualized and as not actualized depending on conditions, time, and place. In this manner both science and philosophy can embody a dialectical rationality; both can support emancipatory cultural action for human justice and freedom.

As I see it, any theory is to know the world in its movement and integrity, it must both preserve and cancel certain aspects of the predominantly static methods of traditional mathematics and abstract rationalism. It must assimilate them on a higher level consistent with the basic dynamics of natural history and socio-intellectual history as modern philosophy has come to disclose them. Dialectics can be said to be a philosophical procedure that distinguishes itself by understand and working with relationships, particularly those that are changing and contradictory, as found in the realms of nature, society and thought. It addresses what it deems to be the necessary interpenetration of abstract and concrete aspects of any knowledge claim, value judgment, or facet of material reality. Dialectics has emerged as an especially conscious and active human enterprise; whose general theory develops through the reflective processes involved in progressively reconstructing

sociocultural and economic practice. Dialectics thus represents an acquired awareness and intellectual skill—studied, utilized, and refined—that enables us to come to grips with the protracted effort to understand and transform (i.e. liberate the latent potentials of) historical reality. The kinetic involved in these processes has been variously conceived, with controversies pivoting around the driving force and irreconcilable quality of determinate internal tensions. According to Simmons (Ibid.), for Plato and for us today, "a world facilitating virtuous existence is a dialectical necessity." Dialectics must "catch up with Socrates." In his estimation, the problem of the *Meno*—Can Virtue Be Taught?—is our problem: "Society is in crisis with philosophy attempting to instantiate virtue."

Dialectical philosophy has developed historically from the time of Plato and Laozi to the present, though not without serious debates and controversy, setbacks, and irrelevancies. I have presented the preceding remarks in order to elucidate the more immediate context of explicit difficulties that affect Marcuse's employment of ontological and dialectical thought. I have attempted a critical assessment of the philosophical problem Marcuse knew was central to human history, human learning, and human liberation—theoretical explanation and its relation to social and natural reality. Overall, a modern tendency toward materialism and dialectics in science and philosophy seems clear. This says something about the nature of the universe, social systems, and human consciousness as we are increasingly aware of them. Should dialectics not belong exclusively to any particular "school," its explanatory exertions underwrite humanity's authentic search for knowledge and learning in science and philosophy as such.

Notes

1 See also Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (New York: International, 1970) p. 65: "The Kantian theory of the origin of all existing bodies from rotating nebular masses was the greatest advance made by astronomy since Copernicus. For the first time the conception that nature had no history in time began to be shaken."
2 Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (New York: International, 1974) p. 10.
3 Frank Baron, "From Alexander von Humboldt to Charles Darwin: Evolution in Observation and Interpretation." Internet *Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, No. 17. February, 2010. www.inst.at/trans/17Nr/7-8/7-8_baron17.htm.
4 Humboldt was no Marxist: he was part of the political reaction that persuaded the Prussian police to take measures against Marx even in Paris, this according to Otto Rühle, *Karl Marx* (New York: New Home Library, 1928) p. 77. According to Bertell Ollman, *Alienation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 53, Marx wanted to dedicate his *Capital* to Darwin.
5 See especially Jürgen Habermas on psychoanalysis in Chapters 10, 11, and 12 of his *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1972).
6 According to a leading German historiographer, Georg G. Iggers, "The hermeneutic form of historicism lent itself well to a critique of socialism because it rejected social analysis as a legitimate form of inquiry …." Also: "… a scholarly reply to Marxism had to be formulated. Meinecke and Weber represent diverse ends of a spectrum … yet their explanations were to be found in human consciousness." See especially, Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975) pp. 24, 84–85.

7 Consider the "science" utilized only a few decades ago to defend the interests of the tobacco industry, the asbestos industry, the beef industry, the sugar industry, etc., not to mention the science utilized by the U.S. government and the pesticide industry to deflect the environmental criticisms leveled against them by Rachel Carson. When we acknowledge the influence of political interests that inevitably also condition what is called science, we can see that reactionary ideological tendencies have intervened (and still intervene) in the rejection of the ecological/dialectical qualities of science even in the 21st century.
8 Michael L. Simmons, Jr. "Dialectic: Philosophy of Education's Missing Essence," conference paper at State University of New York at Buffalo, no date, probably mid-1980s. All quotations from my personal copy of the typescript of the presentation.

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6

WHAT MAKES CRITICAL THEORY *CRITICAL*?

Reclaiming the Critique of Commodity Fetishism

> We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.
>
> —*Aldo Leopold (1966, x)*

The cornerstone of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School and Western Marxism is often seen as its philosophical critique of alienation, understood *not* primarily as a critique of commodity fetishism, but as a critique of *Verdinglichung*. This term is usually translated as *reification,* often in the sense of *ver-Ding-lichen*: to thing-ify, that is to falsely "objectify" realities that are fundamentally unreified, unthinged, or un-thing-like [nichtverdinglichten Sein (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [1926] 1967, 46)], as the consequence of misplaced and unwarranted thingification. Marcuse's ostensible "Heideggerian Marxism" moves to center stage here (Piccone & Delfini 1970; Wolin & Abromeit 2005).

Heidegger develops *Verdinglichung*-theory to argue the inadequacy of scientific knowing when it comes to the study of humans. The methods of anthropology, psychology, and biology are "thoroughly questionable and need to be attacked in new ways which must have their source in ontological problematics" (Heidegger [1926] 1962, 71). "It has long been known that ancient ontology works with 'thing-concepts,' and that there is a danger of 'reifying consciousness'" (Heidegger [1926] 1962, 487). Heidegger wants us to think in terms of "unreified Being" ("*nichtverdinglichten Sein*" Heidegger, Sein und Zeit [1926] 1967, 46) beyond the realm of "Thinghood" (Heidegger [1926] 1962, 72), yet for the most part we fall into our alienated, everyday patterns of thought and behavior, illegitimately reifying the world (and other people) in terms of beings (*Seienden*), things, as *Zeuge*, tools, equipment, Cartesian res extensa, and hence knowing

them only pragmatically, onticly. The spatial and temporal human condition, especially, is said to require a different sort of understanding—existential or *ontological* in nature—and our non-reified understanding of Being (*Sein*) is a precondition for our own authentic, unalienated, existence in the world.

In my estimation, it is Heidegger's development of a philosophy against *Verdinglichung* that is itself questionable. Wolfgang Filbert (1986) widens the above sense of reification, seeing it as a critique of the tendency to value things, that is possessions, over one's mode of authentic being in the world, and as indicating that consumption patterns define personal identity. In 1961 Erich Fromm's *Marx's Concept of Man* prepared the way by interpreting Marx as desiring "the liberation of man from a kind of work which destroys his individuality, which transforms him into a thing, and which makes him into a slave of things" (Fromm [1961] 2009, 40). Each of us needs to value what we are rather than what we have. Christoph Demmerling (1994, 10) writes further:

> The critique of *Verdinglichung*, the core of the social theory that derived from Marx, is still a fundamental element of the critical theory of society despite the discussion in sociology of the end of the industrial labor and despite the 'linguistic turn' in social theory.

See in addition Axel Honneth's volume, *Verdinglichung* (2005); also, Kliche (1980); Berger and Pullberg (1966); Piccone and Delfini (1970).

The shift toward *Verdinglichung*-theory involves a conceptual alteration that causes notable consternation in particular to Jürgen Habermas. He examines the employment made of *Verdinglichung*-theory in the work of Lukács, Horkheimer, and Adorno. In "Von Lukács zu Adorno: Rationalisierung als Verdinglichung," Habermas stresses that: "Horkheimer and Adorno understood their critique of instrumental reason as a 'negation of reification [*Verdinglichung*]' …" (*Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns*, Band I, 1981; also, Habermas 1984, 355). "Horkheimer and Adorno detach the [*Verdinglichung*] concept not only from the special historical context of the rise of the capitalist economic system but from the dimension of interhuman relations altogether …" (Habermas 1984, 379). "It is the 'Aesthetic Theory' that first seals the surrender of all cognitive competence to art …. Negative Dialectics and aesthetic theory can now only 'helplessly refer to one another'" (Habermas 1984, 384). "Horkheimer and Adorno get ensnared in their own difficulties. There is something to be learned from these problems; indeed they furnish us with reasons for a change of paradigm within social theory" (Habermas 1984, 366).

Like Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse develops a critique of *Verdinglichung*, alerting us to our vulnerability to a faulty projection of reality through positivist short-sightedness which may be remediated only through the deconstructive and reconstructive power of a philosophical critique grounded in the aesthetic imagination. In order to understand just what makes Marcuse's critical theory critical,

I believe we need to examine carefully the philosophical underpinnings of his epistemological and intellectual positions. In so doing, we come to realize the ambiguity and complexity—the vicissitudes—of his theorization of the concept of reification. The future of critical theorizing demands that we avoid the reduction of social theory to aesthetic theory and the traditional political dangers of aestheticism and cultural conservatism to which Habermas (1984) alerted us.

Marcuse does accord due respect to Marx's early writings on alienation and to Marx's later account in *Capital* of reification as being historically and materially rooted in capitalism's commodity fetish. The problem is that much of what is called critical theory today has tended to formulate a particular approach to the kind of knowledge constructed by the aesthetic imagination and aesthetic education, which is then presented as the critical antidote against the debilitating fragmentation of consciousness and profound numbing of the senses that are considered to be the major sources of our current cultural alienation. In the end Marcuse's overall philosophy must be seen as encompassing a doubled line of interpretation within a larger field of vision.

Much of Marcuse's continuing appeal stems from his work on the problems of knowledge and the political implications of education, particularly his emphasis on the emancipatory and dis-alienating potential of art and the humanities. It must be admitted from the start that Marcuse's analysis is unusually absorbing. His work presents insights into philosophical traditions largely eclipsed in the customary and conventional forms of U.S. higher education. Marcuse philosophizes about education under conditions of oppression and alienation, and this concern and activity has been central to his entire intellectual effort. His work communicates the vibrancy of his German intellectual sources and an appreciation for much of the real stress and tension in our lives, which, as he finds, are continually torn in the conflicts between sensuousness and reason, longing and gratification. The essential connection of education to the attainment of the social potential of the human race is an integral part of his general theoretical discourse. Marcuse's final book, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978), deals importantly with the aesthetic sources of our wisdom and learning and with the theory of literary art. His doctoral dissertation, *The German Artist Novel* (originally completed in 1922, first published in 1977, and as yet untranslated into English) concerns itself with the education (Bildung) of the artist as this is depicted in modern German fiction.

Marcuse's unique emphasis on the humanities as a foundation for critical theory has a renewed relevance today as right-wing commentators carry out their culture wars with regard to the literary canon, the place of values in schooling, and the role and function and future of the arts and humanities in higher education. I want to underscore not only the strengths of Marcuse's classical philosophy of education, I also want to confront the theoretical complexity of his approach. The philosophical foundations of his work in this regard oscillate in such a manner that his theories of art, alienation and the humanities can displace what he also recognizes and acknowledges as Marx's structural analysis of social life.

There is much to gain by casting Marcuse's uniquely developed analytical categories into relief, comparing them to those of the classical Marxist theory he sought to come to terms with throughout his career.

The philosophical difficulties of Marcuse's theories of art and education hinge upon his treatment of alienation—veering attention toward a critique of reification (as *Verdinglichung*) taken out of the materialist context of the Marxist economic analysis. My argument is that there is a side of Marcuse's theorizing that treats reification as responsible for the objective, material "semblance" (Marcuse 1960, 281) adhering to the social arrangements of human civilization.

