

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE  
AND HERBERT MARCUSE WITH REGARD TO THEIR ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS THE CULTURE OF THEIR PARTICULAR EPOCHS

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## P R E F A C E

This dissertation gives me a good opportunity to explore the close relationship between philosophy and culture. Nietzsche and Marcuse, especially in their roles as critical theorists of culture, seemed to me to be ideal focal points from which I could begin a study of the philosophical trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially with respect to the influence of these trends on the cultural situation and the manner in which the new philosophical attitudes proposed by Nietzsche and Marcuse are hoped by them to regenerate the existing culture.

It is hoped that this dissertation will also go toward untangling certain of the confusions and misunderstandings that surround the thoughts of both Nietzsche and Marcuse. There has been a great deal of controversy over their negative, even destructive influences on men, for example, Nietzsche with respect to the Nazi use of his thoughts, and Marcuse in so far as student unrest finds justification in his ideas. The question of blame or praise becomes less pressing if we regard the ideas of both philosophers as containing potential for both good and evil influences, and that it is up to us to be influenced creatively or destructively and accept responsibility for the choice we make.



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## C O N T E N T S.

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. CULTURE AND AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE	4
II. CULTURAL CONDITIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	24
III. NIETZSCHE'S STAND WITH REGARD TO NINETEENTH CENTURY CULTURE	44
IV. CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL CONDITIONS	74
V. MARCUSE'S STAND WITH REGARD TO CONTEMPORARY CULTURE	104
VI. A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES OFFERED BY NIETZSCHE AND MARCUSE, AS WELL AS SOME PERTINENT DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN APPROACH	137
VII. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	169
SUMMARY	179
BIBLIOGRAPHY	181

## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to examine significant philosophical trends in the nineteenth century and in contemporary culture as the background against which Friedrich Nietzsche and Herbert Marcuse react, as well as critically analyse the alternatives each philosopher puts forward in an attempt to rescue man from what he considers to be a period of acute cultural crisis. We then go on to consider certain pertinent differences and similarities in the approach of the two philosophers as well as draw some general conclusions concerning the existential character of cultural systems.

The philosophies of Nietzsche and Marcuse reflect their concern about the problem of what constitutes a meaningful existence for man, about what leads man into alienation and thereby unauthenticity and what ought to be done to rescue man from cultural dislocation. Both philosophers regarded the specific cultures of their time as harmful to a meaningful existence, in so far as they were not in line with man's 'real' needs.

This brings us to the relationship between culture and the specific existential situation of man. Culture (both the material and 'spiritual' elements in society) is a reflection of man's needs and aspirations as well as man's attempt to cope with these needs and create a meaningful and secure life for himself. We can regard culture as the result of man's attempt to create an authentic existence for himself in conformity with specific existential and historical needs. Man's search for authentic existence is the search for 'the good life' - the kind of life that is meaningful

and conducive..... 2/..

and conducive to happiness within the existential situation.

This search is reflected in the culture that man creates, in all the spheres of cultural activity - the religious, the material, the political, the ethical and so on. By living in line with the cultural values of his time, man believes he is living authentically.

However, because of his finite condition and his inability to arrive at final solutions and permanent answers, man is perpetually confronted by the question of meaning and value. It is this factor which is responsible for the differences in cultures and cultural values. For example, the Greek conception of authentic existence and subsequently its culture is necessarily different from that of the medieval or more modern eras, since the needs and circumstances of each epoch are so different. This aspect of culture - its relationship with the specific existential situation - will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one.

Nietzsche and Marcuse, both deeply concerned about what enhances life and what represses it, reveal a profound dissatisfaction with their contemporary cultural values and attempt to provide (in different ways) for the 'real' needs of man which they believed their specific cultures were not catering for. Both offer a 'solution' to the problem of man's authentic existence, providing guidelines for the creation of a more meaningful culture, one that is more in line with reality than the ones they oppose. However, by their alternatives, Nietzsche and Marcuse have not solved the problem of man's authentic existence in relation to culture, for the simple reason that no

man possesses..... 3/...



man possesses the ultimate or final solution. What these philosophers have done is to offer a specific perspective of truth which is different from the existing one but which is nevertheless determined by the existing cultural conditions.

These are some of the aspects this dissertation proposes to examine - the cultural values of the 19th and 20th centuries, the reaction of Nietzsche and Marcuse to these values and the alternatives they propose, in what respects they are similar or dissimilar, whether these alternatives solve the problem of man's authentic existence and also the relationship between culture and specific existential situations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CULTURE AND AUTHENTIC EXISTENCE.

