

Psychoanalysis and Sixties Utopianism

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The utopianism of the 1960s, perhaps the last flowering of modern utopianism, called for a total transformation that was simultaneously, even inseparably, psychic, political and cultural. I will discuss some sixties utopian texts which use psychoanalysis along with, and intermeshed with, a variety of political, philosophical, and cultural discourses in order to represent a lifeworld of utter alienation, oppression, and thwarted, stifled authenticity. Although these works are permeated with the pessimism and revulsion engendered by this alienation, their most profound impact comes from a summons to what Herbert Marcuse calls the Great Refusal: a total repudiation of actually existing life at the psychic, social, intellectual, and cultural levels simultaneously, and the institution of a truly liberatory and just alternative—a new reality principle, as Marcuse demands and prophesizes in *Eros and Civilization*. It is the utopian nature of these projects, I would argue, based on the assumption that only a thoroughgoing, total transformation is capable of producing any significant change whatsoever—change that is meaningful because it is not coopted—that produces the particular, sometimes almost undifferentiated juxtaposition of psychoanalytic with political, philosophical, and cultural discourses that characterizes these works. This undifferentiated juxtaposition, in the seamless form in which we find it in these texts, bespeaking a coherent, universal intellectual project, is no longer available to current psychoanalytic work on culture. Analyzing its dynamics in these Sixties texts, however, can help us retrieve its refunctioned elements in the current conjuncture.

In this essay, I will discuss two Sixties texts that were among the most influential and widely read at the time within both the new left and the counterculture, but that have subsequently all but disappeared off the intellectual map: Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional*

Man, 1964, and, in a briefer discussion, R. D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience*, 1967.¹ Marcuse is primarily a philosopher and political theorist who, within the Frankfurt School project of linking Marx and Freud, deploys psychoanalytic discourses as indispensable to his project. Laing is a psychoanalyst who employs political, philosophical, and cultural discourses as, similarly, indispensable. There is a sense in both texts of a parallelism, almost an interchangeability among these discourses, as if each treats, in mutually reinforcing and mirroring ways, a crucial component of what is a unified whole. I will also discuss very briefly the ways in which Luce Irigaray, writing at the end of what I would call the long Sixties, produces the same sort of totalizing, utopian project in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1974. For all of these projects, it is the utopian demand for reciprocal, mutually constitutive, total psychic, social, political, intellectual, and cultural change that creates this peculiar additive parallelism or intermeshing of discourses.

Herbert Marcuse, one of the most important of the sixties intellectuals, has virtually slipped, with some notable exceptions, out of sight. Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, his colleagues in the Frankfurt School, by contrast, remain major presences.² Benjamin, in particular, is enjoying what amounts to a renaissance, and Adorno is also increasingly widely read. Yet Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, one of the few most influential books of the Sixties, though now rarely studied, makes essentially the same central argument as Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which has of late become required reading. Horkheimer and Adorno's "negativity" is always implicated in the affirmative, just as all resistance is subsumed by Marcuse's one-dimensional society. Horkheimer and Adorno assume the impossibility of enlightenment just as Marcuse assumes that instru-

mental reason always adheres to domination. The difference—the reason for Horkheimer and Adorno's currency and Marcuse's near disappearance—lies in Marcuse's passionate commitment to total psychic-political-social-cultural transformation, of a sort Horkheimer and Adorno do not propose, since oppositionality for them is always partly implicated in the affirmative. Their view is much more consistent with postmodern notions of complicitous critique and resistance from within than with modernity's totalizing, utopian revolutionary ideologies. In Marcuse's analysis, contemporary psyche, society, culture, and thought are so thoroughly, and similarly, alienated that only an entirely different order of existence offers meaningful hope. For Marcuse, all resistance or subversion short of total transformation is not only ineffective, it is impossible, because it is immediately absorbed by "one-dimensional" society's uncanny powers of cooptation—in his terms, its power to unite opposites and cancel the dialectic. Total revolutionary change, encompassing every aspect of psychic, cultural, intellectual, and political existence, is the only alternative for Marcuse to total domination.