> Marx's early writings are the first explicit statement of the process of reification (*Verdinglichung*) through which capitalist society makes all personal relations between men take the form of objective relations between things.
>
> *(Marcuse [1941] 1960, 279)*

> Economic relations only seem to be objective because of the character of commodity production. As soon as one delves beneath this mode of production, and analyzes its origin, one can see that its natural *objectivity* is mere semblance while in reality it is a specific historical form of existence that man has given himself. Moreover, once this content comes to the fore, economic theory would turn into *critical* theory.
>
> *(Marcuse [1941] 1960, 281, emphasis in original)*

Although the text of *Reason and Revolution* was initially published in English, Marcuse inserts the German word, *Verdinglichung*, into the statement cited above. In several other places Marcuse also ascribes *Verdinglichung* to Marx. Marcuse nowhere cites a text from Marx with regard to the use of this concept, and other published scholarship on this issue is inadequate, even contradictory. Berger and Pullberg (1966) attribute *Verdinglichung* to Marx. Piccone and Delfini (1970) concur and ascribe the use of this term to also to Husserl. Other scholars claim, with greater warrant in my estimation, that *Verdinglichung* was introduced *not* by Marx, but originally by Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness* (Lukács [1922] 1971); see for example, Feenberg (1971) and Israel (1971). In 1926 Heidegger appropriated the term.

For my part, diligent comparative readings of the German-language texts of Marx's essay "On Alienated Labor" and his subsection of *Capital* on "The Secret of the Fetish Character of Commodities" disclose no instance of Marx's use of the term *Verdinglichung*. So, *Verdinglichung* does *not* occur in Marx's early writings or in Volume One of *Capital*. A computerized word-search in German of Marx's full two-thousand-plus pages of *Das Kapital* found two instances of his use of the term, both in Volume Three (as assembled years later by Engels).[1] Marcuse, therefore, has only the slightest justification for attributing to this term a central role in Marx's political-economic theory or theory of alienation. I expect that a Marx reference in this regard was never cited

because no such citation was generally familiar to Marx scholars from any primary source in Marx, then or now.

Instead, on the basis of the writings of Heidegger (1926) and Lukács (1922), Marcuse frequently allows the economic phenomenon of commodity fetishism and the dynamics of capital accumulation to recede into the deep background of his analysis. When that happens, he conceives of alienation and reification almost exclusively as a thing-ified (*verdinglicht*) sclerosis of thought and action, as a subordination of philosophical method to mechanistic and objectivistic principles. By the time of his final book, Marcuse claims (echoing Horkheimer and Adorno's statement in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*): "'All reification is a forgetting,' Art fights reification by making the petrified world speak, sing, perhaps dance" (Marcuse 1978, 73). This is of course vulnerable to the Habermasian criticisms of Horkheimer and Adorno noted above, even if Marcuse's sentence evokes a memory of Marx's observation that the "petrified social conditions must be made to dance by singing their own melody to them" (Marx, "The Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," 1964, 47). Art is thought to preserve a liberating memory that the social and cultural worlds are not the inevitable products of nature, nor are they fixed or static. Social forces and social structure become secondary factors derived from the primary, if tentative, creative, and productive, acts of human objectification. Because reification is said to occur when this is human creative action is forgotten, alienation takes on connotations of amnesis.

Axel Honneth (2005) argues that a critique of systemic economic commodification is not adequate to explain the phenomenon of *Verdinglichung*, which he sees instead as a result of *Anerkennungsvergessenheit* [a kind of "forgottenness" with regard to human rights, being unmindful of the inherent dignity of others—CR]. Building on Adorno's theory of the importance of an individual's earliest emotional bonds for the healthy development of a social sense of solidarity, Honneth understands reification as a kind of pathological oblivion with regard to the humanity of others, cold-hearted conduct that has "forgotten" (Honneth 2005, 69) every element of its former sense of social solidarity. Similar to autism, a behavioral disinterest ensues that lacks any feeling of care or concern toward a world that apparently only consists of inconsequential observable objects. While Honneth believes he is augmenting and improving Lukács's theory of reification as *Verdinglichung*, he distances his own theory even further from the political economic analysis of commodity fetishism (in the context of capitalist social relations) that is the foundation of Lukács's analysis, and instead pursues "an entirely different path" (Honneth 2005, 74). By re-conceiving reification as a form of psychological pathology, resulting in an obliviousness to or a denial of respect and recognition to beings worthy of dignity and respect, the causes of reification are "less directly and immediately," understood as sociological (Honneth 2005, 70, 73). His conception of sociology is a narrow social-interactionist view (Adorno's theory of the child's libidinal bond to the parent; ideological indoctrination to racial prejudice; inter-subjective practices of neutral observation and calculation, etc.), rather than a broader socio-structural or political-economic paradigm.

Marx to the contrary has no quarrel with the independent objectivity of social forces and social structure, nor with the existence of production goods as things. Rather his economic and philosophical criticism is aimed at the indiscriminate capitalist reduction of even the most intimate interpersonal relationships into alienating, market modes.

Marx's account in *Capital* of the capitalist system's fetish or obsession with commodities shows that (and how) private accumulation hinges upon the commodification of labor. Labor's commodification is the condition of the possibility of surplus value, profit, and the accumulation of wealth and capital itself. Likewise, accumulation is heightened when exchange relationships are driven to multiply and predominate in society, and when the population becomes commodity-dependent as completely as possible. Social relationships oriented toward the non-commercial fulfillment of human needs are abandoned or they are coerced into inverted and exploitable social phenomena, subject to capitalism's conventions of commodity exchange. In *Capital* Marx expands upon the fourfold theory of alienation that he developed in the *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844. There he held that under capitalism laboring humanity is alienated, or separated, (1) from the products of labor; (2) from decision-making and control during the process of labor; (3) from the full political potential of the human species, i.e. communism as humanism; and lastly (4) from other laboring comrades, since all workers must regard other workers first and foremost in their a roles as employees, and therefore as competitive commodities, a perspective which undermines labor solidarity (Marx [1844] 1964, 122–129). In *Capital,* the 1844 analysis of alienation is augmented through a discussion of the capitalist system's fetish with commodities: "Fetishism … is inseparable from the production of commodities" (Marx [1890] 1906, 83). This fetish, warp, or twisting of authentic relationships into alienated and dehumanized form occurs because genuinely social attitudes and interests—in people, toward people, and in the fulfillment of human needs—get driven out of economics by transactional business relationships. Exchange in the capitalist market is thought to engender: "sachliche Verhältnisse der Personen und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen"[2] (matter-of-fact, impersonal, and business-like attitudes towards human beings—evading all concern for persons as having human and social needs—while tendering protective social care and one's personal responsibility instead to commercial and technical affairs with profit-oriented business priorities).[3] This is the core of the culture of business. For a striking example, take the interests of those who own and control gun manufacturing in the U.S and who wish to secure the profits of this industry: gun sales are protected with the utmost political and legal determination, of the sort that one might expect to be bestowed upon the lives of school children, while the extraordinary and ever-increasing number of lives of school children lost to gun violence each year is regarded simply as a cost of doing business. Marx understands the culture of business as revolving around this core perversion of economics in *Capital*. It is a further extension of the fourfold theory of alienation formulated in the 1844 *Manuscripts* (Marx [1844] 1964, 129).

Please notice that Marx speaks here of "sachliche Verhältnisse" and "Sachen." In German a "*Sach*verständiger," for example, is a certified appraiser, one who is

competent to assess the market value of an object for sale, a commodity, i.e. not simply a thing. In the art of the lurid German 1920s a *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement criticized the ugly and sordid cultural realities of unrestrained accumulation and commodified desire (repressive desublimation) in class-divided society.

Sache is not *Ding,* yet in several translations of this sentence it is translated as *thing,* which only compounds the *Verdinglichung* problematic I am addressing here. In an example from the version of *Capital* usually taken as standard today, Ben Fowkes's translation published in 1976 by Penguin, talks of "material [dinglich] relations between persons and social relations between things."[4] This is particularly egregious, because *Fowkes* inserts the German word *dinglich* in the brackets above exactly where *Marx* has written *sachlich*! I take this oversight or error as testimony to the extent of the tradition within critical Marxism of assuming that reification means thingification. *Sachlich* here means doing something in an impersonal, business-oriented way. There is no "dinglich" or "Ding" present in the sentence at all!

It must be said that Marx in this section of *Capital*, while never utilizing the term *Verdinglichung*, does use the word "Ding" or *thing* multiple times.

> There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, existence of the things *qua* commodities, and the value relation between the products of labor which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and the material [*dinglichen*] relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things [*Dingen*].
>
> *(Marx [1880] 1906, 83)*

This occasional use of *dinglich* and *Dingen* within Marx's section of the commodity fetish may have contributed to what I nevertheless consider the ideological mis-interpretations wrought by Lukács ([1922] 1971) and Heidegger, who would have had access to *Das Kapital*. Richard Wolin (2012) observes that when Heidegger utilizes forms of the term *Verdinglichung* in *Sein und Zeit* (Heidegger 1967, 420, 437), these are to be seen as allusions to Lukács: "[In] certain respects, Heidegger's concerns are not entirely foreign to those of the early Marx …. It would not be far-fetched to conclude that the central goal of [Heidegger's] fundamental ontology is the overcoming of reification" (Wolin 2001, 144–145).

Rather than *Verdinglichung*, as such, I have been arguing that in Marx's analysis it is the capitalist system's fetishism—of exchange value and of the commodity form—that is responsible for alienated humanity's use of reified, business-oriented, and dehumanized criteria when dealing with other people (particularly employees) yet devoting the utmost VIP care and solicitude to the profit-oriented prospects of business affairs. Marx wants to overcome this

reification, this fetish or idolization of profit-taking, and restore society's "human dimension." This requires the decommodification of the dehumanizing social practices and ideologies that serve to replicate the contemporary social order and heighten the accumulation of capital. Marx certainly did not dispute the objective character of social relationships and their reality independent of the perceiving subject in this critique of the commodity fetish. Rather, he criticized the ultimate rationale and justice of those specific sets of objective economic, social, and cultural interactions, which, as structured sets of human relations, were maintained in order to pursue profit under capitalism. Marx protested not against any general philosophical treatment of human beings as things, but rather against the reduction of humanity to a certain kind of thing, namely a commodity, whose social function is disclosed only through critical political-economy.

Likewise, there was for Marx no question that social relationships are independent of the knowing subject. They are dynamic, material, and objective: his point was that these need not continue forever to reproduce the commodity form. Marcuse and much critical theory, on the other hand, often criticize the objectivity of economic relations, rather than their subjugation to the commodity form. This aspect of critical theory focuses upon the reification or fetishism of objectivity, science, facts and things, in a manner far beyond Marx's discussion in *Capital* of the fetishism of commodities. There is thus one side of Marcuse's work that has largely deflected the philosophical focus from Marx's original target, i.e., the commodification and commercialization of social life and culture under capitalism and re-directed it toward a critique of the inauthentic "thing-character" of objects and the allegedly "reified" nature of their scientific study. The material reality of structured social relationships is questioned as well.

