

The critical commitment of philosophy. On Marcuse's critical project

El compromiso crítico de la filosofía. Sobre el proyecto crítico de Marcuse

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Abstract

The present essay is not intended to be something new about Herbert Marcuse. As a personal exercise to clarify concepts, its aim is to provide an overview of Marcuse's conception, based especially from his book *One-Dimensional Man*, about an advanced industrial society and how our thinking is being more and more rooted in what social elites want us to believe. At the same time, the article provides a basis to think this problem in an increasing postmodern society that is forgetting the most important critical authors of 20th century and its main preoccupation: the identity between subject and society.

Keywords: Marcuse, critical theory, technological rationality, repression, negative thinking.

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Resumen

El presente ensayo no tiene ninguna intención de ser algo novedoso sobre Herbert Marcuse. Como ejercicio personal de clarificar ciertos conceptos, su propósito es dar un panorama sobre la concepción de Marcuse, basada especialmente en su libro *El hombre unidimensional*, acerca de una sociedad industrial avanzada y cómo nuestro pensamiento está cada vez más enraizado en lo que las élites quieren que creamos. Al mismo tiempo, el artículo da bases para pensar este problema en una creciente sociedad posmoderna que está olvidando los autores críticos más importantes del siglo XX y una de sus máximas preocupaciones: ¿cuál es la identidad entre sujeto y sociedad?

Palabras clave: Marcuse, teoría crítica, racionalidad tecnológica, represión, pensamiento negativo.

Introduction

For Marcuse, individual liberty is reached when the productive apparatus is organized and centralized not by the social forces of the advanced industrial societies, but by a state that considers that autonomy is the base of a life that has to be guided by the own thinking of the subject. This will suppose the end of technological rationality, that is to say, the end of the establishment of living standards and judgment that make people act with an entire submission to the social apparatus; an apparatus that “imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor

time and freetime, on the material and intellectual culture”¹

This is why for Marcuse liberty has to be reconceptualized. It can not be established in the same way as it was posed, for example, in 18th century with french enlightenment. Although it was a political view of human freedom, the circumstances and the power of technology over the individual are too far different from 18th century. As a hegelian, Marcuse’s view about freedom is negative. The negative terms that allow acting as a counter part of politics and economy is the path to liberation, which implies that positivity has to be rejected. However, this is one of the main problems of modern societies. Here

¹ Marcuse, Herbert. *One dimensional man. Studies in the ideology of advanced insutrial society*. New York: Routledge. 2002, p.5

the question is posed: How can the subject, as an alienated person, reject positivity?

Before arriving to the argument of Marcuse about how positive thinking can be rejected, we must, first of all, try to understand the ways in which that positivity is rooted in our thinking. For the German author, the implanting of material and intellectual needs is the way in which we are increasingly controlled, we think about ourselves as free subjects that can go to the market and establish what we want to do. However, one aspect of advanced industrial societies is that of a high degree of repression. It's the kind of repression that makes us see that we are happy, that we believe that our thoughts are an individual construction of our reason and desires, but hides the imposition of social interests. False needs, being these the so called gadgets, ideas about art and culture, conceptions and transformations of our bodies, in general everything that is stated as the material and intellectual excedent of capital, is the new way of repression.

Since Freud's psychoanalysis, repression is seen as an indispensable way of acting to the maintenance of culture. To appease one part of our dual nature, Eros and Thanatos, is essential to a harmonious life between men. Notwithstanding Marcuse's affinity with Freud's ideas, he saw another level of repression. Is in order to ideological

circumstances that this concept has to be understood; it's history and human interaction the ones that create repression, and not always our human nature. In an aggressive society, repression refers to the fact that social impositions upon our lives makes us believe that the relationship with the environment is true. This was possible in previous stages of society, for example that one established by German Romanticism, in which social impositions were not so strong; this is why the subject could see with suspicion the political apparatus and stayed against it.

Marcuse is against those who think that the concept of ideology hides a conspiracy or an illusion of the world. If this is true, that would remind us the rationality of industrial societies; but for Marcuse, social impositions are so strong, that the way of living is not an illusion; is something that we believe in, that we think is true. The reminding of the irrational rationality of technological progress is true.