The problem of authenticity is basic to human existence. Philosophers, artists, poets, writers, religious men are all in some way concerned with the quest for meaning. In any philosophy, any theory of life we can discern the attempt to provide a meaning for existence. Art, literature, religion, even the opinions and prejudices of ordinary men are no less attempts to order the world according to a specific conception of reality. The search for meaning is always undertaken in the face of the perpetual insecurity man feels in the universe. Finiteness, contingency, historicity, the lack of any kind of permanence is what man continually comes up against. There is no permanent meaning or value which the universe in itself offers. Man has to create this meaning for himself in terms of his specific existential needs. Once he creates a meaning and lives by it, man believes he is living authentically. Man's quest for meaning takes the form of a number of questions concerning the nature of the universe, his conception of himself and his place in the universe, his relationship with his fellow humans, his likes and dislikes and so on. His answers to these questions constitute a specific Weltanschauung or unified vision of reality.

Armed with this view of life, man is able to live securely and creatively in terms of the 'meaning' and 'truth' he has created for himself. Truth in this sense is always man-made and relative. In the light of a specific 'truth' man goes on to create 'the good life' for himself, to create a culture that satisfies his material, intellectual and spiritual

needs. ....5/.....

needs. Culture, then, reflects man's attempt to order the world, to create a meaning for it. "Generally speaking, we may say that human truth originates in man's rational disposition to order his surroundings, to determine the relations in which he stands to them and to interpret the events of the past in a meaningful way, from a specific point of view and in accordance with the particular circumstances in which he finds himself, in order to achieve a certain sense of stability and security. These various fields of order may be of a private, scientific, humanistic, philosophical or theological nature. In brief they represent the whole scale of human cultural activity." <sup>1)</sup>

We can describe culture in the medium of Saint-Exupery and call it a citadel amid the ever-encroaching desert of meaninglessness which threatens to annihilate man. Cultural values provide a shelter within which man feels secure, which saves him from being overwhelmed by the incomprehensibility of the universe. By coming to terms with the cultural values of his time, the individual lives authentically.

However, the quality of life is never static. Men's needs and aspirations as well as historical circumstances change from one era to another. This in turn alters the existing conception of what it is to live authentically. A change in man's material and spiritual needs leads him to adopt a Weltanschauung that is more suited to the changed existential conditions. Factors which had once seemed of primary importance may begin to lose their significance and vice versa. This change in man's needs and in his view of life inevitably leads to a modification or transformation of cultural values, because of the link that exists between culture and a specific existential situation. Man's cultural activity

points to..... 6/...

points to the 'Truth' or 'the Good' - an ought the observance of which leads man to real or authentic existence. However this 'truth' must not be regarded in absolute terms, as the permanent achievement of any one culture. 'Truth' as reflected in the cultural values of man is always posited in accordance with a specific vision of reality within a definite existential situation. As this situation changes and as man's needs change one 'truth' gives way to a new 'more meaningful' one which better satisfies the new needs that have arisen. That is why the cultural values of one epoch differ from those of another, depending on the prevalent conception of life. Real or authentic existence, then, means different things to different men and different societies. It is this factor which led Nietzsche and Marcuse to reject their specific cultures as incompatible with 'real' human needs, thereby leading to inauthenticity and then offer new conceptions of life which propose to cater for man's 'real' needs. It is this same factor which accounts for the difference in cultural systems. Each system reflects a different view of life, a different pattern of existential needs, a different conception of authenticity. A specific Weltanschauung makes it possible for man to live meaningfully and create culture. However, when new circumstances arise and the prevailing conception of life proves inadequate in the face of the new needs, men turn to another more satisfying world view and consequently, cultural values also undergo a transformation. I will now attempt to show this by using a few examples in historical order viz., the Greek, Medieval and the more modern conceptions of life and culture.

The Greek .....7/..



The Greek conception of authenticity and subsequently Greek culture was indissolubly bound to the polis or city-state. Originally, the polis (composed along aristocratic lines) had been guided by the Olympian hierarchy of gods who embodied the merits and flaws of the Greeks themselves even though they were immortal. All explanations of why things happen were given in terms of the actions of the gods who were supposed to descend into the midst of human society, intervening in and influencing human action.

Homer, for instance, making one of the earliest attempts at ordering the world and fulfilling the human need for explanation and meaning, wrote against a background of divine action. This divine background was for the Greek a perspective of meaning against which the particular actions of man could be fitted. The will of the gods could be used to explain many incomprehensible things.

However, the originally self - sufficient polis became more and more dependent on trading. The growth of a new commercial class, which could also aspire to the highest office, contributed to the democratisation process in the previously aristocratic polis. Trading and colonisation of new areas resulted in greater contact with and a deeper study of nature. Because man was now in possession of innumerable new ideas, he could no longer be satisfied with a purely divine explanation for the universe. More and more he came to exercise his faculty of reason in his search for explanation and insight.

By the application of human reason man discovered a harmony in nature which he translated into principles. By resorting to the search for first principles (arche) man not only succeeded in ordering the universe but also satisfied urgent intellectual, spiritual and material needs. In this way Greek man created a background against

which he..... 8/...

which he could live authentically, no longer at the total mercy of the gods. The gods were also seen to be subject to certain principles in nature (ananke - rational necessity.) Their perception of harmony in nature led the Greeks to believe that the universe is ultimately rational. Man can discover its reality and its meaning by reasoning, since he himself is part of rational nature. (It is interesting to note that man is not yet a personality in his own right, standing individually before his creator as in medieval Christianity. The opposition between mind and nature is as yet undeveloped.)