The treatment of reification as *Verdinglichung* becomes the pivotal theoretical revision Marcuse utilizes to recast the connection of reason to revolution, and to subjectify it. Marcuse comes to theorize alienation as anaesthetization—a deadening of the senses that makes repression and manipulation possible. He theorizes that *art can act against alienation* as a revitalizing, rehumanizing force. The educational goal Marcuse proposes is the restoration of the aesthetic dimension as a source of cultural critique, political activism, and the guiding principles for the social organization of the future. In his estimation, our technological mindlessness and social fragmentation have to be educationally re-mediated through a broadened philosophy of the human condition—emphasizing particularly reason's roots in the aesthetic—if ever we are to accomplish our own liberation. But Marcuse acknowledges that art can also contribute to an alienated existence. Alienation is understood in this second sense as a freely chosen act of withdrawal. It represents a self-conscious bracketing of certain of the practical and theoretical elements of everyday life for the sake of achieving a higher and more valuable philosophical distance and perspective. Marcuse contends that artists and intellectuals (especially) can utilize their own personal estrangement to serve a future

emancipation. Classical learning is thought to impel humanity beyond the "first dimension," the realm of mere fact, to the world of significance and meaning. As Marcuse sees it, the very form of beauty is dialectical. It unites the opposites of gratification and pain, death and love, repression and need, and therefore can authentically represent what he takes to be the conflicted, tragic, and paradoxical substance of human life. In Marcuse's view, the insights provided by these liberal studies are transhistorical and are considered the precondition to any political transformation of alienated human existence into authentic human existence. Here the arts relate to higher education and advanced forms of knowledge not merely in terms of "arts instruction," but as the very basis of a general educational theory.

Despite Marcuse's valuable attention elsewhere to issues of class, race and gender, he often articulates a concept of literary-aesthetic education standing in disjunction from much sociological and historical methodology as well as from the philosophical categories generally associated with a dialectical or historical materialism. Political, historical, and educational issues are considered best understood out of art itself and out of art alone. This aspect of Marcuse's approach, drawn from Dilthey, as well as the cultural radicalism of Nietzsche, at times asserts a logical and political-philosophical priority over his treatment of the thought of Hegel, Marx and Freud, and comes to define Marcuse's characteristic understanding of aesthetic education as a foundation of a critical theory.

Where Hegel and Marx emphasized the role of science, dialectically conceived, Marcuse's early work, but also his final book, *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978) looks to an ontology of art located in the subjective but universally human condition. The Frankfurt School tended to substitute this ontological aesthetic, developed upon the basis of classical German idealism following Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Heidegger, for the philosophy of history of Hegel and Marx, calling it critical theory. In accordance with a prominent motif in this tradition, Marcuse holds that education through art provides the best impetus to philosophical and political education and to the re-humanization of philosophy itself. As ingenious and thought-provoking as this theory is, Marcuse at times illegitimately reduces social and educational philosophy to aesthetic philosophy.

Viewing Marcuse's life's work as a whole, however, I must stress that it is a double line of interpretation that emerges in his philosophizing in which two robust paradigms are dialectically intertwined, yet both have distinctive criteria for critical insight. The ontological/hermeneutic paradigm is subjectively self-contained and considers meaning in self-referential (i.e. human) terms. That is, in terms of the internal turmoil and distress supposedly inherent in the depth dimension of the human condition (with Eros and Thanatos as the core sensual forces). This conflict is theorized as revealed, enclosed, and preserved by the aesthetic form, and its truth is untethered to societal and historical particulars. The

limits of such a position are noted by Habermas, above, and by feminist literary critic, Aeron Haynie, who has written, "it is important not to posit an essential, pre-existing sexuality-as-truth" (Haynie 1994, 13). Following Edward Said, Michel Foucault, and Gayatri Spivak, she contends that an adequate interpretation of such art requires a recontextualizing of a work's supposedly inherent meaning in terms of the impact of its historical and political embeddedness.

In my view, the *historical materialist side* of Marcuse's critical social theory ultimately gains greater explanatory power and retains a malleability and freedom from apriori categorization because it remains externally referential. Because it continually implicates art and knowledge in a structural and historical analysis of social life, it possesses a capacity to construct and engage that context. It can also raise the problems and prospects of intervention against the material structure of oppression in ways the ontological / hermeneutical approach never has.

In "The Foundation of Historical Materialism" (Marcuse [1932] 1973) Marcuse's writing is clearly radical in tone: he emphasizes Marx's work in philosophy and economics as a "theory of revolution" (Marcuse [1932] 1973, 3). He discusses the problems of capitalism's commodity fetish consistent with Marx's analysis. He acknowledges that the negation/destruction of reification can only occur as a result of the practical activities of those who labor (Marcuse [1932] 1973, 39). However, these points are ultimately subordinated to an Heideggerian opposition to what was considered inauthentic or ontic thinking about the world in thing-like, rather than ontological, terms. Alienation results not from the objective and external workings of historical economic patterns, forces, and relationships, but rather from an internal human deficiency. Social and political criticism is reduced to the sheer negation of our mental and behavioral tendencies toward *Verdinglichung*.

What makes theory critical? In 1929, Herbert Marcuse was a graduate student in a seminar of Martin Heidegger's called "Introduction to Academic Study." Marcuse took notes almost verbatim of Heidegger's discussion of Plato's myth of the cave: "Today we do not even know what we are to be liberated from. Yet it is exactly this knowledge that is the condition of every genuine emancipation" (Heidegger 1929, 6). Let me agree that these are pertinent issues. Heidegger's concept of authenticity challenged each person to express his/her "ownmost" freedom and identity by creating meaning in a bleak and meaningless world. Hence his resolute emphasis on our inherent powers of self-making. Marx, on the other hand, addressed the inauthenticity of social conformity as an outcome of economic and political oppression, especially the oppression of our essential species being as humans: our capacity to work together and share together, thus forming an authentic (i.e. non-oppressive and free) human community, a *Gemeinwesen* or commonwealth. Meaning and purpose in human life are not created ex nihilo by the subjective human imagination, they are discovered through historical study of our species being (*Gattungswesen*) and the formation of universal and verifiable knowledge about our highest political potentials as a species and the rational fulfillment of these potentials (attainable yet arrested under existing social conditions).

I argue on the basis of the fuller oeuvre of Marcuse—and that of Marx—that critical knowledge offers determinate negation: knowledge that enables the social negation of the social negation of human life's core activities, the most central of which is creative labor within a partnership political economic commonwealth. It is my view that in theorizing the negation of the negation of our commodified, and hence alienated labor, in the fourfold sense outlined by Marx in the *1844 Manuscripts* and *Capital* Volume One, we find the central criteria of our emancipation.

Marcuse would agree that any abrogation of our intellectual duty to engage in just this sort of critique—taking refuge instead in the philosophical distance found in art or academic alienation—is precisely what genuine critical thinking must refuse to do. This is the dialectical sense in which his critical theorizing becomes the source of a *radical* intelligence that inspires the ingenuity and the action required to advance politically beyond our present alienation toward racial equality, gender equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace: the qualitatively different future that is humanity's birthright. Of utmost importance is that he elaborates these as components of the qualitative leap to be made toward radical socialism (Marcuse 1972; [1975] 2015).

Epilogue

In a manner he said was "half ironical," Marcuse also lectured on the obsolescence of socialism! (Marcuse [1965] 2013, 296). I found a typescript of a lecture with just that title in the Frankfurt archive and published it.[5] It reveals nonetheless what Marcuse took to be the critical nature of Marx's political-economy. As Marcuse explained to his students:

> Here are his [Marx's] main theses which I will try to sum up for you as best as I can and as slowly as I can. First, the social relationships among individuals in capitalist society are governed by the exchange value—that is the market value not the use value—of the goods and services which the individuals produce. That is to say, the relations among men are governed by their marketability. Second, in this exchange society the satisfaction of human needs occurs only as a by-product of profitable commodity production. Third, in the progress of capitalism, the twofold contradiction unfolds between the growing productivity of labor and the growing social wealth on the one side, and their destructive and repressive use; and between the social character of the means of production (that is to say, they are no longer subject to individual but only collective control, they are no longer individual instruments, but collective instruments of labor) and the private ownership and control of the means of production. Fourth, capitalism can solve this contradiction only temporarily through increasing waste and aggressive expansion: imperialism leading to a recurrent cycle of war and depression, wiping out the benefit of the intervening period of prosperity. Fifth, the laboring classes who bear the brunt of

> exploitation seize the productive apparatus and bring it under the collective control of society as a whole. Now I submit that all these propositions, with the possible exception of the last one, have been validated. Even there, one could point out, that what has taken place is that the class struggle has been transformed from the national to the international arena and has developed into the worldwide struggle between "have" and "have not" nations.
>
> *(Marcuse [1965] 2013, 296)*

Likewise, I found and published the following brief, unknown, account by Marcuse of "Value and Exchange Value":

> The differentiation between value and exchange value in itself contains a critical element. This is because in bourgeois society value and exchange value are regarded as completely identical insofar as human beings and goods are defined in terms of the exchange values they happen to possess.
>
> *(Marcuse [1936] 2013, 288)*

Such analyses form the background for Marcuse's more familiar words:

> This society is obscene in producing and indecently exposing a stifling abundance of wares while depriving its victims abroad of the necessities of life; obscene in stuffing itself and its garbage cans while poisoning and burning the scarce foodstuffs in the fields of its aggression; obscene in the words and smiles of its politicians and entertainers; its prayers, in its ignorance, and in the wisdom of its kept intellectuals.
>
> *(Marcuse 1969, 7–8)*

> [O]pposition is [now being] directed against the totality of a well-functioning, prosperous society—a protest against its Form—the commodity form of men and things.
>
> *(Marcuse 1972, 49, 51)*

Ultimately, Marcuse asks: "Now, if this is the case, if that much of the Marxian analysis is validated by the actual development, why then and in what respect is Marxian socialism obsolete?" (Marcuse [1965] 2013, 296). Here is what he has to say over the course of several pages:

> Marx supposed as precondition for the revolution a social class with qualitatively different interests and aspirations, with a different mentality, and which precisely because of this qualitative difference would be capable of building a qualitatively different society, one free from alienation. It was only because the laboring classes supposedly did not succumb to the aggressive and competitive needs of the established system that they were supposed to be the

agents of its transformation. Now, the emergence of such a new class within the old society is prevented by the overflowing productivity of the affluent society and by its ability—this is decisive—by the ability of the affluent society to create and satisfy needs which in turn reproduce and strengthen the same social system. Thus instead of the class struggle between essentially different and irreconcilable interests, you have competition of essentially the same interests. In one word, Marx imagined the collapse of capitalism as a result of the class struggle waged of necessity by the exploited and suffering classes against a small number of exploiters. He did not foresee the long-range incorporation of the exploited classes into the high standard of living of an affluent society; he did not envisage any other mode of collapse of capitalism except through class struggle. Or did he envisage such a different mode of collapse?

Indeed he did—a collapse apparently independent of the traditional forms of class struggle, a collapse which would take place almost entirely behind the backs of the individuals, in—and I chose the word intentionally—in an automatic manner … a collapse by virtue of the overflowing productivity of the system under the pressure of competition. I want to read you one passage from the first version of *Das Kapital*, written in 1857, which exists in no English translation. It is a difficult passage; I shall read it slowly; it is perhaps one of the most important passages in the work of Marx.

