*One-Dimensional Man* -- A Mini-Tutorial

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I now begin what I hope will be a series of mini-tutorials, each perhaps only a few parts long, on books that I think are important or interesting, and which may not be familiar to the readers of this blog. As I proceed, I will find it necessary, for clarity and coherence, to repeat some things I have said in other tutorials. I apologize for this, but it has been borne in upon me that not every visitor to this blog has read the 300,000 or so words I have posted on serious subjects over the last year and a half. I find this incredible [ :) ], but I must bow to the exigencies of the cultural norms of the medium.

Herbert Marcuse was born in Germany in 1898, and died at the age of eighty-one, in 1979. He was a student of Heidegger and Husserl and was deeply influence by the philosophy of Hegel. [Faithful readers will know that I have an allergic reaction to Hegel, so I consider it an evidence of my admirable broadmindedness that I am willing to take Herbert's works seriously, as I do.] In 1932, Marcuse published his first major work, *Hegel's Ontology and Theory of Historicity*. The next year, he joined the Frankfort Institute for Social Research, which had gathered to itself the most brilliant left-wing thinkers in Germany -- Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Fromm, and many others. In 1934, fleeing the Nazis like many other intellectuals, Marcuse came to the United States. During the Second World War he worked in Washington for the organization that eventually became the CIA, heading up the German Desk. It was there that he met and befriended Barrington Moore, Jr., who was working on the Soviet desk. They remained close friends for the rest of Marcuse's life, and it was at Moore's house that I first met Marcuse in 1960 or 61.

Although Marcuse was a formidably *raffine* German intellectual, he became, almost through a serious of accidents, the inspiration and idol for young, rebellious German, French, and American students in the 1960's, gaining such wide name recognition that at one point he even was mentioned in a *New Yorker* cartoon. Herbert was somewhat bemused by this fame, and publicly disavowed any interest in it, but I have always thought he was secretly amused and pleased by it. Marcuse taught for some years at Brandeis, and then, when he reached retirement age and Brandeis would not extend his contract, he went for a time to UC San Diego, where he taught Angela Davis, among others. The two books by which he is best known in the United States are *Eros and Civilization*, published in 1955, and *One-Dimensional Man*, published in 1964.

In order to understand *One-Dimensional Man*, it is essential to have some grasp of the set of issues that Marcuse and the other members of the Frankfort Institute were grappling with in the 1930's and afterward. I believe this is what French intellectuals and their American epigones would call his "problematic," although I dislike that term. For these thinkers, the two great influences on their understanding of the world around them were Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx [and on mine as well, I might add.] But it was very difficult to see how the insights of these two great thinkers were to be combined, or even held in the same consciousness. Freud took the larger social and economic world of himself and his patients as a given fact, to which, as a medical doctor, he gave very little thought. His realm of investigation was the individual unconscious, with heavy emphasis on the development of the unconscious in early childhood. Perhaps his central analytical concept is the notion of *repression*, the forcing into the unconscious of "unacceptable" thoughts and wishes, which, despite the repression, retained their power to disrupt conscious adult functioning. Freud was deeply pessimistic about the human condition, as he made clear in such speculative works as *Civilization and its Discontents*. The survival of the human race, he argued, requires the stifling of powerful libidinal instincts, or at the very least, the sublimation of erotic energies in productive and socially acceptable activities, such as art, literature, industry, and even war. No amount of psychoanalysis, Freud thought, however successful in relieving neuroses, could alter the fact that the infantile fantasy of instantaneous gratification of libidinal desires is incompatible with the reality orientation required for survival and for civilization itself. Notice that although these views seem to be about the social and economic world, their universality and pessimism is such that they leave that world untouched, unaltered, and hence unchallenged. In this sense, Freud's views, while scandalous to his world, were in fact in their effect conservative rather than revolutionary.

The focus of Marx's mature work was the socio-economic structure of capitalist economies -- what he called, echoing Newton, "the laws of motion of capitalist economy." Although in his twenties he wrote some very suggestive and important essays about the psychodynamics of labor in a capitalist economy -- essays that, as we shall see, had a considerable effect on Marcuse and other mid-twentieth century left intellectuals -- it was the economic theory set forth in the five thousand pages of the six volumes of *Capital* and several other works that were his great legacy. Particularly after the success of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, carried out in his name if not in his spirit, it was Marx's theories of capitalist exploitation, of crises, and of the possible transition from capitalism to socialism, not the early speculations on unalienated labor, that were most widely associated with his name.

