

SIDNEY LIPSHIRES. *Herbert Marcuse: From Marx to Freud and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing, 1974. Paperbound.

Not too many years ago, the theories of Herbert Marcuse could not have legitimately been ignored in any course which pretended to teach contemporary social and political philosophy. The apparent prosperity of the working class under capitalism had turned many people in the left wing of American and Western Europe away from economic concerns and toward "cultural" issues. The "New Left," in response to the Vietnamese War and the military draft, sought to organize around such issues as "participatory democracy," self-determination, new life styles (including drug cultures), liberated sexuality, racism, sexism, environmental degradation, and the like. This movement assumed the ability of capitalism to perpetuate a high level of worker consumption, contrary to the position of traditional "Old Left" Marxism, although at the expense of non-alienated life styles. Under such conditions, if revolution *were* to occur, it could not find its source in class conflicts, as the traditional Marxist theory insists, but would have to be generated elsewhere. Herbert Marcuse told us where: in the liberation of the instincts from "surplus repression" and the creation of nonrepressive desublimation. Capitalism, as well as Soviet Marxism, demands a degree of instinctual repression quite beyond what is necessary for "civilization," and thus provides us with a dynamic for social change. Today, of course, we know better: the prosperity of the working class under capitalism was supported by a mountain of debt, debt which inevitably led to a declining rate of profit, an inflation to try, unsuccessfully, to offset it, and now a major depression to loo the working class as a last desperate effort to pay off that debt and maintain profit.

As a practical matter, then, the revolutionary core of Marcuse's theory is no longer as compelling as it once seemed. Nevertheless, much of the critical theory is still plausible, and for many students Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* and

One-Dimensional Man will open a world of hitherto unimagined possibilities, an approach to social criticism which could create for them a level of social consciousness not achievable by other pedagogical methods.

A critique of Marcuse's enterprise can take many forms. Sidney Lipshires wishes to point out "inconsistencies between the positions he has chosen from [Marx and Freud] or inconsistencies between what he has chosen and what he has not admitted for consideration" (p. xv). After some brief remarks describing the intellectual development of Marcuse vis-a-vis Marxism and Freudianism, and the role and significance of the Frankfurt School in Europe and America, Lipshires devotes five of the next seven chapters to an exposition and critique of Marcuse's extrapolation from Freud. Unfortunately from the pedagogical point of view, the form of the critique is, with one important exception to be considered below, less philosophical than it is comparative. Lipshires is content to let his case stand on inconsistencies between Marcuse's position and that of Freud or orthodox neo-Freudians. How significant a critique this can produce is not clear. Obviously Marcuse cannot be fully consistent with Freud. Whether the inconsistencies are of any *ad hominem* significance depends upon how strong Marcuse's desire is to remain within the Freudian tradition. Certainly he wants to root his position there, but just as certainly he cannot remain fully within it. Whether it is of more than *ad hominem* significance requires strong independent verification for the speculative aspects of Freudian theory, something not available.

The one exception to this approach is Lipshire's critique of Marcuse as being "non-empirical" (Chapter 8). The accusation centers on Marcuse's alleged failure to take account of the results of ethological research in his projections for a non-aggressive society. This accusation requires more philosophical scrutiny than it gets in Lipshires' book. Ethological research is one of those crucial areas of science which borders on ideology, especially when the results of this research into animal behavior is claimed to have

significance for human society. It is worth examining Lipshires' charge, since it is precisely the kind of objection one is likely to meet in the classroom, and its appearance here demonstrates the kind of unsophisticated acceptance of anything which masquerades as science that one often finds in students. The importance of ethological research for utopian thinking is this: the utopian argues that forms of anti-social behavior are the result of specific modes of social organization, so that alterations of these organizations could theoretically eliminate this behavior. As against this, certain people argue that there exist human instincts which necessitate anti-social behavior whatever the social forms, and hence repressive institutions are inevitable and desirable. Since it is difficult to appeal to human societies for evidence either way, the argument often moves to animal behavior as manifesting the "natural" presence of these instincts independent of social forms. Unfortunately, there is both an interpretive and a methodological problem involved in such reasoning. The interpretive problem is this: even if we could demonstrate the presence of certain "instincts" in people, very little about human *behavior* would follow. No one supposes that the human instincts are well-formed behavioral instincts. Rather, they are supposed merely to produce tendencies to achieve certain ends. "Survival" as an instinct can lead to a wide repertoire of behaviors depending on circumstances. Even "aggression" does not define any specific behavior but manifests itself in different ways depending on the situation. Thus, it is still possible for the utopian to accept the presence of "instincts" but to argue that social forms can guarantee their manifestation in benign forms (e.g., "survival through cooperation," "aggression against disease, poverty, etc."). Methodologically the problem is more profound: the behavior of animals tells us about their "instincts" to engage in specific forms of behavior. To label these forms "aggressive" or to use any other intentional predicate is to engage in an unjustified form of anthropomorphism. To then proceed to generalize from the instinct to perform the

behavior to the instinct to manifest that intention *generally* is even less justified. And finally, to apply this to persons has no foundation at all. (Consider: animals "fight" over territory instinctively, a "fact" justified by observation—as long as "fight" is not intentional; therefore they are manifesting aggression, a so far harmless bit of anthropomorphism; therefore there exists in them an aggressive instinct, an unjustified generalization; therefore people are necessarily aggressive, an even less justified generalization.) The more responsible ethologists stay away from such implications, but there are strong ideological pressures to move in that direction, and some have yielded. Finally, Marcuse himself recognizes and is critical of the role of "empiricism" in the defense of the status quo, and one ought at least to speak to his criticism of empiricism before using "empirical evidence" against him.

What all this suggests is that Lipshires' approach, while quite critical of Marcuse, seems entirely uncritical of anything else. For this reason, it would probably be better to use, in addition to Marcuse's works themselves, something like Alasdair MacIntyre's critique: *Herbert Marcuse: An Exposition and a Polemic* to introduce students to Marcuse. Lipshires' book has but one advantage: the author has interviewed Marcuse and several of his associates and hence provides us with some information not available elsewhere.

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GILBERT HARMAN, ed. *On Noam Chomsky: Critical Essays*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974, pp. 345. \$4.95, paperbound.

This volume contains fifteen papers. There are contributions from philosophers: John Searle, Hilary Putnam, W.V. Quine, Gilbert Harman, Thomas Nagel, Jerrold Katz, Donald Davidson, David Lewis, and Dennis Stampe; from linguists: Robert Lees, John R. Ross, and Barbara Hall Partee; from psychologists: Thomas G. Bever, James R. Lackner, and Robert Kirk;