> As large scale industry advances, the creation of real wealth depends increasingly less on the labor time and the quantity of labor expended in the productive process than on the power of the instruments set in motion during the labor time. These instruments and their growing effectiveness are in no proportion to the actual labor time which the production requires. Their effectiveness rather depends on the attained level of science and technical progress. Human labor then is no longer enclosed in the process of production. Man rather relates himself to the process of production merely as supervisor and regulator. [… –CR]. He then stands outside this process, instead of being its principal agent. In this transformation the basis of production and wealth is no longer the actual physical labor performed by man himself nor his labor time, but his own creative power, that is his knowledge and mastery of nature through his social existence. In one word, in the development of the social all-round individual. [… –CR]. Then the theft of another man's labor time on which the social wealth still rests today becomes a miserable basis compared with the new basis which large scale industry itself has created. As soon as human labor in its physical form has ceased to be the great source of wealth, labor time will cease and must of necessity cease to be the measure of wealth, and exchange value must necessarily cease to be the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the mass of

> the population has then ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth, and the leisure of the few has ceased to be a condition for the development of the intellectual faculties of man. The capitalist mode of production which rests on the exchange value thus collapses.[6]

Not a word about class struggle, not a word about impoverishment and exploitation. This was written a hundred years before we knew what automation is. Now the interesting thing—it was Marx himself who later on repressed this version, which now appears perhaps as his most realistic and his most amazing insight. It includes, as those of you who know Marx will have noticed, the simple rejection of the labor theory of value and the acknowledgment that the capitalist society will reach this stage within its own development where this theory is no longer valid. The implications of this passage are tremendous. If this should indeed be the last transformation of capitalism, then Marx's idea of socialism would not be radical enough and would not be extreme enough. Marx himself underrated the possibilities of the new society. Why? Because with this automatic transformation of capitalism, with this total automation, the distinction would be surpassed between socially necessary work and individual work, between alienated and non-alienated labor, between work and labor, and perhaps even between play and labor. Moreover, the new freedom would show forth—and I think that again is a decisive point—not in the further development of the productive forces but rather in their redirection, perhaps even their restriction; would show forth in a reduction of the high standard of living which includes waste, poverty, and war.

From here the affluent society appears in a new light, as a society which is organized to stave off these new forms of freedom which we may comprise in one phrase, forms of freedom which would make possible the pacification of the struggle for existence. The affluent society would be mobilized against it by diverting productivity from the elimination of toil and poverty to waste, planned destruction in order to perpetuate the struggle for existence on which its institutions are based. This organization perpetuates repressive and aggressive needs which in turn repress the emergence of the entirely new needs and aspirations on which the possibility for a new and freer society rests. It would follow that socialism still is the real possibility of a free society in countries where the power of advanced productivity has not yet suffocated or satiated the need for real freedom, where people can still start to rebuild their society from scratch in an entirely different way, that is to say in the underdeveloped countries. And we would again have a case, an historical case, of the advantage of backwardness, the advantage of the late-comer, whereas in the overdeveloped society the next higher stage would have to be defined in entirely different terms so that socialism would appear not as it

> does today, merely as a streamlined continuation of advanced capitalism, but as its true negation and as the liberation of really human and humane needs.
>
> *(Marcuse [1965] 2013, 296–299)*

Under capitalism, as Marx and Marcuse emphasize above, the innovative production processes utilizing ever-increasing automation and the newest technologies, reduced costs and reduced payrolls become the new social average in the long run. At the epitome of capitalist productive efficiency, a profusion of commodities comes into being at near zero marginal cost, that is, almost for free. Marcuse is pointing out that Marx himself realized that this drastically reduces profits, and the upshot is that capitalism loses its reason for being. Today we see that this does not mean that pharmaceutical companies with proprietary medications produced at near-zero marginal cost give these products away for free; neither do the software companies, whose products are produced at near zero marginal cost. In fact, today these software properties are "rented" in perpetuity rather than sold outright.

Marcuse acknowledges that capitalism will organize against its own obsolescence "by diverting productivity from the elimination of toil and poverty to waste, planned destruction in order to perpetuate the struggle for existence on which its institutions are based" (Marcuse [1965] 2013, 298). Marcuse is thus ambivalent about whether an "abolition" of capitalism (and or the labor theory of value) could thus actually occur automatically. The reduced amounts of laboring humanity, considered to be a commodified cost in the capitalist production process, would still remain to be liberated from the commodity form and to have their lives liberated from commodity-dependency—as would their commodified, if unemployed, compatriots.

Jeremy Rifkin, who has recently considered a "zero marginal cost society," points out that monopoly power may well mean that prices are *not* reduced to their marginal cost. Nonetheless, he argues we are

> in the early stages of a game-changing transformation of economic paradigms. A new economic model is emerging in the twilight of the capitalist era that is better suited to organize a society in which more and more goods and services are nearly free.
>
> *(Rifkin 2014, 9)*

On the basis of advanced industrial society's current developments, he envisions the "rise of a Collaborative Commons as the dominant model for organizing economic life" (Rifkin 2014, 16). He sees this new model, however, as being neither capitalism nor socialism.

Marcuse long emphasized the emancipatory potential of technological advances in production: abundance, though systematically wasted today, is a real possibility for the future. There are material, historical, and political warrants for a new world system. Today Jodi Dean (2015) is likewise making the case that the opportunity of radical socialism/communism is on the horizon.

Marx certainly knew that owners of the means and forces of production would not automatically relinquish their property holdings: "Material force can only be overcome by material force" (Marx [1844] 1964, 52). As I shall elaborate in Chapter 7, expropriation of the expropriators is still on the radical socialist agenda. Commonwealth ways of producing wealth, holding property, and protecting the environment, must supplant the outdated and outmoded patterns of predation and profit.

Notes

1 See Karl Marx, *Marx-Engels Werke*, Volume 25, [*Das Kapital*, Vol. 3] (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968) pp. 838 and 887. www.mlwerke.de/me/me25/me25_822.htmhttp://www.mlwerke.de/me/me25/me25_884.htm.

On these two pages Marx holds that both capital and land have been mystified as "things," and that Verdinglichung characterizes the capitalist system of production as a whole. This occurs within a discussion of productive activities better described as having been distorted by Versachlichung, i.e. by a "professionalism" that ensures the priority of business affairs over human affairs.

2 Karl Marx, *Marx-Engels Werke*, Volume 23, [*Das Kapital*, Vol. 1] (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968) p. 87.

3 Here's the full sentence from *MEW* 23, p. 87: "Den [Produzenten] erscheinen daher die gesellschaftlichen Beziehungen ihrer Privatarbeiten als das was sie sind, d.h. nicht als unmittlebar gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Personen in ihren Arbeit selbst, sondern vielmehr als sachliche Verhältnisse der Personen und gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse der Sachen."

Moore and Aveling (1906, 84) translate this as follows: "To the latter [i.e., the producers—CR], therefore, the relations connecting the labor of one individual with that of the rest appear not as direct social relationships between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things."

4 Ben Fowkes translation of *Capital* Volume 1 (London: Penguin, 1976) p. 166.

5 Extensive notes to a less polished yet more extensive lecture version were published independently by Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce a year later: Herbert Marcuse, "The Obsolescence of Socialism," in *Herbert Marcuse, Marxism, Revolution, and Utopia, The Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, Vol. 6, edited by Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce (London and New York: Routledge, 2014) pp. 235–248.

6 Marcuse presents his 1965 translation from Marx's German although he gives no citation as to the source. For context and a slightly different rendering see Karl Marx, "Economic Manuscripts [The Grundrisse, Notebook VII]" in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (New York: International Publishers, 1987) pp. 90–91. [http://marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch14.htm#iii4]. For this source information I thank J. Jesse Ramírez, "Marcuse Among the Technocrats," *Amerikastudien/American Studies* Vol. 57. No. 1, (Heidelberg University, 2012). The passage is also available in Martin Nicolaus's translation and edition of Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973) p. 705. Marcuse's 1972 *Counterrevolution and Revolt* mentions this passage once more (Marcuse 1972, 3).

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7

ECOLOGY AND REVOLUTION: A GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL FORCES

> Material force can only be overthrown by material force; but theory itself becomes a material force when it is seized by the masses. Theory is capable of seizing the masses when it demonstrates *ad hominem,* and it demonstrates ad hominem as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp things by the root. But for man the root is man himself …. [Criticism finds its culmination in] … the *categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions* in which man is an abased, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being …. Theory is only realized in a people so far as it fulfills the needs of the people.
>
> —*Karl Marx, Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*[1]

> We hereby decide to build a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living [buen vivir, sumac kawsay]
>
> *Preamble to the Constitution of Ecuador (2008)*

Wasted abundance and environmental degradation have given rise to a radical systems critique and political opposition that Marcuse believes can become a revolutionary force. So too the movements for racial equality, women's equality, and the liberation of labor. Yet none of these will be so without revolutionary wisdom and passion.

Today the "1 percent" is armed with its own socio-economic theory; the "99 percent" is not. A fundamentally different outlook is necessary. The main problem is to develop an alternate vision for humanity that can liberate the potentials of commonwealth production, ownership, solidarity, and stewardship, now blocked by global capitalism.

Through the dialectical methodologies of critical theory and through ecology's characteristically systemic view, I have assessed our contemporary political-economic conditions in order to fashion keener insights into the generative mechanisms that

undergird intensifying inequality, alienation, cultural polarization, earth degradation, and war. The contradictions between the owners of industrial/finance capital and the rest of us are irreconcilably antagonistic. These contradictions cannot be negotiated out of existence but must be removed by an organized, international workforce conscious of its revolutionary responsibility and its revolutionary potential.

On the basis of Marcuse's work and that of Marx, this volume has explored the groundwork of a new world system, GreenCommonWealth, as a global alliance of transformational forces through which a revolutionary humanity may come to govern itself democratically in terms of our fullest potentials and with integrity toward the ecosystem of planet Earth. The GreenCommonWealth alternative presents us with a vision of a new quality of human existence, a new form of ownership, a new form of racial and gender freedom. Marcuse speaks of the search for "eine neue Gemeinschaft" [a new community] at the conclusion of *The German Artist Novel* (Marcuse [1922] 1978, 333). Likewise, in "On Hedonism" he investigates the need for "a new, true community against the established one." He writes that the question of human social organization and its critique is a "*political* question of the right organization of the polis …. Critical theory … seeks to determine the rational form of society. One of these determinations circumscribing the association of free men contains the explicit demand that each individual share in the social product according to his needs" (Marcuse [1938] 1968, 178, 182).

The formation of a GreenCommonWealth Counter-Offensive is the political challenge today. Under system duress, continuing allegiances to crumbling structures of power will be seen as fatally misguided, because they entail real material loss and suffering; they can and will swiftly shift. The fundamental role of the labor process in the sustenance of the human community, on the other hand, is a lodestone not to be disparaged or displaced, even if the labor force is being dehumanized and degraded. The labor theory of ethics and commonwealth raises expectations: there is a world to win!

A new openness to socialist alternatives is taking hold among younger people. A recent opinion piece in *The New York Times* (December 5, 2017) carried the heading "No Wonder Millennials Hate Capitalism." It concludes that the "rotten morality" behind today's intensifying inequalities is more apparent than ever, hence radicalizing young people. Another *Times* article (April 22, 2018) highlighted the growth increase, since the election of Trump and the candidacy of Bernie Sanders, of the Democratic Socialists of America from 5000 members in 2016 to 35,000 in April 2018.These developments reflect the steady growth among youth of the New Sensibility—new needs, generated under capitalism, but which capitalism cannot fulfill, for gender equality, ecological economics, anti-racism.

In 1979, Herbert Marcuse was considering anew the question of the interrelationship of capitalism's destruction of nature and the prevalence today in individuals of a destructive character structure. This was a political-economic and dialectical materialist question: "How can we make the transition from individual psychology to the instinctual base of a whole society, nay, of a whole civilization?" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 208). "[I]nstitutionalized destruction … provides

the context within which the individual reproduction of destructiveness takes place" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 207).