The key concept of Marx's analysis of capitalism is *surplus labor* -- the labor that workers expend over and above what is necessary to reproduce their conditions of existence. In any society, under any circumstances, a certain amount of labor just be expended to grow food, produce clothing and shelter, provide medical and other services, and care for the children who are the new generation of workers. Marx calls this ”necessary labor," and he makes it clear that this labor must be performed no matter what the "social relations of production" may be. But because capitalists own or control the means of production, they can force workers to labor longer hours than is necessary for their existence. The capitalists appropriate this "surplus labor," in the form of the products which they sell in the market. Marx's central analytical claim is that *profit* is nothing but the money form of the surplus labor extracted from the workers. Marx calls this appropriation of surplus labor "exploitation." Thus, the central conclusion of Marx's analysis, which, despite certain technical and mathematical problems I consider fundamentally correct, is that *capitalism rests on the exploitation of the working class.*

The central project of the Frankfurt School, to put it in a phrase, was to bring Freud and Marx into fruitful conjunction, and, by somehow fusing their insights and teachings, produce an integrated theory of human existence in a mature capitalist economy and society. In their different ways, Horkheimer, Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse and others were all embarked upon this same quest. After the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the advent of Nazism, their principal effort was to understand how such horrors could come to be in a society that seemed to be at the height of refinement, intellectual development, and artistic and cultural realization. Many of the great works of the mid-century period deal, in one way or another, with this question. [See, for example, Horkheimer and Adorno's study of *The Authoritarian Personality* -- note the fusion of psychoanalytic and socio-political themes in the title itself.]

In *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse, in a truly brilliant *coup de theatre*, combines the concepts of *repression* and *surplus labor*, and gives us, as a key to understanding life in a capitalist society, the concept of *surplus repression*.

Marcuse was powerfully struck by the fact that in a mature capitalist society, workers seem to internalize psychologically the demands of their bosses, treating the repression of their natural instincts in the factory or shop or office as signs of virtue rather than as painful constraints necessitated by the fact that they have been deprived of access to and ownership of the means of production. To be sure, some deferral of gratification and control of libidinal instincts is unavoidable. That Marcuse had learned not only from Freud but also from Marx. But the quantum of repression that workers inflict *on themselves* far exceeds what is required by what Freud called "the reality principle." This *surplus repression* serves no useful function for the workers. It does, however, serve a very useful function for capitalists, for it vastly increases their profits. Here is the way I put the same point more than twenty years ago in my little book, *Moneybags Must be so Lucky*:

"[T]he worker, as purveyor of abstract, averagely efficient labor is torn between her natural human needs and the needs of capital. Her mind and body require a graceful, rational, integrated development if she is to achieve a healthy fulfillment of her nature. But the exigencies of profitability demand the services of a neutral, adaptable labor power unencumbered by such obstructive predispositions as natural body rhythms, craft traditions, or a preference for participation in the planning, direction, and evaluation of the activity of production.

The concept of abstract labor is *socially valid* because the more fully the worker construes his actual work situation in its terms, the more successful he is, as measured by the criteria implicit in the concept itself -- criteria endlessly reconfirmed by employers, fellow-workers, ministers, teachers, and even by the members of his own family. The more completely he remakes himself in the image of abstract labor, the more likely he is to get and hold a job, win the praise of those around him, and weather the periodic economic storms. This repeated social confirmation confers objective validity on the concept, so that finally it comes to seem that resistance to the regime of the machine is mulish stubbornness, rejection of the authority of the bosses is sinful rebelliousness, and dissatisfaction with a subsistence wage is self-indulgence." [*Third Lecture*: *Mrs. Feinschmeck's Blintzes.*]

Marcuse noted that although the output of goods and services in modern capitalist economies has grown vastly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, workers are actually putting in longer hours now than they had half a century earlier. This is clearly humanly irrational, he argued, but of course immensely profitable for capital. The function of the *surplus repression* manifested in longer work hours and speeded up production lines, even in dress codes and modes of deference and demeanor in the work place, is simply to serve capital's insatiable need for accumulation. The very structure of desire itself is manipulated and distorted to ensure adequate demand for capital's products, with "needs" being created for products that no sane person could truly be said to need.