Marcuse's title, considered alongside its subtitle and the titles of its three subsections, offers an important indicator of the necessary interweaving, even the interchangeability for Marcuse, of psychoanalytic, social-political, cultural, and philosophical analysis. This interweaving or interchangeability goes beyond the Frankfurt School project of uniting disparate, falsely sundered discourses into a unified analysis. For Marcuse, the psychic, the social-political, and the cultural are component parts of a totality which can only be characterized by either domination or revolution. The title, of course, is *One-Dimensional Man*; the subtitle is *Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, and the titles of the three subsections are "One-Dimensional Society," "One-Dimensional Thought," and "The Chance of the Alternatives." In this sequence of titles, "man," "society," and "thought" are various angles or lights shed on a single phenomenon, constituting Marcuse's ultimately one-dimensional view, relieved only by the "chance of alternatives," of what he considers a one-dimensional lifeworld. The book announces itself as about one-dimensional man, yet no subsection or chapter addresses "man" directly; "man"

is understood *as* society, culture, and thought—each term can only be understood through the others.

At the center of Marcuse's project is the hope for the opposite of one-dimensional man: a commitment to the free individual, living an unalienated life, liberated from one-dimensional society, culture, and thought. This fully liberated existence would be possible only under the aegis of a new reality principle, to use the term Marcuse employs in his earlier *Eros and Civilization*, also a crucial Sixties text. This new reality principle would evolve beyond the corruption of the reality principle by totalized domination. *Eros and Civilization* argues that the reality principle theorized by Freud, which Marcuse diagnoses as premised on domination, is no longer necessary in the imminent world of a technology so advanced that it has the potential to liberate human beings from all alienated toil: to bring about what Marcuse calls the complete "pacification of existence." This utopian view of technology's capacity to end the struggle for existence underlies much Sixties utopian revolutionary ideology, culminating in Shulamith Firestone's radical feminist embrace, in *The Dialectic of Sex*, of reproductive technology as the end of gender difference.

Marcuse contrasts the authentically liberatory desublimation this new reality principle would enable and engender, which is tantamount to utopia, to what he calls "repressive desublimation." In the chapter devoted to this topic, Marcuse's discourse moves freely among the psychic, cultural, social-political, and philosophical components of repressive desublimation without distinguishing among them, as if they were interchangeable. Repressive desublimation undoes the foundation of critical or oppositional cultural production—what Marcuse generally calls "high culture"—a foundation that resides, according to Marcuse's Freudian analysis, in sublimation of thwarted desire. In repressive desublimation, "The Pleasure Principle absorbs the Reality Principle; sexuality is liberated (or rather liberalized) in socially constructive forms" (72). This argument, first developed in *Eros and Civilization*, can sound to contemporary ears like a description of a desirable state of liberation, but it is the kernel of Marcuse's condemnation of one-dimensionality: "socially constructive" means affirmative or non-oppositional. Meaningful resistance is being blocked, in re-

pressive desublimation, by a substitute sexual libertinism that merely buttresses the status quo without fulfilling the higher aims of eros for true, fulfilled, unalienated, universalized liberation. Defined down merely as sexuality, according to Marcuse, eros finds its potentiality for real human liberation and total fulfillment betrayed: "sexuality is liberated (or rather liberalized) in socially constructive forms" (72).

Most of this chapter is devoted not to this psychosexual analysis, however, but to an analysis of the effects of repressive desublimation on culture. Culture itself, according to Marcuse—not just "higher culture"—had, in two-dimensional society, been constituted in antithetical opposition to the thesis of a repressive social reality, in fact as a real alternative to that repression. In totally administered, one-dimensional society, culture serves not as an alternative to but as an instrument of social cohesion:

the novel feature is the flattening out of the antagonism between culture and social reality through the obliteration of the oppositional, alien, and transcendent elements in the higher culture by virtue of which it constituted *another dimension* of reality. This liquidation of *two-dimensional* culture takes place not through the denial and rejection of the "cultural values," but through their wholesale incorporation in the established order, through their reproduction and display on a massive scale. In fact, they serve as instruments of social cohesion. (57; italics in original)

Social cohesion is tantamount of course to domination, in which, as Marcuse says, "the Great Refusal is in turn refused," and the great works of two-dimensional culture, or of what we now call high art, "are themselves incorporated into this society and circulate as part and parcel of the equipment which adorns and psychoanalyzes the prevailing state of affairs. Thus they become commercials—they sell, comfort or excite" (64).