> This institutionalized destructiveness is well-known, and examples thereof are easy to provide. They include the constant increase in the military budget at the expense of social welfare, the proliferation of nuclear installations, the general poisoning and polluting of our life environment, the blatant subordination of human rights to the requirements of global strategy, and the threat of war in case of a challenge to this strategy.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 207)*

> Violence finds a well provided, manageable outlet in popular culture, in the use and abuse of machine power, and in the cancerous growth of the defense industry. The last of these is made palatable by the invocation of "national interest," which has long since become flexible enough to be applied the world over.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2011, 210)*

Marcuse scholars, Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, and Douglas Kellner have taken up Marcuse's account of institutionalized destruction, ecocidal violence, and the pedagogical problem of sound and self-directed character formation. As America's foremost critical educationists, they address today's crises of toxic masculinity and disasters of domestic terrorism and mass murder. According to McLaren, for example, "[G]uns form part of the broader military-industrial complex that encompasses our military, the prison system, the law enforcement industry, the border patrol industry, weapons manufacturing corporations, marketing strategists, training schools and gun safety and crime prevention programs" (McLaren 2015, 357). Giroux (2018, 263–264) writes about the "sickening brutalism" partly reflected in the statistics of gun violence in which the numbers are staggering. Douglas Kellner's *Guys and Guns Amok* (2008) likewise asks critical educators today to examine these "acts of societal violence that embody a crisis of masculinity and male rage, an out-of-control gun culture, and media that project normative images of violent masculinity and make celebrities out of murders" (Kellner 2008, 14).

Kellner (2011) updates and elucidates the Marcusean critique of the violation of nature in an environmentalist commentary of his own. This was published with reference to the 1979 Marcuse essay "Ecology and the Critique of Modern Society." Kellner's remarks are worthy of lengthy consideration, especially as a counterweight to today's tendencies to link dreadful U.S. policy decisions solely to the Trump administration:

> The relevance of Marcuse's argument should be apparent in the aftermath of the ecocide and genocide of the Persian Gulf war. While ecologists warned

from the beginning of the disastrous environmental effects of a Gulf war, establishment scientists claimed that potential oil spills and fires did not threaten more than regional destruction. Evidently, Bush and his War Lords allowed no environmental restraints on their high-tech Iraqi massacre and destruction of the fragile Gulf region environment. In late January, 1991, Bush signed an order freeing the military from the burden of producing environmental impact reports which were required after the environmental effects of the Vietnam war became known. Henceforth, free of all restrictions, the Bush/Schwarzkopf war machine merrily bombed Iraqi nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons facilities, and attempted to destroy Iraq's oil industry, causing severe fires throughout Iraq; the environmental damage caused by the U.S.-led coalition bombing was so severe that the Bush administration directed all Federal agencies not to reveal to the public any information concerning environmental damage. The U.S. would release no satellite photos of the region and refused to disclose the effects of U.S.-led coalition bombing on the region. Thus both the Iraqi and U.S. forces were responsible for environmental terrorism and both sides committed horrific acts of human and environmental destruction. Indeed, war itself in the high-tech age *is* environmental terrorism and ecocide as advanced technology destroys the earth and annihilates human beings. From this perspective, the high-tech massacre in the Gulf region reveals the insanity of the Western project of the domination of nature, in which a military machine sees the economic and military infrastructure and people of Iraq as objects to dominate and even destroy. The human and ecological holocaust discloses the importance of Marcuse's argument that individuals must change their very sensibilities and instinctual structure so that they can no longer commit or tolerate such atrocities against nature and other human beings. The euphoria in destruction and wide-spread support of U.S. Gulf war crimes in the general population shows the extent of societal regression during the conservative hegemony of the last years and the need for re-education and humanization of the population.

(Kellner [1992] 2011, 218–219)

Discontent, Awakening, Upheavals

Marcuse regarded the environmental movement of his day as a critical intervention against institutional destructiveness and as the embodiment of a life-affirming energy directed towards the protection of Earth and the pacification of our human existence. His *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Marcuse 1955) proposed a consideration of the mythical figures of Orpheus and Narcissus as aesthetic symbols of an essentially non-repressive eros and philosophical pantheism in which humanity longs for nature and an ego restored to oneness with the world: "A successful environmentalism will, within individuals, subordinate destructive energy to erotic energy" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 212).

Marcuse saw this energy as a political eros in a twofold sense. First, the true labor of love, i.e., a platonic, higher level, selfless, regard for other humans ethically as humans. Secondly as the true love of learning, a platonic search that culminates in a political wisdom that will struggle against institutional forces of destruction. Environmentalism "is political because it confronts the concerted power of big capital, whose vital interests the movement threatens …. The struggle [is] to change those objective, economic, and political conditions which are the basis for psychosomatic, subjective transformation" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 212).

Marcuse emphasizes that in spite of the violence of domination and this destructive institutional context, an emancipatory passion and a "radical character structure" emerge from advanced industrial society in which subversive needs come to supersede the repressive compensatory needs of the established order: "the potential forces of social change are there" (Marcuse [1979] 2011, 209–210).

> The new sensibility . . . emerges in the struggle against violence and exploitation where this struggle is waged for essentially new ways and forms of life: negation of the entire Establishment, its morality, culture; affirmation of the right to build a society in which the abolition of poverty and toil terminates in a universe where the sensuous, the playful, the calm, and the beautiful become forms of existence and thereby the Form of the society itself. . . . [T]he the intellectual and material resources for the conquest of scarcity are available.
>
> *(Marcuse 1969, 25)*

Marcuse found that environmentalist criticisms of extractive and polluting economic policies implicitly or explicitly involved system-negations and epitomized the Great Refusal. Marcuse's essays on ecology are eminently cognizant of the interconnectedness of the biosphere and the negative impacts of the capitalist political economy. His late works of the 1970s operate with a very different assessment of the dialectical foundations of philosophy and nature than the subjectively one-sided view of dialectics in Marcuse's essays of the 1930s. They reflect decades of maturing insight.

Like Aldo Leopold, Marcuse was convinced that we can flourish in harmony with our material environment, and that human life on earth was compatible with the dignity of the land and our wider world. Both Leopold and Marcuse held out the promise of ethical, political, and aesthetic meaning within the ecology of commonwealth. Leopold explicitly enlarged the boundaries of the concept of "community" to include soils, water, plants, animals, air, and people. Green-CommonWealth encompasses the conviction that ecological conscience leads beyond conservation, to cooperation, sharing, and peace in our common world. Environmentalism, especially in its radical features of confrontation, demonstration, rebellion, embodies a broadly-based and humanist empowerment.

Critique of Violence/Domination

In 1965, Marcuse ([1965] 2014) wrote a postscript to Walter Benjamin's *Zur Kritik der Gewalt* [*Critique of Violence/Domination*] (Benjamin [1921] 1999, 2002). The political conditions of the time were not yet ripe for revolution. Marcuse emphasizes that gauging when they are, or will be, is of the utmost importance.

> Insight into the power of what exists prohibits illusions, even where these might be useful. The theory that can stand up against the contemporary established reality, without falling into ideology, must move through the negativity that renders visible the foundations of this established reality's violence/domination [Gewalt]. Only then can the possibility of superseding this violence/domination be recognized once more.
>
> *(Marcuse [1965] 2011, 166)*

Thus, Marcuse's strategy of revolutionary ecological liberation must be understood within a larger social, historical, and political context. Even if the material pressures toward the emancipatory struggle for commonwealth are irrepressible long-term, Marcuse understood that American history was also replete with the deployment of state-sanctioned violence against labor risings, general strikes, civil rights marches, etc. And today: "The tendency is to the Right" (Marcuse [1979] 2014, 392).

Intensifying inequalities have led to workforce disempowerment, a resurgence of racism and sexism, and to a situation in which a set of proto-fascist conditions prevails today. The world production system is heavily dependent upon unsustainable resource extraction. The extractive system, as a for-profit system, continues to retard or slow down the growth of alternative sources of energy and has generated a substantial level of violence against non-violent protesters from Greenpeace to Standing Rock.[2]

Like Benjamin, Marcuse holds that within the framework of the established reality peaceful protest runs up against the limits that police power sets against it, after which it will encounter the force of police violence. The U.S. reader today may well think: Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney 1964; Selma, Black Sunday, 1965; Chicago 1968; and Kent State 1970. Not to mention the continuing series of police killings of unarmed black men from Ferguson (2014) to Sacramento (2018), and the impunity of this regular and terroristic use of the state's deadly force. In addition, the U.S. has active-duty and reserve troops in 172 countries and territories around the world in approximately 800 bases.[3]

Benjamin's critique of oppressive establishment violence is accompanied by a defense of emancipatory revolutionary violence. This resonates with Marcuse's defense of the "right of resistance," which he reminds us is one of the most venerable elements of Western Civilization (Marcuse [1967] 2005, 62). The conventional understanding of revolutionary armed conflict in the history of the United States—from Lexington and Concord, to Nat Turner, John Brown, and

to Appomattox Courthouse—regards emancipatory violence as an historical necessity in the defense and expansion of political freedom. "So from the start the opposition is placed in the field of violence. Right stands against right, not only as abstract claim but as action" (Marcuse [1967] 2005, 62). Marcuse cautions that revolutionary violence will be defeated so long as the revolutionary opposition does not have the force of a new general interest and occur as a world-historical global affair (Marcuse 1970a, 83, 90).

Human Liberation and the Restoration of Nature

Marcuse emphasizes the interconnection of the liberation of people and the restoration of nature as expressed in Benjamin's revolutionary sensibility:

> Only rarely is the truth of critical theory expressed in such an evocative manner: the revolutionary struggle aims at immobilizing that which is happening and has happened—prior to any other positive goals, this negation is the first positive. What humanity had done to humanity and to nature must be stopped, radically stopped—because then and only then can freedom and justice start. Instead of the atrocious concept of advancing productivity, in which nature is simply there, "gratis," to be exploited, Benjamin commits himself to Fourier's idea of the sociality of work which is "far removed from the exploitation of nature and the greedy harvest of the fruits which slumber as possibilities in its lap." To a liberated people, redeemed from oppressive violence, there belongs an emancipated and redeemed nature.
>
> *(Marcuse [1965] 2014, 126)*

Writ large, the restoration of nature depends upon human liberation; both are blocked within the established framework. Yet Marcuse saw the "global revolt of youth" against war, women's oppression, racial animosity, and the devastation of the earth, as a key new challenge. This was occurring because of changes in the realm of awareness and values. Marcuse saw changes in

> the instinctual drives of human beings, one's sensibilities, one's sensuality; changing the fundamental way in which human beings experience themselves and the environment, the way one sees, hears, feels, and smells things, including oneself and others. And how one treats oneself, others, and things on the basis of this new primordial experience—as materials for domination having exchange value, or as a subjects, part and parcel of a pacified world.
>
> This kind of foundational experience, which would most deeply constitute the revolutionary subject of history, can only be attained through a break with the established institutions in their totality; a break not only with politics, not only with the economy, but rather with the totality of traditional culture, including its "higher culture," whose desublimation would be an essential aspect of this break.

> Such a new subject, such a transformed system of needs, is only imaginable through a genuine revaluation of values. This includes the values of the superman, the hero, the fighter, the conqueror.
>
> And this is only imaginable as a rebellion of the instincts themselves against cruelty, barbarism, against the performance principle that facilitates competition.
>
> We do not need to wait for these changes in human nature any longer; this is taking place right before our eyes. Exactly this sort of rebellion of the instincts is happening today in the global revolt of youth, especially the students. Today this is the single authentic movement for peace, and in turn this is the genuine hazard for all that exists: the non-violent power of negation.
>
> I do not mean non-violent in the sense of pacifism and not in the sense of those who today preach non-violence. Peace as the substance of life can not be attained through peaceableness. It will require a fight and perhaps war.
>
> *(Marcuse [1968] 2011, 169–170)*

While the objective productive forces have ripened such that the global economy can be seen as pregnant with abundance, the subjective element matters. Hence also Marcuse's emphasis on incorporating these changes within educational philosophy through (what we have come to know since his time as) revolutionary critical pedagogy, revolutionary multiculturalism, and for the radical goals of socialist society.