Marcuse's analysis, of course, rests on a rejection of the dominant tradition of Western Civilization, as expressed in Freud's pessimism concerning the unavoidability of elevating the Reality Principle over the Pleasure Principle, embracing instead Marx's Romantic interpretation of artistic creativity as the key to understanding humanly fulfilling labor. [I must now apologize to the readers of this blog for repeating things I have said in other tutorials. In a perfect world, I could count on every reader to have read everything I have previously posted, either here or on box.net. But since my readers, alas, actually have lives of their own, which must necessarily intrude on their attention to my every word, I shall what I wrote in my tutorial on The Thought of Karl Marx. This inevitable interpenetration of my various lines of exposition is, I suppose, some evidence that there is a measure of coherence to my thought processes.] Here is what I said there.

"Let me begin by talking about the Romantic conception of artistic creativity. The painters, sculptors, poets, and composers of the medieval and classical period were thought of as artisans, skilled craftsmen who worked for patrons or for entire communities, decorating castles or churches and memorializing military victories and the marriages of princes. But a different conception of artistic creativity emerged in the early nineteenth century period that we now call the Romantic era. Artists began to be thought of -- and to think of themselves -- as lonely creators, inspired by their muses to tear works of great art bleeding from their breasts [think Beethoven rather than Bach.] Thus understood, the act of artistic creation has the following structure: First, the artist is inspired to form an idea in his or her mind, an idea of a sculpture, a painting, a poem, a sonata, an idea of beauty. Then, by exercising great skill with chisel and mallet, with canvas and brush, or with pen, the artist makes the idea real, externalizes it, embodies it in some medium, thereby producing the work of art.

"This self-externalization [or *selbstentausserung* -- it always sounds better in German] may be achieved with great effort, leaving the artist exhausted, spent, drenched in sweat. Or it may be accomplished with blinding speed and seemingly little or no effort at all. But in either case, the completion of the act is, for the artist, a moment of triumph and fulfillment. The Idea has truly been made Flesh. The labor is a fulfilling labor, the fatigue a good fatigue. There it stands, on the page, or on the canvas, or on the podium -- what had begun as an idea in the artist's mind is realized, made real, before him or her. And the work of art is now available to all of us to see, to hear, to read, to experience and enjoy. Even those of us incapable of the act of creation can derive great enjoyment from the work, and even inspiration.

"But this act of creation has a dark side, a negative dimension, for what originally completely and indisputably belonged to the artist alone, as an idea in mind, now takes on a life of its own. The artist ages, but the work of art does not. At the moment of creation, the object, the embodied idea, belongs to the artist, but it may -- indeed, it most probably will -- be sold, to someone whose intentions and appreciation may be antithetical to those of the artist. There is no way that the artist can control how the public experiences the work of art, what the experts choose to say about it, what uses it may be put to, whether for the greater glory of a God whom the artist does not worship, a State to which the artist owes no allegiance, or a collector for whose vulgar tastes the artist has only contempt. Eventually, the artist may have to ask permission or pay an entry fee to view the work that he or she has created. Is it any wonder that Emily Dickenson resisted publishing her immortal poems?

"What began as an act of fulfilling and satisfying self-externalization runs the risk of becoming an act of self-alienation [*selbstentfremdung*]. The term "alienation" has a double meaning on which Marx plays endlessly. To make alien, to alienate, means to make an other, an enemy, something that stands over against oneself [*gegen-stand*]. But to alienate also means to sell, to transfer title from one owner to another. In this sense, the word is routinely used in the law. By alienating the work of art, by selling it, the artist becomes alienated from it. The work of art becomes not simply other than him or herself, but perhaps even inimical, hurtful, an enemy.