Only the utopian avant-garde, as in so much sixties cultural ideology, has the potential to break through this powerful cultural absorption and neutralization brought about by repressive desublimation. Refusal, or "contradiction," according to Marcuse, "must have a medium of communication. The struggle for

this medium, or rather the struggle against its absorption into the predominant one-dimensionality, shows forth in the avant-garde efforts to create an estrangement which would make the artistic truth again communicable" (66). He cites Brecht as having "sketched the theoretical foundations for these efforts" (66) in his "alienation effect." Adorno also accords a "negativity," or partial but meaningful refusal of the hegemonic affirmation with which it is also inevitably complicit, to various forms of avant-garde art. For Marcuse, however, the avant-garde is more fully imbued with resistant negativity. Only the avant-garde can occupy this position of Refusal because it enacts "the break with communication" (68): "[t]he word [in avant-garde literature] refuses the unifying, sensible rule of the sentence. It explodes the pre-established structure of meaning and, becoming an 'absolute object' in itself, designates an intolerable self-defeating universe—a discontinuum" (68–69).

Marcuse intersperses this discussion with quotations from Roland Barthes' *Writing Degree Zero*, a theoretical text produced, like other structuralist and then poststructuralist theoretical texts, within the context of the sixties renaissance of the utopian avant-gardes. Marcuse's endorsement of the avant-garde here—his sense that only in the avant-garde did the possibility for true cultural oppositionality, producing and enabling revolutionary change, lie—was both influential on and representative of the utopian Sixties revolutionary avant-garde (counter)cultural sensibility. A great deal of countercultural aesthetic activity in the Sixties was located within various continuities with and renewals of early twentieth-century avant-garde traditions (see Banes and Huyssen, for example). This radical avant-gardeism, like radical and countercultural "two-dimensional" oppositionality in general, is linked to the utopian belief, now generally discredited, in the possibility of an Archimedean lever: a position at least potentially outside ideology and social construction.

The avant-garde provides this utopian lever, this vantage point for a new consciousness and new social practice, by breaking communication itself, and therefore undercutting what Marcuse calls the "Happy Consciousness," which he renders in caps, like its obverse, the "Great Refusal." The Happy Consciousness, as in certain New Age and self-help ideologies, is en-

tirely liberated from any inhibiting guilt. Unlike the New Age, guilt-free, actualized self, however, the Marcusean Happy Consciousness is free primarily to participate guiltlessly in murder and mass destruction. It is a manifestation of the "conquest of transcendence;" it "reflects the belief that the real is rational, and that the established system, in spite of everything, delivers the goods" (79). Again, the psychic, the social-political, the philosophical, and the cultural are inextricably intermeshed in this totalized damnation of the existing order and corresponding utopian call for a totally transformative Great Refusal.

We find this simultaneity as well in "One-Dimensional Thought," the second part of the book. It develops Marcuse's powerful attack, informed by his years of pioneering philosophical work along with the other critical theorists of the Frankfurt School, on scientific, technological, instrumental rationality, or what he calls Reason, as the ideology—at once reflection and precondition—of domination. Technological rationality is "the triumph of the one-dimensional reality over all contradiction," the obverse of dialectical thought: "[t]he closed operational universe of advanced industrial civilization with its terrifying harmony of freedom and oppression, productivity and destruction, growth and regression is pre-designed in this idea of Reason as a specific historical project" (124).

The two-dimensional universe, "a world antagonistic in itself," which Marcuse argues has existed from the beginning of civilization up to the (his) present moment, derives its two-dimensionality from the fact that it is "a world afflicted with want and negativity, constantly threatened with destruction" (125). It is the unprecedented satisfaction of want by technology that eliminates both the agon and the inherent potential for criticism and oppositionality of the two-dimensional universe. In two-dimensionality, the contrast between the painful existence of want and alienated toil and the apprehension of a utopian life free of those, corresponding to the contradiction between the oppressed, exploited laborers and the ruling class, produces a contrast between "is" and "ought," between oppressed reality and potential liberated reality. In classical philosophical terms, this is the contrast between the real and the ideal.