Revolutionary Eco-pedagogy

Marcuse was aware that critical theory needed to be taught (through the liberal arts and humanities, yes, and also) utilizing the experiences of the exploited and oppressed, through dialogue and dialectical thinking, to analyze the objective social totality and real possibilities for the future. Hence the need for revolutionary critical pedagogy as well as political education through an analysis of cultural history, natural history, and our human potentials in the liberal arts and sciences. He was above all else the educators' educator, paving the way decades ago for the critical insights of radical educational theorists like Henry Giroux, Douglas Kellner, Peter McLaren, and others today (each of whom acknowledges a major debt to Marcuse). Marcuse called for a new educational humanism built on the admonition from Kant: Schooling must aim at the better future condition of the human race (Marcuse 1972, 27).

McLaren's *Critical Pedagogy & Predatory Culture* (1995) and his *Revolutionary Multiculturalism* (1997) were among the first volumes in educational philosophy to emphasize the contemporary U.S. shift to a more vulture-like and imperial order. In them McLaren demonstrates that teaching in a critical manner must refuse to replicate class exploitation, racism, gender inequality, empire, and war. Henry Giroux refers to our increasingly rapacious and destructive time as constituting a

new dark age, with a "New Authoritarianism" (2005, 2018) putting "America at the Edge" (2006a). He makes a powerful case that: "privatization, commodification, militarization and deregulation are the new guiding categories through which schools, teachers, pedagogy and students are defined. The current assault on public education is not new but it is viler and more powerful than in the past" (Giroux 2015, 140). Giroux very correctly reproaches the reactionary culture warriors (Allan Bloom, William Bennett, et. al.) who claim multicultural reform in education has already gone "too far" with his studied assessment that it "hasn't gone nearly far enough" (Giroux 2004, 16). McLaren calls for the pedagogy of revolution (2000) and revolutionary multiculturalism (1997)—that is, teaching about more than diversity: teaching about the structured social dynamics of class exploitation, racism, gender inequality, empire, and war. As he sees it, we are compelled by the force of economic necessity as well as the ethics of equality to alter these systemic processes and to pursue "the common goal of transforming the exploitative social relations of global capitalism" (McLaren 1997, 69). A critical theory of education must retain its crucial dimension of defiance and its power of transformation through insurrection (McLaren 2015). McLaren reinforces this point against postmodernism's ostensibly critical literary and aesthetic approach to education when he urges educators to "take the struggle over the social division of labor as seriously as we do the struggle over meaning and representation" (McLaren 1997, 13).

In his latest contribution McLaren (2015) emphasizes *revolutionary eco-pedagogy* and the concepts of *buen vivir* and *planetary comunalidad*—

> Critical educators, who have addressed for decades and with firm commitment topics of race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and other social justice issues are now casting their eyes to the antagonism between capitalism and nature to ask themselves how we can rationally regulate the human metabolic relation with nature. In our struggle for a "transformed economy founded on the nonmonetary values of social justice and ecological balance" we don't follow a productivist socialism or capitalist market ecology. We emphasize use value, not exchange value and "a liberation from the alienating economic 'laws' of the growth-oriented capitalist system."
>
> *(McLaren 2015, 301)*

"[Vandana] Shiva's general principle of 'earth democracy' (2005) is congruent with the idea that the foundations of the means of production in land, seed, water and so on, need to be kept in perpetuity by an arranged social commons" (McLaren 2015, 316). *Buen vivir* is the philosophical watchword of South American eco-socialism. The protection of nature is a political priority, as are clean and simple living. Through political struggle the rights of Mother Earth, *Pachamama*, were incorporated into the Ecuadoran constitution in 2008. McLaren contrasts buen vivir to the American dream/nightmare of the limitless commercialization of life. Further, he emphasizes that:

> *Comunalidad* is a Oaxacan concept that serves as a type of cosmovision, and it deals with "the complex intertwining of history, morality, spirituality, kinship and communal practices [derived from] [t]he concept of reciprocity … that requires the other or others to make … equivalent response[s], and it is meant to be a permanent relation and inclusive of all members of the community".
>
> *(McLaren 2015, 328)*

My own concept of green commonwealth finds a profound resonance here.

Education critics Giroux, McLaren, and Kellner attack guns in the service of capital, specifically as U.S. national gun policy generates massive profits while killing students and others catastrophically. Given the national conversation about the February, 2018 killing of seventeen high schoolers in Parkland, Florida, and the epidemic of mass shootings, such as at Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook elementary school, and Las Vegas, the work of Giroux, McLaren, and Kellner is all the more relevant. "Regardless of rhetoric, guns are mass-produced to kill" (McLaren 2015, 357). The idea that guns preserve democracy constitutes an unconscionable and egregious swindle of benevolence that is unfathomable in the face of continuous bloodshed" (McLaren 2015, 355). "We see the interests of the elite capitalist class too clearly in the failure to restrict guns even after such atrocious events as the recent massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut" (McLaren 2015, 358).

Critical educators in Kellner's estimation must address the interconnected scandals of U.S. militarism and war, masculinist privilege, the policing and prison systems, and media sensationalism, as well as effective gun control laws. This analysis is rooted in the background of U.S. political shame in recent years (the delivery of the 2000 election to Bush over Gore by the Supreme Court; the inauguration of Terror War against Iraq, Afghanistan; felony charges and forced resignations of high government officials for corruption and sexual misconduct etc.) including his recent publication on the Trump presidency and authoritarian populism (Kellner 2016).

Kellner (2005) has written extensively on critical theory as the foundation of critical pedagogy. He argues that it is time that a new class analysis and a new class politics revitalize critical social theory (Kellner 1989, 228–229). This interest is central to his ongoing innovative work on the impacts on education of globalization, the restructuring of capital, media spectacle, and new technologies. Kellner emphasizes that when a critical pedagogy is tied to new critical theory, it can have real emancipatory impact:

> Critical social theories conceptualize the structures of domination and resistance. They point to forms of oppression and domination contrasted to forces of resistance that can serve as instruments of change. […] Thus, critical social theories are weapons of critique and instruments of practice as well as cognitive maps. […] If a theory illuminates a phenomenon … and produces altered reception of it (or perhaps rejection), or inspires the production of oppositional … practices, then the theory turns out to be valuable both in its theoretical and practical effects.
>
> *(Kellner 1995, 25–27)*

Human intelligence, for Kellner, is emergent from the need to overcome material, historical, and cultural oppression. Hence, his criticisms of the nation's post 9/11 warmongering, false patriotism, and media propaganda (Kellner 2005, 2003).

These critical educators are focusing today on advanced capitalism's clear incompatibility with authentic democracy. They combine a critique of the logic of capital accumulation and global predation with a critique of education as a means of social control and for the replication of the unequal social division of labor.

"Schooling is an eminently political and moral practice, because it is both directive and actively legitimates what counts as knowledge, sanctions particular values and constructs particular forms of agency" (Giroux 2014, 37). Teachers are being put on the defensive by neoliberal reformers in education like Michelle Rhee and others. Giroux stresses that the teacher corps needs to go on the offensive, as indeed they have in the recent (2018) state-wide strikes in West Virginia and Oklahoma. In terms of a more challenging critical pedagogy: "educators need to start with a project, not a method. They need to view themselves through the lens of civic responsibility and address what it means to educate students in the best of those traditions and knowledge forms we have inherited from the past, and also in terms of what it means to prepare them to be in the world as critically engaged agents" (Giroux 2015, 141). This means that:

> educators will have to focus their work on important social issues that connect what is learned in the classroom to the larger society and the lives of their students. Such issues include the ongoing destruction of the ecological biosphere, the current war against youth, the hegemony of neoliberal globalization, the widespread attack by corporate culture on public schools, the dangerous growth of the prison-industrial complex, the ongoing attack on the welfare system, the increasing rates of incarceration of people of color, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, the rise of a generation of students who are laboring under the burden of debt and the increasing spread of war globally.
>
> *(Giroux 2015, 142)*

> [E]ducators need to do more than create the conditions for critical learning for their students; they also need to responsibly assume the role of civic educators willing to share their ideas with other educators and the wider public by writing for a variety of public audiences in a number of new media sites.
>
> *(Giroux 2015, 142)*

The inherently political process of multicultural education must also include important debate and struggle around the central problems of labor and the inequalities of wealth, particularly how these affect schooling and the social reproduction/social transformation of the political-economic order (Reitz 2004,

2002). Using uncharacteristically traditional Marxist terminology in 1947, Marcuse advocated the "socialization of the means of production, their administration by the 'immediate producers'" as a precondition for a socialism which negates the methods of capitalist production. "This includes, to begin with, the abolition of wage labor" (Marcuse [1947] 1998, 224–225).

Radical Political Economics: Accounting for Inequality

In Chapter 1 of this volume, I have provided an analysis grounded in radical political economics (Reitz 2016a) that can help faculty and students to understand, question, and challenge the deeply-rooted origins of economic, social, and political inequality. The remarks presented there as a brief critique of the U.S. political economy can be regarded as a contribution to Marcusean critical social theory and critical pedagogy insofar as they "project potentiality in the objective conditions" (Marcuse [1974] 2015, 18) and embody a newer form of concrete social science inquiry that examines the structures and dynamics of capital formation and the problematic patterns of workforce remuneration in the U.S. while also projecting the possibilities derived from this analysis for radical social change in the conditions of work, remuneration, and wealth ownership and wealth distribution (see also Reitz 2016a; 2016b; 2004; 2002).

Students—and faculty—typically have little awareness of the nature of wealth or the pattern of its distribution in society. They also lack insight into the connection of income flows to relations of property ownership. Private ownership of capital is clearly not socially necessary for value (i.e. wealth) production. The necessary component is labor. As I have demonstrated in Chapter 1 above, in the U.S. economy's manufacturing sector, each quantity q of income flow to such a job (as wage) is generally accompanied by an income flow of $3q$ to capital. A critical appreciation of work turns right side round the empiricist assertion that "job creators" are paying their employees and demonstrates that employ*ees* are paying their employ*ers*. This exposes the Jobs Shell Game. The theory that businesses can reduce inequality by "creating jobs" is politically deceptive and pathetic for labor. Peter McLaren's "Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy for a Socialist Society, A Manifesto" ([2013] 2015) raises a critical economics of the commodified labor process to a principle of emancipatory education.

> [As advocates of revolutionary critical pedagogy] we participate in an analysis of the objective social totality … we simultaneously struggle for a social universe outside the commodity form of labor. If we are to educate at all, we must educate for this!
>
> *(McLaren [2013] 2015, 260)*

In any society the labor force must produce a surplus of value/wealth to maintain infrastructure and provide for social goods such as health care, education, etc., over and above incomes to individuals. I have urged the new logic of ownership,

understood by Marx and Marcuse, that only the labor force as a social body has a legitimate right to manage this surplus. When it does, the first condition for a humanist commonwealth has been met.

****

Universalizing Resistance: The GreenCommonWealth *Counter-Offensive*

In *One-World Ready or Not,* written more than a decade before the 2008 financial meltdown on Wall Street, William Greider warned of catastrophic changes ahead. Quoting John F. Welch, former CEO of General Electric, he stressed that "'Things are going to get tougher' he [Welch] predicted in 1994. 'The shakeouts will be more brutal. The pace of change more rapid.' What lies ahead, Welch said, 'is a hurricane'" (Greider 1997, 21).