"Marx, with what I consider a stroke of sheer genius, takes the Romantic conception of artistic creativity and generalizes it to all of us, arguing that all human beings are capable of, indeed must engage in, an act with the same fundamental structure -- the act of production. Human beings, unlike animals, live by purposefully transforming nature in accordance with ideas in their minds, so as to make it into goods that can satisfy their needs. [Marx did not know about tool use in animals, but that really does not matter here.] They too first form an idea in mind -- of a stone shaped to be a tool, of a field of grain, of a stick bent to form a bow -- and then externalize it, embodying the idea in an object that can serve our needs, helping us to gain food, clothing, shelter, and other humanly satisfying goods. But unlike the act of artistic creation, the act of production is collective, social. We struggle with nature together, not alone. This act of collective self-externalization, of production, is labor."

Marcuse embraces Marx's conception of natural, fulfilling, autonomous labor as a human good, not as a curse laid upon us for our disobedience, and adds to it the concept of surplus repression. This gives him a very powerful analytical tool with which to criticize human existence in an advanced capitalist economy. Capitalism as we experience it today is exploitative and it rests upon a degree of repression that is far greater than required simply for the satisfaction of human needs. But what is, in Marcuse's view, even worse, modern capitalist society [and especially American society, I think Marcuse believed] has devised ways of depriving the exploited and repressed of the psychological means of resistance.

The key to this critique is Marcuse's surprising and seemingly contradictory notion of *repressive desublimation*.

*One-Dimensional Man* was published by Beacon Press in 1964, but it was written in the several years prior to that date. [Personal aside: The editor-in-chief at Beacon at that time was a wonderful man named Arnold Tovell, an old-fashioned editor who self-consciously cultivated and supported authors whether they produced best-sellers or not. When Harvard University Press foolishly turned down Barrington Moore, Jr.'s most important book, *The Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, because some anonymous reader said it was too heavily influenced by Karl Marx, Tovell snatched it up. It was Tovell who agreed to make a tiny book out of essays by Marcuse, Moore, and myself, publishing them under the provocative title, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*. Later on, Tovell gave me a contract for *The Poverty of Liberalism* on little more than a sketch of a table of contents, after which he also published my Matchette Lectures as *The Ideal of the University*. Publishing houses don't seem to have editors like that anymore.]

As I observed a few days ago on this blog, America in the late fifties and very early sixties was politically somnolent, save for the Civil Rights Movement, the significance of which for America Marcuse seems totally to have missed. This failure, remarkable for so sophisticated a social critic, can I think be explained in two ways. First of all, despite the fact that by this time Marcuse had lived in the United States for almost thirty years, he was still a thoroughly European intellectual, in whose *weltanschauung* issues of race simply did not figure. Second, the Civil Rights Movement was not in any way a revolutionary movement. It offered no challenge at all to capitalism, and can actually be seen as seeking to remove pre-capitalist distortions from American economy and society. I do not think that excuses Marcuse's blindness to what was, after all, the most powerful progressive popular movement in America in several generations. But as Erik Erickson observes in a beautiful passage that I chose as the epigram at the beginning of Volume One of my *Autobiography*, "An individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one segment of history." We are, all of us, products of such a coincidence, with all the limitations that implies.

The feeling Marcuse experienced when looking at that America can, I think, accurately be characterized not as anger, but rather as dismay. American seemed to him, flattened, banal, seamlessly upbeat, cheerful, and devoid of all fruitful *negativity*. This is the significance of the title he chose for his "Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society," to quote the subtitle of the book. There was, he thought, no second dimension of negative thinking in American society that could give rise to protest, rebellion, or revolution. There were, of course, many elements to this dismaying phenomenon, but one key, Marcuse thought, was the paradoxical manner in which the ruling forces in American society had managed to defuse potentially eruptive negative energies not by repressing them -- the response of an earlier stage in capitalist development -- but precisely by permitting their expression, embracing them, commodifying them, and thus depriving them of their power. He called this tactic "repressive desublimation."

To explain this puzzling phrase, I need to range a bit far afield for a moment, reflecting both on the history of culture generally and more particularly on what things were like in the fifties and early sixties. For some of you, this will be a stroll down Memory Lane, for others an excursus into ancient history.