Technological progress, the new way of control, shows the contradiction of this society. But this contradiction is assumed by human beings as a non contradiction. They think that social antagonisms are over and that there is no need to struggle against misery, injustice, poverty, bad education, and so on. Things are like this because we believe that the system is abolishing them. Now, we are

confronted with a social apparatus that puts us in a stage in which we think about ourselves according to our possessions, “the term introjection perhaps no longer describes the way in which the individual by himself reproduces and perpetuates the external controls exercised by his society. Introjection suggests a variety of relatively spontaneous processes by which a Self (Ego) transposes the outer into the inner”². When this introjection, or mimesis, is our life style, we no longer accept other life styles. We no longer accept qualitatively changes, but we see our lives according to quantitative conditions, such as possessions or the attempt to size experiences and feelings like love and hate.

The closing of the political universe

One question raises at the moment of posing the structure of alienated individual thinking: What is the social structure in which those people exist? Related to the political stage, the new society is for Marcuse the union between Welfare and Warfare state. In the new way of doing politics, economic power is held by private corporations, with an executive power more and more controlled by an elite, although not directly, but with its economic force able to buy the political class. As it was stated by the american

sociologist Charles Wright Mills³, the state, the corporations and the army were the modern institutions that ruled other institutions, such as the family, universities, church, and so on. The political universe is also an ideological stage in which we believe we are free to elect our servants; but they were already elected by an economic power in which we do not have any chance to participate.

A welfare and warfare state was one of the consequences of the first part of 20th century wars. In the Frankfurt School, the state is seen from the analysis of Friedrich Pollock, especially during the period of post World War II, with his essay about state capitalism. Either in his condition of democratic or totalitarian, the basic about state capitalism is that the market is deposed of his controller function, in order to be a function of the state, through a general plan that manages the actions of consumers. Its objective is to increase the benefits of those who have influence in the general plan. “No state capitalistic government can or will dispense with the profit motive, for two reasons. First, elimination of the profit motive would destroy the character of the entire system, and second, in many respects the profit motive remains as an efficient

² *Ibid.*, p.12

³ Mills, C.W. *The power elite*. United States: Oxford University Press, 2000.

incentive"⁴. No matter if the state has a stronger power in the economic order of society, or that the welfare state represented benefits for everyone; the state was not autonomous; more than that, the aforementioned elite hoarded the political sphere. Moreover, as it was established recently by the french economist Thomas Piketty⁵, between 1970 and 1980, there was a growth deceleration, specially demographic, a movement in privatization and transference of public wealth to private wealth, and the recovery of real estate and stock exchanges actives, has led to an advent of certain social elites that hoarded the public power.

In that order of ideas, state capitalism, based on welfare and warfare institutions, do not tolerate, according to Pollock, a high degree on the standard of living to the masses. The democratic state is, of course, more susceptible to this; but in his nature there is the possibility for totalitarianism. Capitalist economy, with a reserve army, that is to say, unemployment, cannot be maintained in peace. Creating the conditions of welfare is, at the same time, conditioning people to war.

In order to understand the political universe of capitalist society,

⁴ Pollock, Friedrich, *State capitalism: its possibilities and limitations. The essential Frankfurt School Reader*. New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1990.

⁵ Piketty, Thomas, *El capital en el siglo XXI*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2015

Marcuse resort to the marxian analysis that contemplates the production apparatus as the one that creates the technical rationality. This technical rationality is shown not only in factories, tools and the exploitation of resources, but also in labor time. In order to achieve human freedom, socialist society proposes that those immediate producers should manage the productive apparatus. It is not the nationalization or the socialization the way to break the technological structure, the end of the existing social structure implies an alienation of the laboring classes from the universe.