Under the rule of contemporary U.S. oligarchs, increasingly evident no matter under which President, even natural disasters from Katrina in New Orleans (2005) to Maria in Puerto Rico (2017) have exposed the epic failures of governmental action and inaction to safeguard citizens. Greider calls this oligarchic order "*The Rentiers' Regime"* (Greider 1997, 285–289). Crisis situations (affecting primarily black and Latinx populations) bear out this hurricane scenario literally with frightening effect. See Henry A. Giroux's *Stormy Weather: Katrina and the Politics of Disposability* (2006b) in this regard. Likewise, today's paramilitary tactics of "ICE" (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) against undocumented immigrants portend a chilling neo-fascist police presence in everyone's future. Do any of us need to be reminded of Martin Niemöller's harrowing realization:

> When they came for the Jews, I did nothing, for I am not a Jew. When they came for the Socialists, I did nothing, for I am not a Socialist. When they came for the labor leaders, the homosexuals, the gypsies, I did nothing, for I am none of these, and when they came for me, I was alone, there was no one to stand up for me.

The evidence of impending economic, governmental, and/or natural catastrophe is mounting. Without an adamant ideology of GreenCommonWealth, there is no sufficient negation, and there will be no sufficient transformation from oligarchy toward a new world system when conditions are ripe for revolution.

The essence of the capitalist system is the commodification of all necessities of life and universal commodity dependency.

> Unseen behind all these depredatory trends of transnational corporate-money-sequencing is the global financial system led by Wall Street and London…. Everything of value is thus manipulatable by corporate money-sequences exponentially exploiting price margins with no limit to the damaging effects on human life, societies, and ecologies.
>
> *(McMurtry 2013, 65–66)*

Except for the 1 percent, all of us, no matter what we do, are controlled and disciplined by owners of capital (whose markets in our labor we all must negotiate as commodities ourselves). A vision of re-humanized social action and social ownership is a mature philosophy of human freedom and fulfillment grounded in the human capacities of sensuous living labor. Authentic freedom is ours when we grasp intellectually and hold politically the resources that we have produced, and which can be possessed by all, within a de-commodified and re-humanized world.

The Commonwealth Promise of Sensuous Living Labor

I indicated in Chapter 4 above, how Marx stressed that "labor . . . as the creator of use-values, as useful labor, is a condition of human existence which is independent of all forms of society; it is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature and therefore human life itself" (Marx [1867] 1976, 133). Commonwealth has the power to reclaim our common humanity. Its fundamental goal is decommodification: public work for the public good. Humanity's rights to a commonwealth economy, politics, and culture reside in our commonworks. This involves sensuous living labor authentically actualizing itself through humanist activism and creativity—humanity remaking itself through a social labor process in accordance with the commonwealth promise at the core of our material reality. This requires a new system of shared ownership, democratized ownership, common ownership. Commonwealth is humanity's (that is, sensuous living labor's) aesthetic form: workmanship and artistry, emancipated from repression, taking place not only "in accordance with the laws of beauty,"[4] but also according to the labor theory of ethics and ecological responsibility.

GreenCommonWealth is living labor's promise. The radically socialist logic of commonwealth production, ownership, and stewardship can bring to maturity, within the realm of necessity, an intercultural archetype of equality, disalienation, ecological balance, freedom, and abundance. Marcuse knew that because capitalism exists, so too does exploitation, and that system change is necessary and possible if we comprehend and refuse the system. He stressed that system change requires a twofold refusal: of its mode of production and the repressive satisfactions that replicate it. Marcuse not only described the obscenities of global inequality, domination, alienation, and war in an extraordinarily vivid and effective manner, more importantly his writing evokes solidarity among subaltern groups across traditional barriers of culture. He elucidated the social change strategy of united action (Marcuse [1971] 2005, 149–151) to extend the base, as well as building united fronts, to bring together movements for racial equality, women's equality, and the liberation of labor (Marcuse [1974] 2015, 46, 60). Marcuse wanted to help labor reclaim its humanist potential, where, with gratitude for all things made and appreciation for all things of this earth, we struggle to become more fully who we are.

Marcuse's writings contain essential philosophical resources for critical social theory and revolutionary ecological liberation. His work models the path by which

we, an international political force of "the 99 percent," can be politically prepared and strengthened. With his insights we can reconceptualize our understanding of our world and our work in order to collectively retake and repossess a common-world—characterized by racial equality, women's equality, the liberation of labor, the restoration of nature, leisure, abundance, and peace.

The Stress on Praxis Is Clear

Marcuse's writing generally stays at the level of strategy; differing tactics emerge under differential conditions of history, time, and place. Today we are confronted with activist options: Electoral reform? Fight for 15? Direct action? Civil disobedience? The Poor People's Campaign? Immigration and refugee support? Black Lives Matter? #Me Too? Opposition to gun violence? Gun control? Teacher strikes? Union work stoppages? Student protests against tuition hikes? Sierra Club? Greenpeace? Standing Rock? Is the watchword still Rudi Dutschke's "long march through the institutions?" Does the Great Refusal mean to refuse to engage in politics as usual? Building social movements as countervailing forces to the political economic systems at the heart of current crises of inequality? Strategic actions through general strikes? Organizing city by city for citywide shutdowns? Raising the issue of ownership and how to democratize it in strikes and shutdowns and civil war? Socializing the billionaire's assets? Public ownership of arms-making industries? Public ownership of health care system, etc.? Ensuring everyone a livelihood through guaranteed universal income?

"The Great Refusal takes a variety of forms" (Marcuse 1969, vii). Doesn't it also link them all into a global alliance of transformational forces? Henry Giroux's *The Public ~~In~~ Peril* (Routledge 2018) points us in this direction recommending that we work on a "Comprehensive Politics" (Giroux 2018, 271) such as found in the strategic thought of Peter Bohmer (2015) and Charles Derber's (2018) *Welcome to the Revolution: Universalizing Resistance for Social Justice and Democracy in Perilous Times*.

> Connecting issues and social movements and organizations to each other has the potential to build a powerful movement of movements that is stronger than any of its individual parts. This means educating ourselves and our groups about these issues and their causes and their interconnection. (Bohmer 2015)

Giroux (2018, 271) reminds us that this sort of comprehensive political resistance was the perspective of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., especially in the "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence" speech delivered shortly before his assassination. This is where MLK, Jr. famously reframed his opposition to racialized police violence and the denial of civil rights of racial minorities, linking it to U.S. militarism and its foreign wars, and tying both to economic exploitation at home and abroad. Giroux (2018, 273) also highlights the effort of Angela Davis to connect such issues as Ferguson with the struggle in Palestine.

This perspective helps us better understand the strategic intelligence of Marcuse's revolutionary ecological liberation. Marcuse saw the liberation of people as necessarily prior to the restoration of nature, yet he understood this linkage dialectically. He also suggested the necessity of the concept of ecology itself within

an offensive strategy for a new world system. Ecology's perspective is systemic, increasingly a system-negation. Ecology, as methodological tool, affords critical insight into the generative mechanisms that undergird ongoing violations of nature and their impacts over time. It illumines the material processes of intensifying inequality, alienation, cultural polarization, and war; how war, as environmental terrorism and ecocide, suddenly or steadily destroys the earth and regularly crushes human beings.

Marcuse regarded the environmental movement as the embodiment of a life-affirming energy directed toward the protection of Earth and the pacification of our human existence overall. To him it reflected the vernal spirit of "May Day," while embodying also the combative spirit of the revolutionary international labor force. May Day means protesting particular wrongs—Yes! "Fighting for reforms is part of the struggle for system change" (Magdoff and Williams 2017, 321). But this is a fight also at a higher level of engagement, protesting a political-economic wrong in general. Each particular protest requires catalyst individuals, often those having been targeted by a particular form of oppression, to enlist other survivors, front-line forces, and allies in a build-up of organizational strength for each cause. Each particular wrong, ecologically understood, is an aspect of the concrete reality of institutionalized destructiveness and dehumanization. The concrete reality of commonwealth, understood ecologically, is poised to negate those several negations, to redress those several injuries. The ecology of commonwealth requires liberation from race, class, and gender inequalities, with a re-humanizing restoration of consecrated, beneficent action and effort as the substance of human life, with gratitude for the disalienation of our mode of being in the world as sensuous living labor. Ecological liberation is, itself, its own revolutionary labor of love: a vision of a new quality of human existence—with new forms of ownership, sharing social product according to need—and with new forms of racial and gender equality and freedom.

Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams (2017) have included an assessment of the *need* for revolutionary strategy in their new book, *Creating an Ecological Society*:

> We are tipping the Earth system into an entirely new state, one that humans have never experienced in our 200,000 years on the planet. Chaotic barbarism may well replace stable societies and some believe that our very existence as a species is threatened.
>
> *(Magdoff & Williams 2017, 306)*

Like Marcuse, they stress that "a system to replace capitalism, one based on economic and political equality and ecologically sound economies is both possible and essential" (Magdoff & Williams 2017, 307). Building a mass movement will require overcoming our fragmentation. Our political action must be infused with a practice "of the values we espouse for the new ecological society: reciprocity, cooperation, honesty, solidarity" (Magdoff & Williams 2017, 316). These are humanity's values as a laboring species, as I have endeavored to show in Chapter 4 above.

> Abolishing an unequal and violent system, one that does not balk at destroying the resiliency and sustainability of the planet itself, will require a sustained, coordinated revolutionary mass movement: one that is centered on the power of working people to stop production when necessary, and that has the vision and capacity to bring into being a new and totally different society.
>
> *(Magdoff & Williams 2017, 311)*

Marcuse titled one of his last essays—once more, half ironically—"The *Reification* of the Proletariat" (Marcuse [1979] 2014, emphasis added). He comments there on the contemporary condition of the human labor force, and counters one of the central contentions of *One-Dimensional Man*. He is now willing to engage in what he had formerly considered a "reification." He will embrace the "orthodox Marxist" notion that labor increasingly knows itself as an objective resource, not as the "cost" that business propagandists would have us believe, and that labor knows that it is capable in principle of fulfilling its function as revolutionary subject.

> The working class is still the 'ontological' antagonist of capital, and the potentially revolutionary Subject: but it is a vastly expanded working class, which no longer corresponds directly to the Marxian proletariat … [A] "counter-consciousness" emerges among the dependent population (today about 90% of the total?) an awareness of the evermore blatant obsolescence of the established social division and organization of work.
>
> *(Marcuse [1979] 2014, 392)*

The workforce is the creative force in the economy. Everything depends on labor. Yet today labor is supervised and controlled by finance capital. Marx and Marcuse emphasized that, in and of itself, labor has the capacity to act freely. Labor occurs in social relationships, and it is a communal project of social beings to meet human needs and promote human flourishing.

Decommodification and Green Commonwealth

Capitalist progress todays divests us of our own creative work, yet our creative work is also the source of our future social power. A comprehensive critical social theory must stress the centrality of labor in the economy and the necessity of new forms of commonwealth ownership and commonwealth production. It must help us to apprehend the dialectic of the historical and material world and the changing social condition of humanity within it. It must theorize the origins and outcomes of economic and cultural oppression and be engaged politically by the labor force to end these abuses. Marcuse advises:

> All the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand. That they are not used for that

> purpose is to be attributed to the total mobilization of the existing society against its own potential for liberation.
>
> *(Marcuse 1970, 64)*

The 1 percent's enormous accumulation of private property has not led to the self-actualization of the human species or its individual constituents, as the neo-liberal business utopians assert, but to the continuation of war and poverty, and to the delusions of grandeur and self-destruction on the part of our current Masters of the Universe on Wall Street.