It is always the case that protests against and dissent from the ruling orthodoxy, especially by the young, have taken the form of eroticized deviations from the norm in speech and bodily self-presentation. In some eras, the fleeting revelation of a naked female ankle is enough to scandalize polite society. In other eras, women may bare a breast without occasioning comment or disapproval. When the Beatles burst on the American scene, their appearance shocked Middle America, despite the fact that they wore coats and ties when they performed. It was the outrageous length of their hair -- almost, but not quite covering the napes of their necks -- that announced to everyone the depths of their rebellion. The young especially, who do not yet have the means or the skills to challenge the established order politically or economically, but who are desperate nonetheless to make visible their rejection of the Reality Principle and their embrace of the Pleasure Principle, do the only thing available to them, making minor alterations in their physical appearance. Bare skin, long hair, spiked hair, no hair, facial hair, tattoos, ear piercings, nose piercings, tongue piercings -- it really takes very little to produce hysteria in adults. This ability to drive grown-ups wild is a manifestation of the power of negativity -- of denial, rejection, refusal to conform to whatever norms of behavior and self-presentation happen to rule at the moment. The young frequently are novices at ideological or socio-economic analysis, but they are natural virtuosi at insolence. The merest drawling of a word or slouching of a shoulder can terrify those charged with policing the repression on which capitalist society depends. It is not surprising that during the 1968 Columbia University student protests, the distinguished political scientist David Truman, then a senior member of the university administration, was quoted as saying about the undergraduate protester, Mark Rudd, "It makes me uncomfortable to be in the same room with him."

But with extraordinary prescience, Marcuse realized that modern industrial society had found an entirely new way of containing and defusing the forces of negativity and rebellion -- by embracing them, commodifying them, converting them into sources of profit. So long hair, piercings, tattoos, and the insolence of the slouch became advertising devices, splashed across newspaper and magazine pages to sell soft drinks, jeans, cars, and beer. This unblocking of the negative energies of *Eros* and *Thanatos* robbed them of their power to challenge the existing order. It was a *desublimation* whose effect, against all expectation, was actually *repressive*, by depriving previously buried wishes, fantasies, and thoughts of their powerto destabilize the dominant social and economic order.

Against this paradoxically repressive tolerance of dissent, Marcuse brandished the only weapon he could find: the power of great art. Marcuse's thought here is very deep, very surprising, and in my judgment very powerful. In a speech I have given in several venues titled "What Good is a Liberal Education?" I undertook to explicate Marcuse's thinking. I am going to reproduce here what I said in that speech, despite the fact that the entire text has been posted on box.net. Once again, I apologize for repeating myself. Here is what I said:

"The new-born infant does not possess a coherent rational self or ego with which to negotiate its relationship to the external world. Indeed, it does not yet so much as possess a conception of itself in contradistinction to its surroundings. What we think of as the ordinary thought-processes of reality orientation - the distinction of self and other, the recognition of relations of space, time, and causality, the distinction between desire and satisfaction, wish and actuality - are in fact secondary accomplishments, painfully acquired in the wake of initial and continuing frustrations. Each of the stages of what we consider normal childhood development has a profoundly ambivalent significance for the child, at one and the same time a source of power, satisfaction, and self-esteem, and a suffering of frustration, pain, and rage.

"One example can perhaps stand for the entire years-long process. Little babies are at first unable to express their desires, of course, save by the inefficient method of crying. Still, a fortunate baby will succeed in getting its parent's attention by crying, and the parent will become hyper-sensitively attuned to those slight variations in the cry which indicate whether it is hunger, fatigue, colic, or teething that is the cause. Eventually, the baby learns to sit up in a high chair and eat with its hands or a spoon, and [we may suppose] it learns as well that when it waves its hands and makes a demanding noise, it gets a cookie. The baby, note, will be deeply ambivalent about this learned behavior, for what the baby wants [or so Freud persuasively tells us] is to have its hunger, or its desire for a cookie, instantaneously gratified, without even the temporary frustration of waiting until the parent decodes the cry and responds. But though this state of affairs has come about at the cost of frustration and pain, it is also a source of power and gratification. By learning how to command its parent's response, the baby can get the cookie. What is more, the parent is likely to respond with manifest pleasure to the baby's ability to sit up and communicate its wants.