As Western philosophy moves through time, be-

ginning with the progression from Plato to Aristotle, Marcuse argues, the ideal becomes detached from its basis in real material alternative possibility, and becomes instead the realm of the *merely* ideal—of a metaphysics that no longer contains the force of oppositional potentiality it originally represented (this is of course a radically abridged, simplified summary of Marcuse's argument). The entire history of Western philosophy for Marcuse, up to the Marxist resituation of the dialectic in historical materiality, is a history of debilitated, dematerialized metaphysics (see in particular pp. 135–36). Condemning all but Marxist-materialist philosophy, Marcuse argues that logical, technological, mathematical, scientific rationality is the ultimate form of this sterile, dematerialized universality.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno, also attacking the "total integration" that Marcuse calls one-dimensional society, make a related attack on scientific reason as fully instrumental and as prime engine of domination in the bourgeois period (ix). However, their emphasis is on the "self-destructiveness of enlightenment" (xi). This self-destructiveness is a version of the return of the repressed: Enlightenment's obliteration as "superstition" of all phenomena that do not conform to its narrow definition of scientific rationalism, its "disenchantment" of the world, the "identification of intellect and that which is inimical to the spirit" (x). The disenchantment of the world results in the haunting of Enlightenment rationalism by monstrous versions of mythologized "unreason," culminating in the barbarities of the Holocaust. Reason, for Horkheimer and Adorno, is always attached to unreason, its dialectic twin. In the Enlightenment, this attachment is repressed, resulting in a return-of-the-repressed the brutality of which is overwhelming. Again, the Adornian view of inevitable mutual imbrication of reason and unreason, like his analysis of bourgeois aesthetic affirmativity always inhabiting and defining avant-garde negativity, is more congenial to current ideas of complicity and mutual constitutiveness than is Marcuse's view of total affirmative domination countered only by total, utopian liberation.

Marcuse chooses to conclude the book, because of his Marxist belief in the necessity of optimism, on an almost forced hopeful note, "The Chance of the Alter-

natives." Again, here, he recapitulates the central arguments of the book. Marcuse does make clearer here than he had in the first two sections the extent to which the Great Refusal—the total transcendence of the existing order necessary to effect any meaningful change—must come from the utterly disenfranchised margins of society, since one-dimensionality's egalitarian affluence otherwise absorbs all resistance so thoroughly. He also makes clearer the extent to which the Great Refusal is linked to avant-garde aesthetic consciousness. Marcuse emphasizes in this section what he calls, with jarring, unintended significance in the wake of the later stages of the Vietnam war, the "pacification of existence," by which he means the end of scarcity, want, and alienated toil, made possible, as it appeared then, by the promise of technology. The "pacification of existence" would allow, if accompanied by the Great Refusal, the pursuit of the "art of living" (Marcuse takes this phrase from Whitehead).

These arguments are entirely lodged within the utopian vision of modernity. In some of their particulars, they also resonate profoundly with the radical and countercultural ideologies of the Sixties:

Today, in the prosperous warfare and welfare state, the human qualities of a pacified existence seem asocial and unpatriotic—qualities such as the refusal of all toughness, togetherness [by which Marcuse means enforced conformity rather than communal living], and brutality; disobedience to the tyranny of the majority; profession of fear and weakness (the most rational reaction to this society!); a sensitive intelligence sickened by that which is being perpetrated; the commitment to the feeble and ridiculed actions of protest and refusal. (242–3)

In his culminating denunciation of one-dimensional society, focused on its cooptation of the aesthetic, Marcuse makes perhaps the strongest statement in the book of one-dimensionality's nearly invincible power and efficacy:

Setting the pace and style of politics, the power of imagination far exceeds Alice in Wonderland in the manipulation of words, turning sense into nonsense and nonsense into sense. The formerly

antagonistic realms merge on technical and political grounds—magic and science, life and death, joy and misery. Beauty reveals its terror. . . . The obscene merger of aesthetics and reality refutes the philosophies which oppose "poetic" imagination to scientific and empirical Reason. Technological progress is accompanied by a progressive rationalization and even realization of the imaginary. The archetypes of horror as well as of joy, of war as well as of peace lose their catastrophic character. . . . In reducing and even canceling the romantic space of imagination, society has forced the imagination to prove itself on new grounds, on which the images are translated into historical capabilities and projects. (248–9)

These "new grounds" are the liberated aesthetic consciousnesses of the avant-garde Great Refusers, and of the "substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable" who "exist outside the democratic process" (256). Marcuse specifies the civil rights movement as the location of these outsiders—"the fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period" (257). A broad spectrum of Sixties counterculturalist radicals attempted to occupy the outsider position of Great Refusal Marcuse delineates here as the only hope for ending one-dimensionality.