To understand this transformation, Marcuse actualizes the marxian concept of labor. Mechanization reduces physical energy expended in labor. To Marx, workers are exploited under conditions in which private corporations of surplus value is joined with the appropriation of physical energy that is expended under subhuman conditions. Despite the technological advances made by social forces, 20th century labor is not so different, in relation to human conditions. Given that Marcuse's thesis is the one dimensionality of thinking and behavior, labor time serves to the process of standardization that makes the new working class does not sees it as a denial of their society. 19th century working class, according to marxian theory, was the negation of the society; his class consciousness stand against ca-

pitalist consciousness. "The machine process in the technological universe breaks the innermost privacy of freedom and joins sexuality and labor in one unconscious, rhythmic automatism—a process which parallels the assimilation of jobs"⁶

Due to the labor force changed along 20th century, the blue collar labor force declines and the white collar increases. However, there are more ways to increase the level of life, which is related to the life technification, human consciousness is not related as a member of a specific class. Because there is no longer an identification of the professional with some sort of autonomy, it is more difficult to create a negative force that goes against the enslavement forces. As a marxist, Marcuse believed that the new technological circumstances that determined the production were transforming human consciousness and putting it into a state of total alienation of autonomous thinking.

Concerning the relation between workers and machines, Marcuse pointed out the following. According to Marx, it was human labor force the one that created surplus value; from here is where the antagonism between the alienated laborers and the owners of modes of production comes. But in 20th century, Marcuse's arguments pointed out that it is not the labor force

that creates surplus value; it is the machine. That is why, in order to know what is the cost of production, there is no need to measure work, but just to measure the equipment utilization. However, if industrialization was determined by the measurement of job, what happened with the institutions that created it? The institutions that created the technological progress are of course changing, but with this change, the conscience of human beings is at the same time being transformed, with the condition that we no longer perceive that it changes. In this way the change of consciousness can not be understood if there is not consideration of the changes in the societal existence. This conscience, as the manifestation of bourgeois morality, requires the appeasement of our intellectual and body pleasures. Social existence is prior to our existence; but is also the limit of our thinking. But as a social change, it could not be developed without the interference of the people who hoarded the political universe.

The new organizers lose any kind of responsibility for his ownership of the modes of production. They are a minority increasingly bigger in the relation capital/ingress. As the new class of administrators are not determined in the same way as the others (right now called the 99%) by the unidimensionality of thinking. Rather than a capitalist, they are bureaucrats

⁶ Marcuse, Op. Cit., p. 30

that do not see the misery in which thousands of people have to live in order to exist. Politics and economy are no longer administered by the ones who were really interested in them; it is the time for technicians, planners and scientists who believed that freedom comes from the freedom of choice that they predetermined. "Egoism characterizes the aggressive tendencies of little groups of societies, and it has nothing to do with happiness of the majority"⁷

According to these aspects, it can be said that for Marcuse the problem is the way in which the state has been organized. It is not a vain critique of technology what Marcuse did, his critique consists in the analysis of this progress as a source of alienation by itself, as if it were build in an Orwellian world that does not allow us to see the vital principle of a real relation with others. It has to be considered the technological process as a process made in first instance by a welfare and warfare state in order to be used for its purposes.

American capitalism, for example, is a welfare state because it has the capacity to increase the life level, understood as more access to education, to better jobs, more free time, and an apparently diminution of the

gap between rich and poor. Although this is not true, this standard of living generates in human beings the one dimensionality of thinking and behavior.

The prospects of containment of change, offered by the politics of technological rationality, depend on the prospects of the Welfare state. Such a state seems capable of raising the standard of administered living; a capability inherent in all advanced insutrial societies where the streamlined technical apparatus [...] depends for it's functioning on the intensified development and expansive of productivity⁸

But welfare state could not work without the coercitive system that is inherent to it. Technological progress has been created by welfare and warfare state. State that was not only in american society, but also in soviet socialism. As one of the most important theorists of 20th century marxism, Marcuse did not see stalinist socialism as the realization of freedom. Capitalism, as well as socialism, were both systems builded on the basis of a certain productive apparatus, but also on the ideology that conceives the other as the enemy.