Within the framework of rational nature, Greek man set out to find order and meaning by means of rational principles - a search embodied in the theories of Greek philosophers, beginning from the Milesians and including Heraclitus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and so on. The Greeks reasoned that the orderliness evident in the world pointed to the fact that the cosmos constitutes a unity. In nature they found a harmonious relationship between elements. This led them to believe that only that which is symmetrical, well proportioned, harmonious is 'real'. Man lives in line with nature by finding this proportion, this balanced unity in nature. Aristotle's doctrine of the Golden Mean reflects the search for balance. Apollo who symbolises reason and harmony and form has to be complemented by the unbridled passion of Dionysus. Greek culture embodies the complementarity of these two gods. Authenticity meant balance. The Greek ideal of man was a personality harmonised and controlled by reason, the result of which would give self knowledge and clear judgement. About the Greek search for unity and balance in nature H.J. de Vleeschauwer writes: "The Greeks never asked the question how the

universe had ..... 9/.....

come into being.....The question which they asked was always firstly, whether the universe represents an order that could always be accepted without question on the basis of the visible order and regularity of things, and secondly, where such an order had come from.....Greek philosophy always strove towards the concept of the unity of the cosmos, and in order to maintain unity it postulated a single principle lying at the basis of the universe." 2)

Beginning from the Milesians, philosophers looked for this permanent persisting principle in order to reach the inner reality of the universe. The universe is not the 'plaything of dark powers' but is intelligible and can be studied in terms of first principles. Beneath the apparent multiplicity and confusion in nature, there exists a permanent primary substance (physis) which reason can discover. Thales believed this principle to be water. Others found it in vapour or fire. Though their theories differed, the Greek philosophers all proceeded from observed facts and logical reasoning towards the conception of a rationally ordered universe, thus making a break with supernaturalism and asserting the autonomy of human reason. The Greek search for unity culminated in Plato's Theory of Forms. The highest reality for Plato is 'the Good' (which can also be identified with God). Knowledge of 'the Good' can lead man to achieve his own authentic nature. Kitto compares the Good as belonging to the same order of things as "the Christian State of Grace." 3)

The emphasis on Reason came to be the motif of Greek culture - to be found in politics, philosophy, literary and artistic creation and so on. The wonderful creative vitality of Greek culture is due to the

absence of..... 10/...



absence of acute political, moral or religious restraint. There was no Bible to appeal to as final authority. Greek man was thrown back on his own reason, on his own sense of right and wrong. It was believed that man as part of rational nature could not rest in the irrational. Even the gods were subject to rational judgement. R.W. Livingstone contrasts the attitudes of Job and Prometheus to their respective gods. Job is full of humility. Prometheus, believing himself to be guided by reason, curses Zeus with insulting defiance. Aeschylus does not hesitate to judge and condemn Zeus when he appears unjust and hence irrational.<sup>4)</sup> The Greeks came to identify the content of the Good, the Beautiful, the Just and so on with Reason. A vision of perfect truth could be attained by means of reason. The polis, of course, was the historic expression of a rational universe. The material and spiritual life of man rested in his being a member of the polis community. The polis in other words provided scope for the achievement of the Good Life, for the realisation of arete or virtue, just as in medieval times this was the concern of the Church. W.G. de Burgh quotes the example of Socrates to illustrate the authenticity of life in the polis. "When Socrates, after his condemnation by the Athenians, was offered escape from prison, he replied that to evade the law of the polis, even when unjustly exercised, was as morally wrong as for a son to do violence to an aged parent."<sup>5)</sup> Since the polis is grounded in reason it constitutes the focus of man's moral, intellectual, aesthetical, social and practical life. And so Greek man lived, believing himself to be guided by rational principles.

Why, then, did the Greek conception of life decline in validity? Historical circumstances arose which completely altered the situation in terms of

which Greek..... 11/..



which Greek culture had developed. The solidarity of the polis was disturbed by wars, both internal and external. Among the Greek philosophers there was no uniformity about the nature of reality. It became evident that philosophy was unable to provide final insight into the nature of virtue and happiness. The rational investigation of nature was not sufficient to provide all the answers. Millions who lived in the Roman Empire felt excluded from the good things of this earth and turned longingly towards a better world. The Graeco-Roman world was split by the dualism between the earthly world and a supersensuous one. It was believed that man on his own strength can become neither knowing, virtuous nor happy. A deep passionate need for true salvation (for which Greek philosophy made no provision) came to be felt. Foreign forms of worship, a mingling of Oriental and Occidental religions, came to be eagerly accepted. Man sought meaning beyond nature and the world of sense. New theories like Neo - Platonism, Neo - Pythagoreanism, Cynicism, Gnosticism, Stoicism, Epicureanism, etc. arose in an attempt to satisfy the new needs of the time. However, it was Christianity which proved most successful in providing man with a new conception of authentic existence, entering" the surfeited, decadent Graeco - Roman world with the youthful force of a pure high religious feeling and a conviction that was courageous to the death." 6)

The Greeks had relied on their own rational faculty to arrive at truth. However, this self-certainty had been shattered in so far as they felt that they could no longer live meaningfully on the strength of philosophical inquiry alone. The desire for a new source of authority led to the dominance of divine revelation as the highest source of knowledge.