Ultimately, Marcuse's pessimism concerning the total revolutionary change he advocated, a pessimism overriding his more ideological optimism, was justified. This pessimism was based on his understanding of the real material gains, the real egalitarian rise in the standard of living, the real end, for better and/or worse, of the two-dimensional universe of the dialectic and of oppressive hierarchical dualism. The one-dimensionality he delineated so powerfully, and to which he offered utopian transformation as the only possible "alternative," lost the character of total alienation he ascribed to it, and the Sixties moment of utopian integration of all discourses passed.

Like Marcuse, R. D. Laing, in *The Politics of Experience* (PE), locates hope for change—which must be total, revolutionary change to count at all—in individual consciousness: "this book begins and ends with the

person" (23), he says. Laing, psychoanalyst, designates "politics" in his title as his primary object of analysis, where Marcuse, critical social theorist, designates "man." Unlike Marcuse, however, Laing does not attach the potentiality for revolutionary change to material social conditions. Rather, change for Laing can only come as a result of a collective set of acts of willed individual self-liberation. For Marcuse, only a liberated consciousness could act to realize the liberatory potentiality inherent in advanced technology. For Laing, the liberation of authentic consciousness from the constraints of alienation is itself sufficient to bring about revolutionary social change. Both, nonetheless, articulate a utopian project which requires for proper elaboration an interwoven, interpenetrating psychoanalytic, political, cultural, and philosophical analysis.

The paucity in Laing's writing of Marxist or other explicitly political language and thought did not, in the Sixties, separate his work from Marcuse's, or from any of the other primarily political or sociological writing that influenced the new left—it did not place his work in a distinct "psychoanalytic" category over against a "political" category. Laing directly cites not just Marcuse himself, and also Fanon, two Sixties political luminaries whose work is profoundly informed by psychoanalytic thought, but also Baran and Sweezy, whose economic-political work *Monopoly Capital* was another crucial text for Sixties radicalism. Laing also makes reference to the violent ravages of North American and European colonialism, the war in Vietnam, as well as, like Marcuse, romantic, modernist, and avant-garde poets and novelists. Laing calls directly for an integrated theory and critique of all human culture and society, enabling and culminating in a utopian plan for total revolutionary change. He describes his project as a response to the "need for a strong, firm primary theory that can draw each practice and theory into relation to the central concerns of all forms of psychotherapy. . . . Most fundamentally, a critical theory must be able to place all theories and practices within the scope of a total vision of the ontological structure of being human" (48).

The central message of *The Politics of Experience*, which resonates clearly with that of *One-Dimensional Man*, can be summed up in a sentence from Laing's introduction (this introduction in fact cites *One-Dimen-*

sional Man): "humanity is estranged from its authentic possibilities" (second page of unpaginated three-page introduction). As it is for Marcuse, this estrangement for Laing is at once psychic, political, social, and cultural. For Laing, as for Marcuse, human beings in alienated society introject their reified lifeworld, substituting it for the authenticity from which they have been utterly, but possibly not irrevocably, divorced. Laing attacks

the disarray of personal worlds of experience whose repression, denial, splitting, introjection, projection, etc.—whose general desecration and profanation—our civilization is based upon. When our personal worlds are rediscovered and allowed to reconstitute themselves, we first discover a shambles. Bodies half-dead; genitals dissociated from heart; heart severed from head; head dissociated from genitals. Without inner unity. . . . Man cut off from his own mind, cut off equally from his own body—a half-crazed creature in a mad world. (55)

Most of *PE* consists of jeremiads such as this against the condition of estrangement from authenticity—"[t]his book attempts to document some forms of our contemporary violation of ourselves" (unpaginated third page of "Introduction"); most of this jeremiad is located within modernity's utopian project.