⁷ Horkheimer, Max. "Egoísmo y movimiento liberador", En: *Teoría Crítica*, Argentina: Amorrortu Editores, 1974, p.159 (author's translation)

⁸ Marcuse, Op. Cit., p.52

The conquest of the unhappy consciousness

To understand the unhappy consciousness that is held in an advanced industrial society, Marcuse refers to the difference between high culture of pre-technological society and culture created in an advanced industry society. Marcuse said: “What is happening now is not the deterioration of higher culture into mass culture but the refutation of this culture by the reality. The reality surpasses its culture. Man today can do more than the culture heroes and half-gods; he has solved many soluble problems”⁹

The development of conscience would be analyzed not by the interference of the state, as it was made previously, but from the space where social processes are held: culture; some contributions are necessary before Marcuse’s arguments. The distinction between high culture and mass culture was one of the principal topics of Frankfurt School, especially in Adorno and his 1947 essay with Max Horkheimer called Cultural industry. For all of them, the discussion was not about making a difference of what culture is and what is not; and was not, as many people think, to create an elite culture just enjoyable for the bourgeoisie¹⁰. Because they were

writing in fascist time (remember that for them, american mass culture had related aspects of authoritarian conditions of german fascism¹¹) and culture was a problem because they saw in it certain mechanisms of oppression. The maintenance of culture implies, in its dynamic conception, to be seen as a fire imposition of a physic coaction on peoples mind. His legitimate maintenance is held in the family, school, church and the state. Authority, in Marcuse’s case, the technological rationality, is the way in which people think they are free, but in fact they are just free to obey what social elites say to them what is to be obeyed.

In Marcuse’s thought, Freud’s psychoanalytic theory and its two principles, reality and pleasure, give the base to understand the state of the unhappy consciousness. Reality

of Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory, the New Left believed that it was going to be a leftist aesthetic. However, that would be impossible, insofar as Adorno was opposed to that aesthetic, represented by soviet realism. For a discussion about this, see: Adorno et al. *Aesthetic and Politics. Afterword by Fredric Jameson*. New York: Verso, 2010

¹¹ “Today, tragedy has vanished in the nothingness of that false identity of society and subject, whose horror still brights fleetingly in the empty appearance of the tragic. But the miracle of the integration, the permanent act of grace of the one who has the power to welcome the one who does not stand against any resistance and swallows its own reluctance, signifies fascism” In: Adorno & Horkheimer. *La Industria cultural*. Madrid: Akal, 2007, p. 167 (author’s translation)

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 60

¹⁰ For example, with the postumous publication

principle, like the determinations of politics, economy, production, etc., has been imposed over culture, that is to say, over the libidinal nexus of the subjects. Immediacy between them has been lost, making our consciousness mediated by those determinations. In capitalist societies, the world of the metaphysical subtleties, which to the eyes of a one-dimensional man is posed as a social structure, is able to fix even our thoughts. Western high culture was built into a feudal and romantic world vision, remote of the influence of industrialization, business and the productive system. Romantic novels, for example, used images of people who were distanced even from their world. As in Schiller's drama and poetry, the visions about the romantic hero gave to the reader another dimension of reality. It was not intended to be fiction, but it was a construction of the reality principle led by the pleasure principle; in the artist case it was the role of imagination that gives the possibility to reconcile our reason with our happiness, reality with the subject, the one that led the construction of the work of art.¹² In the case of the young Raskolnikov of Dostoyevky's *Crime and Punishment*, the inner struggle for his own subsistence and to determine who knew about the crime, was a job for himself; there was no self-help

book that said to him how to commit a suicide without nobody realizing it. In spite of the level of life of 17th and 18th centuries, reality was not above the aesthetic dimension, and the artists knew it. For Marcuse, artistic alienation makes reference to the conscious power to transcend social positivity.

What makes 20th century high culture is the manifestation of the same things that happens in society. It is not alienated art, but positive art. Even places where that art is represented is different from romantic places. Theaters, temples, cathedrals, were places where people could experience a totally different dimension of the one that manifest to themselves every day. Architecture, for Adorno and Horkheimer in "The cultural industry", is based upon the fact that cities have to be built in order to benefit the productive apparatus; houses and factories are not even planned, they are just built in order to guarantee specific economic benefits. Making a difference with certain types of artistic manifestations, Marcuse, who has a debt with Adorno's aesthetic theory, pointed out the importance of alienated art. His main function is to be opposed to the positive aspects of society. Art has to be negative; it has to demonstrate how our pleasure principle can stand against the reality principle. But it is not just to stand against; it is to try to reconcile both principles, because in that way we can experience a return

¹² See: Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, chapter VII.

to the repressed. Artistic imagination gives us an unconscious memory of the lost path of liberation. In a state of affairs in which there is no liberty, art puts an image of a free man. Surrealism, in the case of Eros and Civilization, with the psychoanalytical images of man, gives us a political interpretation of the Oedipus complex; but not as Freud's conception of the submission of the son to the father, but rather is the image of the son who can fight and destroy the authority.