Truth ..... 12/.....

Truth - unquestionable and supreme is to be found in revelation. And the new instrument in the search for truth and authenticity is faith. Philosophy voluntarily submits itself to religion in so far as man's rational faculty is to be used to comprehend and explore revealed truth. In this way, Christianity satisfied the emergent new needs which the Greek way of life could no longer satisfy. The Church seemed the only hope of redemption amid the dissolution of political and moral life.

The shift in emphasis from reason to faith is reflected in the culture of the new epoch - the medieval era. Medieval culture filled the gap which Greek culture could no longer fill. Faith provided a new certainty that men desired so desperately. Man found more meaning as a creature of faith than as a rational being. This faith found its object in the revealed truths of the divine Scriptures. G.A.Rauche writes "In medieval philosophy the real ground .....is found in the 'lumen supernaturale' i.e. the revealed truths of Holy Scripture e.g. the incarnation, resurrection, ascension, transubstantiation, trinity, etc. It is the task of reason to provide the form for these unassailable truths, to systematise them and to explain them logically as far as this is possible." 7) Revelation, then, is the first principle of reflective thought. The holiness of reason lies in the clarification of revealed truth. The prime motif of medieval culture is faith in God. Medieval architecture, sculpture, literature, painting and music was Christian in essence and articulated the Bible. Its philosophy and science centred around the Bible. Its ethics and laws were an extension of Christian commandments. Its political and economic organisation was also motivated by Christianity. Medieval culture stressed union with

God..... 13/.....

God as the supreme end and encouraged a negative attitude towards the sensory phenomenal world. The entire culture is 'ideational' as Sorokin calls it, because it is based on "the principle of a supersensory and super-rational God." 8)

The Christian Church became the focus of medieval life and culture. The Church was all-comprehensive, watching over every human creation. Following the New Testament ideal of reward in Heaven or penalty in Hell, the Church represented order in a time predominantly chaotic and violent. It offered salvation to all men by decreeing how men should live. That men observed strictly its decrees is reflected in the medieval fear of excommunication from the Church. This separated the offender from all ecclesiastical ministrations and left him to the mercy of the devil. Excommunication was regarded as the most horrible of punishments since it barred man from the only way of life which offered salvation, the only authentic form of existence. And so the individual submitted his private opinions to those of the Church, which was the vehicle of divine revelation. Men were genuinely concerned about the salvation of their souls.

It is for this reason that medieval culture reflects man's gaze as being firmly fixed on the spiritual goal of life. Fervent faith made man ever ready to strive and sacrifice in order to enhance his spiritual life, earthly life being regarded as of little or relative importance. "The dominant note of the medieval spirit was ..... other world-  
-liness. To its thinkers and men of action the supersensible world possessed a reality denied to the scene of man's temporal pilgrimage.....Those who were most absorbed in mundane concerns never questioned,  
when they paused..... 14/...



when they paused to think, that these were of secondary moment, that 'this earth our habitation' was but a transitory stage of discipline, or that the only knowledge of intrinsic worth was that of man's spiritual goal and of the instruments that led to its attainment." 9) That is why "people's minds were constantly attentive to all manner of signs, dreams and hallucinations." 10) R.W.Livingstone compares the Greek and medieval attitudes to life. "For him (the Greek) the whole of creation was not groaning and travailing in pain. He was waiting for no glory to be revealed with which the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared .....But to abolish the unseen world for the Christian, is to alter the whole meaning and value of life. The permanence in Christianity is the persuasion that the world is not an adequate theatre for man, nor is he capable of reaching the perfection of his nature unaided." 11) Hearty support for the Crusades which were an important aspect of medieval culture also indicates the intensity of the medieval concern for salvation. Popes, kings, warriors and peasants set out to find salvation through crusading. In slaying the heathen and recovering the Holy Land, men were doing God's work as well as expiating their own sins.

The desperate desire for salvation can be explained by the quality of medieval life. Nature was not as tame and controlled as today. Epidemics, plague, famine, war between the feudal kingdoms, the growth of heresy and the violent savagery with which it was punished gave life a quality of perpetual insecurity and added to the general fear of the unknown. The Greek mind saw a rational order in nature with which it could identify its own being. The medieval mind saw no such order - only confusion and misery.