The opening language of the introduction, particularly, reflects the pervasive sense among Sixties radicals and counterculturalists that existing conditions were utterly intolerable and must be changed totally in order not just for life to improve, or for humanity to realize its authentic or liberated potential, but for life to continue at all in any meaningful way. This apocalyptic sense of imminent upheaval, either annihilating or redemptive, is one of the least currently accessible aspects of the Sixties structure of feeling, but one of the most decisive.³ Laing's opening language is also characteristic of the dramatic intensity of his tone and address to the reader, an intensity that now, in post-modernity's cool, ironic affective landscape, rings melodramatic, exaggerated, overly earnest and impassioned, but is characteristic of much Sixties writing:

Few books today, are forgivable. Black on the can-

vas, silence on the screen, an empty white sheet of paper, are perhaps feasible. There is little conjunction of truth and social "reality." Around us are pseudo-events, to which we adjust with a false consciousness adapted to see these events as true and real, and even as beautiful. In the society of men the truth resides now less in what things are than in what they are not. Our social realities are so ugly if seen in the light of exiled truth, and beauty is almost no longer possible if it is not a lie. (unpaginated first page of "Introduction")⁴

(The closing sentence of the book, culminating a visionary "trip" that acts as a coda for the text, narrating Laing's own quest for truth and authenticity, which, Joycelike, he glimpses in the figure of the "Bird of Paradise," the title of this section, is equally characteristic: "If I could turn you on, if I could drive you out of your wretched mind, if I could tell you I would let you know" [190; also 185–6]). Laing here speaks Marcuse's Great Refusal. He speaks it in part in the language of the avant-garde: the black canvas, the silent screen, the empty white sheet of paper are familiar avant-garde tropes signifying a transcendent silence or emptiness that is the only authentic aesthetic response to an utterly bankrupt social order. This avant-garde aesthetic is informed by modernity's belief in a real, unitary, transcendent "truth" that is "exiled" by alienated society, and a similarly knowable, potentially consensual "beauty" that is "almost no longer possible" because it is so utterly divorced from that "truth."

The introduction is characteristic of the text. Most of *PE* is located clearly in modernity's utopian discourses, decrying existing conditions and positing total transformation as the only hopeful alternative: "[o]ur task is both to experience and to conceive the concrete, that is to say, reality in its fullness and wholeness. But this is quite impossible, immediately. Experientially and conceptually, we have fragments" (22). This formulation evokes the works of literary high modernism, where "fullness" and "wholeness" are the elusive, yearned-for ultimate goals of complex texts that map, in form and content, the bleak modern terrain of fragmentation. The revolutionary Freud who underwrites this apocalyptic ideology would be unrecognizable to a postmodern, Lacanian Freud: "[t]he relevance of Freud

to our time is largely his insight and, to a very considerable extent, his *demonstration* that the *ordinary* person is a shriveled, desiccated fragment of what a person can be" (25–6, emphasis in original).

Laing's first chapter, "Persons and Experience," establishes the parameters of the book's central arguments. Laing poses the question, "[c]an human beings be persons today? Can a man be his actual self with another man or woman? . . . [A]re persons possible in our present situation? . . . Is love possible? Is freedom possible?" (23, emphasis in original). (Note, crucially, the characteristic pre-feminist assumption that "person" or "human being" equals "man;" Laing wants to know whether a "man" can "be his actual self with . . . a woman," but not whether the reciprocal might be possible—the woman is still fully other here.) This language is, again, characteristic of the Sixties in its passionate tone and unapologetically high level of generality.

The authentic self is associated for Laing, as in much Romantic Sixties ideology (Blake was a crucial figure in the Sixties)—particularly that of the progressive education movement, with Neill's *Summerhill* among the most visible and popular of its texts—with the innocent child. This idealized child figure, unwarped by alienation, is associated with derepressed bodily desire (Marcuse's Reichian eros), and with the liberated unconscious of fantasy and dream:

As adults, we have forgotten most of our childhood, not only its contents but its flavor; as men of the world, we hardly know of the existence of the inner world: we barely remember our dreams, and make little sense of them when we do; as for our bodies, we retain just sufficient proprioceptive sensations to coordinate our movements and to ensure the minimal requirements for biosocial survival . . . an intensive discipline of unlearning is necessary for *anyone* before one can begin to experience the world afresh, with innocence, truth and love. (26, emphasis in original)

Laing proposes the order of fantasy, in which alienated humans can gain access to their childhood, their dreams, and their bodies, as a potential antidote to this "almost unbelievable devastation of our experience" (27). He then links fantasy to poetry, or the literary,

which "enabl[es] being to emerge from nonbeing," and "can be the occasion of that great liberation when one makes the transition from being afraid of nothing [the dissociated condition of alienation in which fear is repressed] to the realization that there is nothing to fear [the liberated condition in which disabling fear is transcended]" (42). These positions, though framed very differently by Laing, in much more mystical terms, are familiar from Marcuse, for whom the "aesthetic dimension" is the most accessible currently available location of an incipient revolutionary consciousness.