The labor force, as a group, has a legitimate right to the political leadership of the commonwealth system of governance. This right of the commonwealth to govern itself, and humanity's earliest ethic of holding property in common, derive only secondarily from factual individual contributions to production; they are rooted primarily in our essentially shared species nature as humans when this nature is comprehended in terms of our communal heritage and our communal future.

Each of us, as sensuous living labor, must consciously identify with a global offensive against the logic of capital, "negating that which negates us" (Garland 2017, 65). As Marcuse himself phrases it: "the ecological logic is purely and simply the negation of capitalist logic" (Marcuse [1972] 2005, 175). In Leopold's perspective, we must realize we belong to the biotic system comprising our land and world and recognize the logic of protection, love, and respect for nature (Leopold [1949] 1966, 218–219).

In a recent essay Jodi Dean emphasized that "at a minimal level, if we are to have a chance of taking power, of reformatting the basic conditions under which we live and work, we have to share a name in common" (Dean 2015). I am suggesting the "GreenCommonWealth" counter-offensive.

Dean recommends the formation of a revolutionary party; see her *Crowds and Party* (2016). "People are moving together in growing opposition to the policies and practices of states organized in the interests of capital as a class. Crowds are forcing the Left to return again to the questions of organization, endurance, and scale. Through what political forms might we advance? For many of us, the party is emerging as the site of an answer" (Dean 2016, 3).

Additional counter-offensive perspectives abound. A colleague, David Brodsky, reports on a common ground platform for radical activism hammered out and circulated widely by the Kansas City Progressive Network in his "*Charter 2000*: A Transitional Program for Labor" (Brodsky [2013] 2015). The entire contents of *Charter 2000* can be considered at http://progressiveplatform2000.org/. Brodsky describes its logic in summary form: "It is in the interest of all people who must work for a living, and those dependent on them—in other words, everyone except the privileged classes—to mount a counter-offensive against the intensified assault on labor now occurring around the world" (Brodsky [2013] 2015, 51). *Charter 2000* encompasses an eclectic mixture of reformist and radical ideas; its core is a highly detailed provisional program for what will doubtless still be a

long-term project of discussion and organization as we start to rethink the shape of human society. Its compendium of universal rights and entitlements helps us re-imagine labor's humanist future, i.e. what we are for, not just what we are against. These are spelled-out in detail under headings such as:

> *Peace* (peaceful, nonviolent, and civilian economy and society; teach non-violent conflict resolution; foreign relations based on peaceful cooperation and international grass-roots solidarity; end U.S. aggression against other nations and peoples; end military sales to foreign countries, especially repressive regimes; eliminate U.S. military bases in foreign countries and territories);
>
> *Justice* (a democratic economy producing for human needs, legitimate aim of economic activity is to optimize the common good; equal rights; democratic and fair distribution of wealth, property, and power; an end to classism, racism, sexism [gender and sexual orientation], ageism, xenophobia, domination by single culture or religion, whether institutionalized or informal, including the scapegoating of immigrants and non-citizens; end racial profiling; support affirmative action);
>
> *Solidarity/Community*; basic freedoms, privacy, civil and human rights, women's rights, rights of children and youth, rights of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders; robust democratic process and structure, electoral reform, democratic outcomes; stout public domain and services;
>
> *Sustainable abundance*; ecological/environmental stewardship; sustainable agriculture; humane treatment of animals/animal rights.
>
> The discussion of rights becomes one of *assured entitlements* to:
> jobs and income;
> housing, accommodations, food, clothing, utilities;
> health care;
> transportation;
> communication/media;
> education;
> culture/the arts;
> child care;
> science and technology in the public interest;
> citizen/consumer power;
> safe, clean sustainable environment;
> security and emergency services.

Charter 2000 is unique among U.S. progressive platforms and programs in its focus on universal human rights, especially social, economic, and cultural rights, which are excluded from the U.S constitution and slighted in statutory law. It is also unique in its insistence that U.S. democracy expand to embrace these universal human rights, which *Charter 2000* calls democratic outcomes, and that they be guaranteed through constitutional amendments.

As Brodsky emphasizes:

> *Charter 2000*['s] … 'Preamble' reads: "We prefer flexibility: any strategy that furthers the broad progressive transformation of American society is a good one. There are many effective ways of advancing progressive goals, ranging from educational efforts to testimony before public bodies, community and labor organizing, electoral and media campaigns, and actions in the streets (rallies, marches, demonstrations, picketing, and civil disobedience)."
>
> *(Brodsky [2013] 2015, 56)*

On the tactic of winning new constitutional amendments guaranteeing rights—Brodsky rightly admonishes: "Implementation will depend on a permanent, militant mass movement insisting on enforcement" (Brodsky [2013] 2015, 56).

An essay by Douglas Dowd (2015), author and for many years radical professor of economics at Cornell University, recently deceased, presses upon us a renewed sense of urgency: "as the world now spins it increasingly becomes obvious that unless sane and decent people take over U.S. politics that our indecent politics will bring an end to life on earth." Looking back to summer 2011 he recounts that Occupy Wall Street protests took hold throughout the nation. "The protests are beginning to take hold again. Three cheers for that, but we also need a nationally coordinated movement for the substantial improvement of all social problems and possibilities at home: and peace abroad" (Dowd 2015, 89). He asked: "As the rich and powerful go about their dirty work, what should *we* be doing?" (Dowd 2015, 90) and he suggested that, for one thing, a campaign should be waged as a left within the Democratic Party, and beyond it in the streets, focusing on six major issues: "the economy, inequality, big business, taxes, wars, and the environment. The 'six' interact and are interdependent; to rid ourselves of what's harmful in any one of them, all must become substantially undone in ways to serve *all*, instead of a few" (Dowd 2015, 92).

Ultimately, this requires a new way of owning and controlling resources that is democratic, egalitarian, and ecological. My paradigm for the new mode of ownership is GreenCommonWealth. This signifies the democratization of ownership: the sovereignty of the people as a whole over the economy, instead of the sovereignty of the rich, the military industrial complex, and Wall Street. It represents the real association of free human beings within a democratic society embodying universal human rights, grounded in our common work, our willingness to see nature restored, and where peace becomes "the substance of human life."

Radical authors today are coming to realize also that: "the only way forward is a new arrangement, based on ones that have better served societies since the dawn of civilization" (Pettifor 2012, 24). Just one indication of this advancing perspective is that of British ecological economist, Brian Davey, who suggests as a new socialist starting point "the philosophy, culture, and political economic ideas of a diversity of indigenous communities and tribes in the Andean region" (Davey 2012). These peoples were modelling a "solidarity economy" blending

ecology and socialism after a long history of colonial oppression, racism, and sexism. The contemporary combination of socialism and ecological policy is likewise seen by others (Kozloff 2008; Bateman 2012; Sitrin 2012). These "new" arrangements are derived from the commonwealth practices that prevailed for the longest period in human history in ancient African (and subsequently other, e.g. Minoan) partnership societies, and which persist in the contemporary labor theory of ethics and commonwealth developed here.

Our task is to "look capitalism in the eye" and address its most sacred cows. Labor is our resource. Against capitalism, the pivotal power of labor is the general strike: a site-occupation or sit-down blocking capitalism's income flow and literally taking possession of capital stock. This must become a revolutionary weapon. We need to expropriate the expropriators—replace capitalist destruction with an intercultural labor force activism and humanism—and create laboring humanity's cosmopolitan and self-governing GreenCommonWealth. This alternative system is to eliminate commodity exchange, dismantle the military industrial complex, liberate labor and reduce the work week, guarantee racial equality, women's equality, and leisure, abundance, and peace. It extends the ecology movement's inherent tendency toward system-negation.

The GreenCommonWealth Counter-Offensive constitutes the determinate negation of today's globalized institutional destructiveness (i.e. not just any negation or denial or opposition movement, but that negation determined by the inner structure of the economic order, which, in negating core negatives, can bring into being a newer and higher order that was inherent though previously blocked within it). There will be no restoration of nature and no re-humanization of our coarsened and divided culture, our damaged and precarious world, without revolutionary ecological liberation.

"All the material and intellectual forces which could be put to work for the realization of a free society are at hand." Forces arrayed against them may continue as hegemonic, though their overthrow is not only possible, but probable. Race, class, and gender inequality and repression are falling into world-historical dishonor and disgrace. "The Great Refusal is not only a refusal of capitalism and its forms of exploitation and alienation but also a refusal of the social, political, cultural, psychological, and other mechanisms that reproduce and protect capitalism" (Farr & Lamas 2017, 392).

This volume has recovered and reclaimed Herbert Marcuse's critical social theory, in particular his understanding of revolutionary ecological liberation, the dialectical rationality of philosophy, the nature of the human essence, and his theory of the radical rather than the minimal goals of socialism.

The dialectics of intercultural solidarity, labor partnership, and conscientious environmentalism are disclosing even now, within the negativity of the gravely damaged human material condition, the ongoing validity of Marcuse's Great Refusal. The counter-offensive power that can restore the Earth and liberate, support, and protect humanity, is to be found in the partnership political promise of the GreenCommonWealth Counter-Offensive.

Notes

1 Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law," in *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, [1844] 1975) p. 182.
2 Zoe Carpenter, "Since Standing Rock, 56 Bills Have Been Introduced in 30 States to Restrict Protests," retrieved February 21, 2018: www.thenation.com/article/photos-since-standing-rock-56-bills-have-been-introduced-in-30-states-to-restrict-protests/.
3 "America's Forever Wars," *The New York Times*, lead editorial, October 23, 2017, A20. See also David Vine, *Base Nation* (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt & Company, 2015) p. 3. Henry Giroux emphasizes the "normalization" today of "intolerable violence in a militarized culture …. '[S]upport our Troops' … messages function as military recruiting advertisements on the sides of busses, cabs, and billboards" (Giroux 2018, 265–266).
4 Marx, *Paris Manuscripts* XXIV: "An animal forms only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply everywhere the inherent standard to the object. Man therefore also forms objects in accordance with the laws of beauty." Marx drew this phrase on the laws of beauty from Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man;* see also Marcuse (1969, 26) on art as a productive social force.

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EPILOGUE

> One day, one festival with Zarathustra, taught me to love the earth. "*Was that* life? Well then! Once more!"
>
> ——*Nietzsche*

This book is a celebration of learning, liberation, and leadership. It is a bold and brazen attempt to change the world. Who will define the future? The political language of the Republicans and Democrats builds-in silence where contemporary discourse ought to engage with the likes of Marx and Marcuse, Kellner, Giroux, and McLaren. Within a context of scholarship, I have made my critical contributions to political economy, ethics, philosophy of education, logic, and ecology, as these frame the human material condition. Because we need a new world system, I have offered, in outline, the GreenCommonWeath Counter-Offensive. I have researched the foundations in commonwealth labor for the basic criteria of social conscience, and developed a labor theory of ethics. This converges with my study of the human mode of being in the world and my ensuing definition (following Marx and Marcuse) of our core condition as sensuous living labor. The volume's dialectical humanism recognizes that life is at times stressful, more often satisfactory (even comfortable, delightful), and how our political life will clearly benefit from commonwealth as a new way of holding property and commonwork as a new way of producing abundance, equality, leisure, and peace. Understanding the human species as a multicultural species, this book salutes our diversity, demands racial and gender equality, and advocates partnership power in place of hierarchy and the force of domination. Though we have much political, economic, and philosophical work yet to do, human beings uniquely appreciate the awesome and radical

characteristics of the earth and its beauty. Our efforts to restore nature can be a belated requital. Revolutionary ecological liberation can transform our estate on the face of this planet such that we can regain a place of honor while attaining our fullest potentials.

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