There was..... 15/.....



There was every indication that the Second Coming was at hand. The Church took on itself the task of making men ready for it, if necessary by force. On earth, life was miserable and rewardless. The promise of joy and happiness after death made men all the more ready to accept the teachings of the Church as the only authentic way of living. To secure its own position, the Church encouraged a homogenous culture which was induced by the individual's fear of hell and his desire to get to heaven - ideas which were amply and horrifyingly depicted in medieval literature, for example, Dante's works. Revelations of the prophets were valued above the achievements of individual men. Consequently, medieval culture lacks a preoccupation with the contents of human consciousness or analytic criticism of human experience and is essentially theocentric in character as Greek culture had been geocentric.

Philosophy had to concentrate on the study of the Scriptures for a causal explanation of the universe. G.A. Rauche writes "while the Greeks worked out the causal principle by observation and arrived at a first cause by reflection, medieval thinkers 'knew' the cause of the universe, God the Creator, by revelation. This explains the subordination of philosophy to theology in the Middle Ages. Thereby philosophy becomes the ancilla theologiae, the task of which is to afford rational insight into the revealed truth which is not questioned but is accepted on faith." 12) The end of philosophy is knowledge of God, which required the harmonious co-ordination of faith and reason, philosophy and theology. Saint Augustine, for instance, found the Platonic Ideas of Goodness, Beauty, Justice, and so on in God's mind. "In Him they are all contained in highest union. He is absolute unity, the all-embracing truth; He is the highest Being, the highest Good,

perfect Beauty .... 16/..

perfect Beauty (unum, verum, bonum). All rational knowledge is ultimately knowledge of God."<sup>13)</sup> Thomas Aquinas also attempted to justify faith by reason and, with the aid of the Aristotelian dialectic, to "construct a logical system that would vindicate a world outlook already revealed and determined."<sup>14)</sup> And so the Church sought to co-ordinate human cultural activity, thus satisfying the intellectual and spiritual longings of men. Men obeyed its injunctions because they believed it embodied truth and goodness and hence offered the most authentic way of life.

However even this tightly knit cultural homogeneity was not to last. A variety of historical circumstances arose which transformed the purely religious world view into a more secularised one. A secular civilisation proved more adequate to satisfy new needs. The unity of medieval life was shattered by the Reformation which ushered in a new era that encompassed events like the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, the invention of gunpowder and printing, geographical discoveries, the growth of cities and so on. As a result vast new dimensions were added to man's horizons. The quality of men's lives changed radically, and so did their needs. The desire arose for a freer and more human conception of nature and life. Men no longer believed that theology was adequate enough to comprehend fully the meaning of life. A serious attempt was made to assess life from different standpoints, since man now desired a more comprehensive outlook on life than that offered by the Church.

Religion was no longer able to provide the foundation for a theory of the world and of human life. Man's gaze turned more and more to himself

and his..... 17/..

and his human environment. Science and philosophy defined their limits as against theology and assumed a conscious independence. The fact that men were no longer content with a common tradition led to the awakening of national life, and the unity of culture disappeared. The intellectual concentration of the Middle Ages gave way to decentralisation and the rise of new centres of learning, for example, Paris, Geneva and London. The invention of printing freed literary life from its rigid connection with the church schools and led it to assume new forms shaped by individual personalities.

The urgent demand for new knowledge of the world found its fulfilment in the growth of the natural sciences. The medieval outlook based on the unity of causes gave way to a conception of the world which did not admit the notion of one single highest principle. The scientific revolution led to a new interpretation of nature in terms of natural physical causes. God's existence was not denied but nature was studied in itself "as a dynamic system of bodies in motion, the intelligible structure of which can be expressed mathematically." 15) The universe came to be seen as a rational predictable machine which men could understand. Experiment and verification gained more and more stature as means of attaining knowledge. Men turned to science for truth as they had once turned to religion.

The 'ideational' culture of the Middle Ages had clearly given way to a 'sensate culture' 16) The emphasis on man and human dignity and achievement becomes more persistent and exclusive. The tendency is towards individualism and self-sufficiency. Freedom from rigid medieval discipline led to an astonishing display of individual genius. Greek man had needed the polis to achieve the good life, to live authentically.



Medieval man needed the Church but with the waning of its influence, men felt confident of achieving the good life on the strength of human reason, will and personality. Scientific achievements which allowed men greater control of nature confirmed this conviction in the power of man to achieve a meaningful life on his own. So, instead of concerning themselves with happiness in some other realm, men directed their efforts to creating a better life on earth. Values like power, pleasure, wealth which were previously rejected as sinful now came into their own. Man is more than ever 'the measure of all things' and this is reflected in the new secularised culture.