However, technological rationality, with the cultural industry, has permeated artistic manifestation. Romantic art is, of course, not even available; its time has passed. But advanced industrial societies have not created a new type of art according to the new circumstances. For Marcuse there is no possibility for the Great Refusal that was stated by Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*. This refusal, stated by surrealism, is the protest against an unnecessary repression; is the prospect of a life without anguish. Art is no longer the negation of society but only the ideological manifestation of the welfare and warfare state. An unconscious manifestation which people assume as true. Positive art is totally opposed to sublimation. The images created by sublimated oeuvres d'art are useful because they represent to the audience the negative part of society. However, the negation does not intend to reconcile people with

his reality principle avoiding the internal contradiction of Eros and Thanatos, sublimation is referred not just to an astonishing art representation; it is rather that pleasure principle that stands upon reality principle¹³. What makes this argument strength enough to be taken into account is that the artistic sublimation is a phenomenon that plays with our instincts, that is to say, with the way of living. Although the discussion is in the aesthetic realm, for the Frankfurt School there is an influence of technological progress into artistic manifestations. The social apparatus creates a dimension in which human activities are reduced and in which pleasures are reduced too. Instinctual experience is, by consequence, reduced but not withstanding, has to be relocalized. This relocalization is put in terms of sexual experience, but not as an erotic experience. It is clear, since Freud, that erotic relationships are different from sexual relations, whose purpose is just sexual satisfaction or reproduction. As long as the latter is just the accomplishment of partial impulses, erotism refers to a wide range of impulses that include not only sexuality, but also the gratification of good life. This is why

Diminishing erotic and intensifying sexual energy, the technological reality limits the scope of sublimation. It

¹³ See: Horkheimer, Authority and family.

also reduces the need for sublimation: In the mental apparatus, the tension between that which is desired and that which is permitted seems considerably lowered, and the Reality Principle no longer seems to require a sweeping and painful transformation of instinctual needs. The individual must adapt himself to a world which does not seem demand the denial of his innermost needs- a world which is not essentially hostile¹⁴.

This adaptation of the individual into the reality principle that is imposed on him, presupposes the rejection of the possibility of his own pleasure principle.

This unconscious rejection is used for political mobilization. People are seen, not as the modern subject, but as a subject used for political purposes. It is the individual more a neurotic person than an individual struggling with Eros and Thanatos. The neurotic personality¹⁵ is formed by the controlled desublimation product of the social apparatus. This is why, as Marx pointed out, people tend to find themselves as consumers of the productive apparatus and not trying to resolve the inner conflicts of humans. In this transfer, that is to say, to give to external factors what has to be resolved internally, the social apparatus assumes the role of a moral agent;

¹⁴ Marcuse, *One-dimensional man*, op.cit, p.77

¹⁵ See: *Eros and Civilization*, chapter 10.

our conscience is in this way reified. Our world representations are based in things and not in what human beings are. It's just the general necessity of things. Because reified conscience is not longer autonomous conscience, responsibility of our actions decreases and we think that what we are doing corresponds to a social manifestation and not to an individual subjectivity. This is why we no longer feel guilty for our actions. "Today, the mark of ideologies is rather the absence of this autonomy than the fraud of its pretension. With the crisis of bourgeois society, the same concept of ideology seems to lost its object"¹⁶

The historical commitment of philosophy

Insofar the ideological problem is whether we can know what is true or not, what is happiness and what is an imposed happiness; the conflict appears at a philosophical level of what is real and what it seems to be real. To Marcuse, this philosophical question is evident since platonic dialectic and Aristotle's formal logic. In ancient Greek philosophy, reason is the cognitive faculty to determine what is truth and false, being this contraposition the conditions of Being and Reality. As man would be able to

¹⁶ Adorno, Theodor, "Contribución a la doctrina de las ideologías", En: *Escritos sociológicos I*. Madrid: Akal, 2004, p. 443 (author's translation)

act according to what is real, he would be acting pursuant to what is true. The problem is not just at an epistemological level, it is clear how since greek philosophy, epistemology and ethics were part of the same problem, that of man and how he can develop his own faculties involved in certain space-time conditions. Epistemology cannot stay apart from ethics. Those who think that philosophy is just a mere reflection on what are ideas, suffer from the same trivialization of those who are embedded in the cultural industry standards: they are afraid of knowing what they are.