"One day, something inexplicable, terrible, frustrating, painful happens. The baby makes its demanding noise, with the cookie in full view just outside its reach, and the parent, instead of immediately handing it over, as has happened every day for as long as the baby can remember, now picks up the cookie, holds it tantalizingly before the baby, and says in what can only be construed as a deliberately sadistic voice, "Can you say 'cookie'?" Well, all of us know the rest of this story, for all of us have lived through it. The acquisition of language, the mastery of one's bowels, the control of one's temper - all of the stages in development that make one an adult human being who is recognizably a member of a society - all have a negative side, a side associated with shame, rage, pain, frustration, resentment, a backside, as we learn to think of it, as well as a positive side associated with praise, self-esteem, public reward, power, satisfaction - a front, which, as our language very nicely suggests, is both an officially good side and also a pretense, a fake.

"By and large, we do not forget the frustration, the pain, the rage. We repress it, drive it out of consciousness, deny it, put it behind us, as we like to say. But, like our own backsides, and the feces which issue from them, they remain, and exercise a secret, shameful attraction for us.

"This brief reminder of our common heritage makes it clear that the repression of "unacceptable" wishes - as Freud so quaintly and aptly labeled them in his earlier writings - is an essential precondition for our development of the ability to interact effectively with the world, and with one another. Mastery of our own bodies, mastery of language, the psychic ability, and willingness, to defer gratification long enough to perform necessary work, the ability to control destructive, and self-destructive, rages or desires - civilization, society, culture, survival depend upon them. But necessary though they are, they are painful; throughout our lives, we carry, repressed, the delicious, illicit fantasies of total, immediate, uncompromised gratification, of instantaneous, magical fulfillment, of the permission to indulge the desires that have been stigmatized as negative.

"In *One-Dimensional Man*, in what has always seemed to me one of the truly inspired texts of twentieth century social theory, Marcuse deploys these insight to explain the structure and conditions of social protest, and the subjective psychological sources of the energy that fuels social change. The argument goes like this: The energy on which we draw for work, for art, and for politics, as well as for sex, is the fund of originally undifferentiated libidinal energy with which we are born, and which we attach to various objects through the psychic processes of sublimation, displacement, and cathexis. The gratifications we obtain are, as Freud poignantly shows us, always somewhat diminished, compromised, shadowed by the unavoidable adjustments to reality. The pleasures of useful, fruitful, unalienated labor, the satisfactions of artistic creation, even the sensuous delights of sexual intercourse, necessarily fall short of what is longed for in our repressed fantasies. To give a single, elementary example: all of us who write books of philosophy will acknowledge, I imagine, that in our most secret dreams, we lust after a review that begins something like this: "Not since Plato wrote THE REPUBLIC has a work of such power and brilliance burst upon the scene" - after which, we become instantaneously rich, young, thin, and flooded with absolutely risk-free offers of polymorphic sexual satisfaction. What actually happens, if we are fortunate, is that we are moderately favorably reviewed, by someone with his or her own fantasies of instant gratification, and have the genuine, but subdued pleasure, in years to come, of stumbling on references to our production, or of encounters with a praising reader.

"Now, Marcuse suggests, there is real surplus psychic repression inflicted on all of us in our society, most particularly on those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, and the established, institutionalized structures of political and economic repression being what they are, it takes an enormous, painful, dangerous mobilization of psychic energy to fight those structures and reduce the quantum of surplus repression. But since the dangers of revolt and resistance are so great, and most especially because the repression has been internalized in each of us in the form of an unnecessarily punitive set of self-inflicted restraints, a reasoned, measured, realistic call for incremental improvements is unlikely to elicit the burst of revolutionary energy needed for any change at all. "Workers of the world, unite! You have a modest reduction in surplus repression to win!" is not a slogan calculated to bring suffering men and women into the streets.

"What in fact happens, Marcuse suggests, is that revolutionary change is energized by the utopian, siren call of liberation, which, whatever the language in which it is couched, is experienced subjectively as a promise of the gratification of those infantile fantasies of instantaneous, magical, total gratification which lurk within us all. Workers' liberation, Black liberation, Women's liberation, Gay liberation - all appeal, necessarily, meretriciously, and yet productively, to these universal repressed fantasies. Only the tapping of such powerful wellsprings of psychic energy can move us to the heroic feats required for even modest reductions in surplus repression.