Philosophy, like science, assumes a new position. In Greek times, when the naive religious and ethical consciousness disintegrated, philosophy developed along scientific lines, replacing religion in showing what direction life should take. In the medieval era, philosophy became the hand maiden of religion. But in more modern times, philosophy, from the analysis and defence of revelation, passed to a criticism of it. Independently of religious interests, it sought to ground its teaching in the light of human reason and experience. Since it was no longer believed that life was rigidly determined by divine laws, man felt that he could, by the application of human reason, control his progress towards higher levels of well-being and happiness.

Modern philosophy is said to begin with Renē Descartes in France and Francis Bacon in England. Bacon emphasised the empirical study of nature in order to increase man's control over his material environment. Hobbes even desired to eliminate completely from philosophy all speculation on the immaterial or spiritual.

Descartes ..... 19/...



Descartes and Leibniz also saw philosophy as a means of increasing human knowledge about the world. Knowledge was seen as a means of enabling man to better his earthly life as it became more and more divorced from religious interests. Descartes, who was dissatisfied with knowledge grounded purely in revelation as well as the mass of unconnected facts now available to man, proposed the method of induction which would establish a single principle of highest certainty from which the whole field of experience would be explained. From Descartes' thinking there sprung two branches - the one from Descartes, the physicist who sought to make comprehensible all events in the corporeal world (which was eventually to lead via men like Locke and Hume to the positivism of the 19th century) and the other branch from Descartes, the metaphysician who sought elementary truths of consciousness (which eventually culminated in Hegelian metaphysics).

The former aspect of Descartes' philosophy led to Locke and British empiricism with its ethics of happiness through success. In line with the new empirical approach towards reality and the beginning Industrial Revolution, men tried to establish anew the authentic nature of man's existence especially in the light of the new circumstances. Locke's ethics benefited the growing capitalist conception of property. He hoped that the welfare of the people would be determined by the interests of the majority but his individualist ethics led to the leaders of commerce and banking taking control, thus paving the way for capitalism. "Locke's dictum that 'government has no other end but the preservation of property' worked historically as a bulwark of individualistic and laissez-faire policies. Locke wanted to regulate the accumulation of property by the requirements of the community as a whole, but the common good in turn resolved itself into the search of the

majority for..... 20/...

majority for their own prosperity." 17) In fact, Locke's emphasis on rights rather than duties made it easy for the proponents of economic individuality to dispense entirely with the common good as a standard for regulating the use of property. So the new empiricism was not to result in the values its proponents desired. The Industrial Revolution transformed the lives of millions who now formed the working class which had to sell its labour in the open competitive market. Their lives were, more often than not, miserable and poverty-ridden as has been described so graphically in Dickens' novels.

Descartes' rationalism, on the other hand, culminated in the attempt of the French Revolution to establish society on the basis of reason alone. Just as Newton had set the pattern for a rational investigation of the physical world, so to, man ought to employ his reason for interpreting moral, religious, social and political life. Philosophy could then be an instrument of liberation, a means to discover a rational foundation for society. However, the absolutisation of the principle of reason was to lead to new alienation and even to murder. The guillotine ruled supreme. Albert Camus points out in The Rebel how, in the French Revolution, reason is absolutised to such an extent that it becomes unreasonable. However, the emphasis on reason and its separation from sensibility was deplored by men like Hamman, Herder and Jacobi, who desired a synthesis of reason and sensibility like Nicolaus of Cusa's idea of coincidentia oppositorum. In his Transcendental Idealism, Kant attempted to reconcile the best features of Continental Rationalism and British Empiricism. However, this synthesis was shortlived.

The development..... 21/..

The development of philosophy after 1790 led to the revival of the old oppositions under the new forms of idealism and positivism. Idealists like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel supported the extreme claims made by reason. Hegel constructed his vast comprehensive system around the principle of absolute reason. On the other hand, positivists like Comte and Mill appealed to our experience of facts and the limits of knowledge. In the 19th century, Nietzsche, in addition to others, like Schopenhauer and Bergson, again attempted to reunite reason and experience by the central synthetic notions of 'will' and 'life.'

The new trends in the more modern era - the waning of religious influence, man's emphasis on the power of his own reason as well as on empirical investigation of this world, scientific and industrial development, the rise of forces like nationalism, capitalism, socialism and so on - are the consequence of the disintegration of the medieval outlook and reflect an entirely different world from that known to the Greeks or the medieval man. The new cultural and philosophical forces which came to the fore in this period and which attempted to satisfy man's new needs - metaphysical idealism, positivism, nationalism, materialism, etc., are later strongly attacked by Nietzsche and Marcuse as leading to new forms of alienation instead of catering for man's true needs. I have attempted to show in this chapter how a particular conception of life enables man to live meaningfully and creatively, and how, when this conception becomes inadequate, it gives way to another, affecting also the culture of a given period. Nietzsche and Marcuse hold that the conception of life in their particular times as well as the culture created in accordance with that conception of life, are leading to inauthenticity and self-estrangement since

man's real.....22/.....

man's real needs are not being satisfied. Both, consequently, offer a new conception of life in order to revitalise life and culture. In the next chapter I will deal with Nietzsche's analysis of the cultural pattern in the 19th century as it had emerged as a result of the disintegration of the previous pattern owing to changing circumstances of life, and the reasons for his dissatisfaction with the cultural system of his own time.