However, more than giving an erudite analysis of greek philosophy, what Marcuse tries to develop, since the origins of greek philosophy, is how human thought is determined by dualities; a duality that the same thinking has to resolve. This is why the ontological categories, like truth, falseness, being, nothingness, reality, reason, and so on, are the ones who build human beings forms. "Philosophy originates in dialectics, its universe of discourse responds to the facts of an antagonist reality"¹⁷ No matter the historical gap between Marcuse and ancient philosophy, what is clear is the dialectic conception of philosophy; conception that is going to be developed by Marcuse according, not just to Plato's dialectic, but more from Hegel's conception of what is real

Although Marcuse explores his ideas since the greeks, what is also clear for him is that he is not wanting to give an scholar account of Plato and Aristotle. What he wants to make clear is that no matter the historical gap, philosophy is to have a compromise with what is truth; and in that case, the more simple epistemological fact shows us that truth cannot be discovered just by the use of our senses. If this would be the case, advanced industrial societies would not have any kind of repression; it would be so evident for us the one-dimensionality of thought and behavior, that nobody would accept his own repression. However, that is not the case. In this order of ideas, the rejection of positivism is at the same time the confidence on our reason and in metaphysics. How can something really important as our liberty be explained just from experience? Did not Descartes metaphysics show us the importance of skepticism and self-reflection? In explaining ancient philosophy, Marcuse tries to link it with modernity, which is the stage of consciousness in which individuality can develop itself with the dialectic relation with the universality. "Conscience is aware of itself as thought, and knows that my thought is for me the only thing that is binding"¹⁸ Philosophy is the believe that the own thought

¹⁷ Marcuse, *One-dimensional man*. Op.cit., p.130

¹⁸ Hegel, *Philosophy of right*. New York: Prometheus books, 1996, p.130.

is capable, from a critical judgement, to understand the true content of reality. Philosopher is not a person who stands against his reality and rejects an specific position on it; he is not a person who is always in the pejorative world of ideas, on the contrary, philosopher is the one who wants to know how can reality has a rational basis, and with this knowledge create a good life for him and for the others. This is the concrete problem of philosophy. However, as history has shown us, are not philosophical values the ones who govern reality; conversely the power of a surplus-repressed civilization was imposed upon them. In Plato and Aristotle philosophy, the problem is stated in their conception about movement, of what is in potentiality and actuality, as a manifestation of Being. That is why "The philosophic quest proceed from the finite world to the construction of a reality which is not subject to the painful difference between potentiality and actuality, which has mastered its negativity and is complete and independent in itself-free"¹⁹

Despite the great effort that philosophy has made to introduce his philosophic value of reason into the world, it is not the convergence between Reason and Liberty what makes a society a rational organization. As we have shown, technological ratio-

nality, the imposition of standards of living and acting, is the type of rationality imposed on advanced industrial societies; a society based in an excessive production of what we do not really need, but we think that we do. This is why Marcuse called it technological rationality. We think our world based on a technique, in how can we produce more and more; but not because we really want to produce, but because we need to have a role in our society. It has not to follow our dreams the purpose of capitalist societies, because, insofar as dreaming is a free human activity, our freedom depends of external conditions; those of the imposed necessities.

Marcuse is not just one of the great thinkers of 20th century that the nervous, fearful and an ignorant post-modernity educational system is trying to forget; he is also a romantic thinker who believed in immediate human relations; those who do not need a market between them to be "real" relations. The commodity production has made this. In this order, the new human needs are those who establish in first instance human thought, and then is the development of the latter. This is the commitment of philosophy. Our thinking has to be developed in order to establish a state of affairs in which men no longer need to spend an anguish life in the realm of necessity. If this is the case, truth, as a concept, would be realized in a true human existence,

¹⁹ Marcuse, *Op. Cit.*, p. 131

that of a real universality. Philosophy think about a world in which human beings could be equal, denying the actual equality.