"The upshot of every revolution is therefore disappointment, for no matter how successful the revolution, it cannot, in the nature of things, liberate us from necessary repression. After the victory celebrations, we must still go to work, use the toilet, submit ourselves to some code or other of dress, of speech, of sexual conduct. Despite the inevitable and repeated disappointments, we must keep alive the fantasies, and attach them to our political aspirations, for they are the essential motor of real world social, economic, and political progress.

"How can we keep alive the deeply buried fantasies so that their energy can be used to fuel the real-world project of liberation from surplus repression? Surprisingly, Marcuse argues that the great works of art, literature, philosophy and music of our cultural tradition play an essential and unexpectedly subversive role. Regardless of their manifest content and apparent purpose, these works keep alive, in powerful and covert ways, the fantasies of gratification, the promise of happiness, the anger at necessary repression, on which radical political action feeds.

"To explain somewhat how even the most seemingly abstract works of art perform this function, let me quote a single paragraph from Marcuse's discussion, and then explicate it by reference to a Bach fugue. Here is the passage:

"The tension between the actual and the possible is transfigured into an insoluble conflict, in which reconciliation is by grace of the oeuvre as form: beauty as the "promesse de bonheur." In the form of the oeuvre, the actual circumstances are placed in another dimension where the given reality shows itself as that which it is. Thus it tells the truth about itself; its language ceases to be that of deception, ignorance, and submission. Fiction calls the facts by their name and their reign collapses; fiction subverts everyday experience and shows it to be mutilated and false. But art has this magic power only as the power of negation. It can speak its own language only as long as the images are alive which refuse and refute the established order. [ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN, pp. 61-62]"

"Consider a Bach fugue, which can stand, in Marcuse's analysis, for any work of art or literature that submits itself, as all true art must, to some canon of formal constraint. We could as well consider a sonnet, a portrait, a statue, or indeed a Platonic dialogue. The rules governing the composition of a fugue are extremely strict. They constitute, psychologically speaking, a repression of the composer's instinctual, creative energies. In the hands of a novice, the fugue-form is a strait-jacket, painfully forcing one to adjust one's musical line in unnatural ways. It is, speaking at the very deepest psychological level, the equivalent of being required to use the toilet, or to say "cookie" before being fed. But in the hands of Bach, all is transformed. Bach's fugues seem effortless. They magically transcend the constraints of the form, all the while rigidly conforming to them.

"The result is sheer, sensuous beauty which is, at one and the same time, liberated from the constraints of form and completely consonant with those constraints. The fugue thus holds out, magically, the promise of total satisfaction, the "promesse de bonheur," that is to be found in the unconscious of each of us. In the same fashion, a Dickinson poem, a Rodin sculpture, a Platonic dialogue, a van Gogh still life reawaken in us the fantasy of perfect, effortless gratification. These works of art and literature, Marcuse is suggesting, remind us of the possibility that there is a life better than the network of compromises in which we are enmeshed, a second dimension to existence in which freedom replaces necessity, happiness replaces suffering.

"The great works of humanistic writing, be they philosophy, history, theology, or criticism, accomplish the same end. The pure, rational arguments of Spinoza's ETHICS recall for us the image of a world in which reason is an instrument of liberation, not of domination. The sheer formal beauty of a mathematical proof, the effortless derivation of the most powerful conclusions from apparently innocent premises, holds out to us the hope of instantaneous ecstasy. "

There is, of course, much, much more in *One-Dimensional Man* than I have been able to indicate in this mini-tutorial, but six thousand words are enough, I hope, to whet your appetite. Those of you who are analytic philosophers by training and profession can read the book, gnashing your teeth at what you will undoubtedly consider his willful misunderstanding of your chosen intellectual style. My copy has marginal notes dating from the sixties filled with outraged defenses of my own teachers, Quine among them. But I am convinced that if you will read the text with a certain generosity of spirit, you will find both enlightenment and inspiration. It is not for nothing that an earlier generation of rebellious youths found in Marcuse the mentor their own education had denied them.