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C H A P T E R     T W O

CULTURAL CONDITIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the light of my topic, I will now attempt to show the philosophical and cultural environment that existed in the nineteenth century. Nietzsche's contemporaries offered various alternatives to rescue man from being swallowed up into Hegel's all-embracing system. In addition, scientism, materialism, nationalism, democracy, etc., also formed part of the existing cultural pattern. Nietzsche was subsequently to reject all these aspects as being symptoms of the cultural malaise, rather than means of escaping from it.

The alternatives offered by men like Marx, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and by proponents of scientism, democracy, etc., reflect the conceptions of these theorists about what leads to alienation and unfreedom e.g. Hegel's Absolute. The alternatives also indicate how man ought to live, and under what conditions culture is in line with reality. This links up with my attempt in Chapter One to show the connection between culture and the authenticity of human existence, as well as the shift in cultural values with changes in man's needs and circumstances.

Of the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill wrote how " a change has taken place in the human mind..... The conviction is already not far from being universal that the times are pregnant with change, and that the nineteenth century will be known to posterity as the era of one of the greatest revolutions of which history has preserved the remembrance, in the human mind, and in the whole constitution of human history." <sup>1)</sup>

In the face of this change, persistent

adherence.....25/..

adherence to the old cultural values was leading man into self-estrangement. To a large extent the 19th century cultural crisis was caused by Hegel's total philosophy posited against reality, and also scientific and technological developments in the light of the bewildering new problems this raised, which I will discuss in greater detail below. Hegel had propounded the wonderful vision of Absolute Reason moving dialectically through the world and becoming manifest in the various spheres of human cultural enterprise - art, religion, philosophy, politics and so on. In the movement of the Absolute were realised the values of truth, freedom, justice, beauty and goodness into which man was absorbed. Man lived authentically in freedom when he subsumed his entire life and will to that of the Absolute Spirit. The glory of this idealist system, however, remained in the clouds. The absolute values were revealed by man's actual situation to have no bearing on reality. To attempt to live by them would result only in alienation from the world and from one's true nature. Hegel had sought to incorporate every aspect of human reality into his rationalist construction.

It soon became increasingly obvious to a saddened mankind that the Hegelian synthesis contained a glaring discrepancy between abstract cultural and intellectual ideals, and everyday life. The promised millenium had not materialised. Instead, there was a growing feeling of self-estrangement, of bewilderment at the inability to locate oneself within a meaningful pattern of life. Cultural dislocation was the inevitable result of the conflict of cultural values and reality. Traditional meanings in the various cultural spheres were no longer valid.

To add.....26/.....

To add to all this, the Industrial Revolution further transformed human life, bringing fresh horror into the lives of men. The factory system uprooted the traditional perspectives of the existing culture. Materialism, the profit motive, deference for wealth, together with periods of alternating prosperity and depression resulted in the development of a faceless urban civilisation. Culture was valued in terms of practicability, its relevance to demand, cost, etc. The result was a standardisation and stultification of art, literature and so on. For the growing mass of the proletariat, reality consisted of long hours, low wages, bleak industrial landscapes, child labour, the destruction of human dignity - in fact, exploitation and misery. The desire to improve the lot of the workers led to Marxist theory, anarchism and so on. In fact, liberalism, constitutionalism, democracy, nationalism, imperialism were all political trends in the 19th century encouraged by the Industrial Revolution.

With the growth of science also, religion lost its effectiveness. Christianity in the accepted sense was no longer able to provide an anchor for the faith that men needed so desperately to exercise. The growing materialism, theories like those of Darwin were serious threats to the validity of Christianity and its morality. Dostoevsky, for instance, makes one of his characters say in The Brothers Karamazov, "If there is no God, everything is possible." 2) Many, then desired to create something in the place of religion. Robespierre's idolatry of virtue and reason, Comtean positivism and Marxian socialism were all attempts to arrive at a satisfactory answer.

It was..... 27/.....



It was quite obvious that the old world was gone forever. But what was to be the motif of the new? As a corrective to the crisis of life and culture in the 19th century, there were two types of alternatives offered - a more existential one, directed against Hegel's speculative idealism (Marx), his rational totalitarianism (Kierkegaard) and his absolutised rationalism (Schopenhauer); and a more scientific one, directed against Hegel's metaphysics and seeking to base man's authentic existence in scientific thought as it emerged in the 19th century.

First we deal with Marx. He protested against the idealist consciousness which Hegel's system had sought to engender to the neglect of man's material needs. Marx developed Hegel's philosophy of history into a theory of class struggles which, by dialectical necessity, leads to socialism where the proletariat is in control of the means of production and is hence no longer alienated from the commodities it produces and from the world. He transformed Hegel's philosophical categories into social and economic ones, and offered economic forces as the basic cause of all change in the world of thought and things.