The above cursory summary is not intended to do justice to Laing's work, which has far more intellectual gravitas than I have so far indicated.⁵ He draws not just on a deep knowledge of Sartrean existentialism, which also assumes a knowledge of the Marxist intellectual tradition, but also on an eclectic array of psychoanalytic thought, including Winnicott's object relations theory, and on Husserlian phenomenology, as well as on his own earlier, pioneering work on the dynamics of schizophrenia (particularly in *The Divided Self*). My purpose in the above summary is not so much to elucidate Laing's thought, but rather to demonstrate the forceful, dominant presence in it of the intermeshed discourses of the Sixties' utopian metanarratives.

Laing articulates a manichean vision of an ultimate truth and good "desecrated" and "profaned" by false consciousness:

I am a specialist, God help me, in events in inner space and time, in experiences called thoughts, images, reveries, dreams, visions, hallucinations, dreams of memories, memories of dreams, memories of visions, dreams of hallucinations, refractions of refractions of refractions of that original Alpha and Omega of experience and reality, that Reality on whose repression, denial, splitting, projection, falsification, and general desecration and profanation our civilization as much as on anything is based. We live equally out of our bodies and out of our minds. (58-9)

Laing articulates the bedrock Sixties dualism of alienation and authenticity. The incantatory, repetitive language, and the tone of prophetic outrage, just as much as the totalized, apocalyptic vision, are characteristic of Sixties prophetic, utopian writing.

Similar dualisms underly Laing's vision:

Love and violence, properly speaking, are polar opposites. Love lets the other be, but with affection and concern. Violence attempts to constrain the other's freedom, to force him to act in the way we desire, but with ultimate lack of concern, with indifference to the other's own existence or destiny. We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love. (58)

Throughout *PE*, Laing denounces this split between authentic and alienated worlds, as we have seen, as the central deformation of human life. For both Laing and Marcuse, the attack on dualism is born of and articulated in the service of a utopian agenda.

Much more could be said about this book, again, from the points of view of a variety of intellectual preoccupations. But for my concerns in this argument, it is primarily relevant to note that the overall intellectual structure of *PE*, involving the undifferentiated contiguity and seamless intermeshing of dominant modern and emergent postmodern paradigms, which have subsequently sundered into clearly differentiable, in fact often antithetical, paradigms, in the postmodern dominant, make it a characteristic Sixties utopian text.

In language much more emotive and poetic than Marcuse's, Laing diagnoses psychosocial deformations with the same interchangeability of the psychic and the social: civilization is based on the disarray of personal worlds; the vividly, multiply self-dissociated subject is indifferentiable from the "mad world" this subject constitutes and is constituted by. Like Marcuse, Laing, finding these deformations intolerable, believes that they must be changed totally in order not just for life to improve, or for humanity to realize its authentic or liberated potential, but for life to continue at all in any meaningful way. Cultural discourse is similarly intermeshed with political and psychoanalytic discourse. Like Marcuse, who argues that the "aesthetic dimension," particularly as realized in the avant-garde arts, is the most viable location of an incipient revolutionary consciousness, Laing believes that it is the aesthetic, particularly poetic deployments of fantasy, that can, in his words, "enable being to emerge from nonbeing," and "can be the occasion of that great liberation" (42).