With the problem of universality, Marcuse returns to Hegel's approach in which thought should not be alien to his object. Although there is a rejection of formal logic, what Marcuse's dialectic requires is a logic system that allows it to move into the laws of the Real, of concrete. But these forces, laws, tendencies, elements, are developed in their inner oppositions. Marcuse saw the solution that Marx gave to the problem of Hegel's dialectic: too much idealism. Insofar as experience is presented to the individual as a false experience, that is to say, as an objectivity that hides its causes, the development of things, history, has to be understood as a men practice. A practice understood not in terms of productivity that is to Marcuse the way in which this term is understood in 20th century capitalist society. As an intellectual and material activity, practice begins from the data of experience but goes deeper and put that experience in the colander of a dialectical thought that understands the different dualities in which experience resides. Once human thought notices this, reason becomes not only historic reason, but also the negation of the established order. Thereby, "the idea of reason pertains to the move-

ment of thought and of action. It is a theoretical and a practical energy"²⁰.

Marcuse believed that universals cannot be understandable without the whole they belong to. That is why such analysis requires the understanding of that whole. As it was stated before, this is not only on behalf of philosophical thinking; it is also on behalf of those people on which universals act. "If philosophy does not comprehend these processes of translation and identifications as societal processes, as a mutilation of the mind (and the body) inflicted upon the individuals, their society- Philosophy struggle only with the ghost of the substance which it wishes to demystify. The mystifying character adheres, not to the concepts of mind, self, consciousness, etc. but rather to their behavioral translation"²¹ In this translation, social analysis have to take into account Marcuse's concept of Real. If the analysis of universals begins from the presupposition that these concepts could be understood as modes of actual behavior, it falls in the mistake that actual behavior is the real one, and consequently the appearance that irrational is rational. In this sense, philosophy is not just merely the interpretation of the world; it is, as it was established by Marx on his "Theses on Feuerbach", the assumption that the actual conditions have to be changed.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p.146.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.208.

That is philosophy's commitment; commitment that is guided by the concept of liberty, that presupposes real possibilities of a qualitative change. It is the real possibility of liberation. It is not what commonly people think about utopia, a mere illusion. No. We cannot reject the historical changes that are upon our eyes. Qualitative changes, which presuppose a change in the social productive apparatus, a reduction of unnecessary repression, it's at the same time the change of human behavior. The construction of a new life implies the construction of a new sensibility. As an aesthetic dimension, this construction is not an aesthetic sensibility that stagnates himself in a positivist appreciation of the world. As is stated in *Eros and Civilization*, especially in the chapter the aesthetic dimension, the new sensibility is a political factor, like in Schiller's *On the aesthetic education of man*. The assumption that man has impulses which go beyond direct sexuality implies that erotic impulses are the ones that can stand against aggressiveness and guilt. "Freedom, in this sense, would become the environment of an organism which is no longer capable of adapting to the competitive performances required for well-being under domination, no longer capable of tolerating his aggressiveness, brutality, and ugliness of the established way of life"²².

²² Marcuse, Herbert, *An essay on liberation*. United States: Beacon Press, 1971, p.9.

It is the actual conformation of social institutions that made unthinkable this liberation, to the extent that mutilated individuals defend the chains that attach them to undemocratic institutions. Democratic planning serves to certain interests, hiding its totalitarian attitudes. It would be an organized, rational and fair society when the historical subject of modern societies could achieve the purpose of freedom as a real possibility. Marcuse's arguments are not in defense of philosophy by itself; philosophy is rather committed with those who were deprived of a good life. This is why our purpose is to keep fighting for utopia. Marcuse's reflection gives us the arguments to support the idea that miserable people cannot continue maintaining the actual system just because an intolerable egoism of social elites. The fight against economic, social, political, and even academic forces has to be carried out with new arguments. The New Left is right now old; it did not work. But it has to be restored. The actual experiences of Greece, Spain, and Ecuador give us the illusion of a new life. "It is [in Benjamin's words] only for the sake of those without hope that hope is given to us"²³.

²³ Marcuse. *One-dimensional man*. Op.Cit., p. 261.

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