Luce Irigaray, writing in the Sixties-generated cru-

cible of feminism, poststructuralism, and Lacanian psychoanalysis, proposes the total overturning of Western patriarchy. The final section of *Speculum of the Other Woman* is called "The Vengeance of Children Freed from Their Chains." Psychoanalysis, as it is for Marcuse and Laing, is inseparably intermeshed in this utopian project with philosophy, politics, and culture. Framed by lengthy revisionary treatments of Freud's essays on femininity, and of Plato's parable of the cave in relation to woman's role in representation, the central section of *Speculum*, which is called "Speculum," begins with Freud and Plato, then moves from Aristotle, to Plotinus, to Descartes, to an array of mystical discourses, to Kant, to Hegel, to Irigaray's own psychoanalytic, philosophical, poetic elaboration of woman as the "not yet" that "probably corresponds to a *system of hysterical fantasy* but/and acknowledges a *historical condition*" (227). Irigaray links Freud to Plato, then to Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Kant, Hegel and back to Freud again through her theorization of all subjectivity in the West as inherently masculine, premised on the repression and suppression of the feminine in order for the masculine subject to regard himself endlessly ("specularization") through the mirror of the abjected maternal feminine. All the male psychoanalytic and philosophical thought Irigaray analyzes converges in the "challenge" of "mother/nature for power, and productivity. He [here Freud, but this also applies to all the others] must resurface the earth with this floor of the ideal" (140). The "ideal" is the masculine substitution of itself, defined as transcendence, or thought, or "form," or "the phallus," for the maternal feminine "origin," which is defined down as a mindless, formless void, lack, absence, shadow. Feminism must overturn this centuries-old lie, as Irigaray sees it, and reinstate the maternal feminine as origin of human culture. This reinstatement will not involve a new domination, because domination is entirely a product of the structure of masculine subjectivity. It will instead produce a utopia of shifting, multiple, liberated subjectivities in a freeform, open-ended, entirely non-oppressive human lifeworld. Because it is so universally inclusive in its agenda, Irigaray's, as one of the last great Sixties utopian projects, demands the fusion of discourses that, in our post-utopian time, we are no longer able to mesh so seamlessly.

The question of utopia has seemed to me to be at the center of the Sixties movements, of the difference between the Sixties and the present, and of the continuities between the two. In *Postmodernism*, Fredric Jameson has a chapter entitled "Space: Utopianism After the End of Utopia" (154–180). Jameson argues that postmodern spatialization is the replacement of modern temporality, attendant on the replacement of modernist depth by postmodern surface. He argues that postmodern spatial (anti-temporal) and surface (anti-depth) structures militate against, and seem to negate, the utopian, but that certain forms of aesthetic practice, particularly some nature-related installation art, inhabit postmodern spatialization in ways that keep modernist utopianism alive: "Spatialization, then, whatever it may take away in the capacity to think time and History, also opens a door onto a whole new domain for libidinal investment of the Utopian and even the protopolitical type" (160). He imagines or hypothesizes, among some artists and writers, "something like an unacknowledged 'party of Utopia': an underground party whose numbers are difficult to determine, whose program remains unannounced and perhaps even unformulated, whose existence is unknown to the citizenry at large and to the authorities, but whose members seem to recognize one another by means of secret Masonic signals" (180). I would argue that this is Jameson's compensatory fantasy of the persistence, however unlikely and invisible, of an unaltered, unconstrained, totally revolutionary utopianism, which is in fact no longer available in the present moment. Nonetheless, I agree with him that the utopian impulse does persist in the present. It is neither underground nor invisible; rather it is both visible and also pervasive, though no longer revolutionary, and very much altered and constrained.

In terms of the issues raised in this essay, issues that would currently fall under the academic heading of interdisciplinarity, the utopian impulse persists in various versions of cultural studies. It is still critical, still a motive force for progressive change, but it has become limited, muted, partial, local, diffuse, multiple, skeptical, complicit, displaced, and significantly refunctioned. Jameson also says "One wants to insist very strongly on the necessity of the reinvention of the Utopian vision in any contemporary politics: this les-

son, which Marcuse first taught us, is part of the legacy of the sixties which must never be abandoned in any reevaluation of that period and our relationship to it" (159).

NOTES

¹See Works Cited for post-sixties works that do argue for Marcuse's continuing relevance.

²Note the 1999 issue of *Critical Inquiry* devoted entirely to Benjamin, for example.

³In a not unfamiliar stroke of postmodern irony, it is the right-wing survivalists and fundamentalists who have inherited both the apocalyptic vision and also the hyper-ventilated language of the sixties.

⁴Some postmodern fiction deploys this tone, but ironically, self-mockingly, or at least self-consciously; for example, Paley, Roth, Rushdie.

⁵I do not make use here of the corpus of psychoanalytic work on Laing, particularly on his original theories of schizophrenia, the unconventional therapeutic practices he derived from them, and his connections to British object-relations theory, because it is not directly germane to the argument of this essay.

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