Marx was convinced that his new theory of reality, which he called dialectical materialism, could lead man to an authentic life, especially in the light of the new needs which the growing industrialisation of society had created. For him, it was a scientific theory, more meaningful than Hegel's abstract spiritualism which deals with the ideal rather than with the real. Philosophic theory, in Marx's view, must concern itself with altering conditions in the practical situation in order to satisfy man's material needs. Marx wrote that ~~the~~ truth ~~is~~

"truth i.e..... 28/....

"the truth i.e the reality and power of thought must be demonstrated in practice. The contest as to the reality or non-reality of a thought which isolated from practice, is a purely scholastic question..... The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it." 3)

Marx visualised a complete transformation in the existing consciousness as well as in reality, in order to lead man away from alienation to a more meaningful existence. Though he ridiculed Hegel's speculative idealism, Marx agreed with Hegel that the world develops according to a dialectical procedure (thus continuing the 19th century conception of change, growth and evolution as an ultimate fact of universal validity). Marx disagreed with Hegel however as to the force underlying dialectical change. Matter, not spirit, is the driving force. Cultural values must be determined by a conception of reality as material. Cultural values are determined not by the movement of the Absolute Spirit, but by the methods of production of a particular epoch.

Capitalism has an attendant culture which is used to justify and maintain the status quo i.e. exploitation of the masses. It must be replaced by a system which takes into account the needs of the proletariat (whose needs are the only real ones since they are in line with the process of history). Only then can a valid, non-exploitative culture develop. The state will wither away and the individual can live authentically in the classless society by contributing to the well-being of the whole. There would no longer exist the necessity for religion, for Christianity which had created false needs and thus led man into self-estrangement.

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Earthy happiness..... 29/..

Earthly happiness can be achieved by abolishing the circumstances (social and economic) that lead to the necessity for religion. Christianity had offered an otherworldly joy to compensate for grave social and economic ills in the present. Once these ills are removed there will no longer be need for the false lures of religion.

By this theory of dialectical materialism, Marx hoped to eliminate the social and cultural rot that had set in. His theory is motivated by interest in 'real' existence as opposed to Hegel's abstractions. His alternative appealed to many, answering a need created by the development of industry and the rise of technology. With its claim to scientific rigour, it offered to man the vision of an economically and materially integrated universe as the source of all cultural values. Since Hegelianism offered no more consolations, many turned to Marxism as a way of salvation since it took into account material and economic conditions and needs.

Like Marx (and Nietzsche later on) Kierkegaard saw himself as 'a corrective against the age' and passionately opposed the intellectualism and aestheticism of the era. His alternative is presented in terms of the value of the individual in his unique relationship with the Christian God. Kierkegaard reacted sharply to Hegel's gigantic amorphous system which absorbed the individual and alienated him. Hegelianism prevented any movement, either in the direction of complete atheism (which Nietzsche called for) or to a more honest Christianity (which Kierkegaard desired).

The characteristic of the age, Kierkegaard saw as a crippling 'vis inertiae' that could only

retain man..... 30/...



retain man in his condition of self estrangement. He was one of the first to react to the existing intellectualism, thus providing a sharp stimulus to the great revolt against Hegelianism which was later carried on by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Germany, William James in America and Henri Bergson in France. The movement Kierkegaard launched to restore man to a more authentic life was in the direction of a recognition of temporality, concreteness, the value of the individual and his existence, as against Hegelian abstractness.

Kierkegaard rejected the Hegelian claim to comprehend reality through reason. Rational philosophy has no bearing on man's actual needs since it did not help him in the concrete decisions he had to make every day. Also, it fails to grasp the fact that man is not a pure thinker but an existing individual. Kierkegaard condemned strongly the thinkers who accepted Christianity because it appealed to the intellect as logical and reasonable. This had transformed the living religion into an abstract Christian culture.

Further, the subjection of 'God' to finite human reason was abhorrent to Kierkegaard. The ultimate truths about human existence cannot be discovered by reason. Truth can only be found through faith. Kierkegaard's rejection of conventional Christianity foreshadows Nietzsche's later vehement repudiation of it. Christianity, instead of fulfilling man's real needs, was fast leading him into a meaningless existence. Kierkegaard maintained that merely to live in a Christian environment does not automatically make one a Christian. "When all are Christians, Christianity eo ipso does not exist." 4) The concept of suffering and sacrifice is missing. The Christian virtues have been reduced to a comfortable code of

bourgeois ethics.....31/...



bourgeois ethics.

"The bourgeois love of God begins when vegetable life is most active, when the hands are comfortably folded on the stomach, and the head sinks back into the cushions of the chair, while the eyes, drunk with sleep, gaze heavily for a moment towards the ceiling." 5)

Hegel had rejected the 'complacent devotion of the individual to his own beloved individuality.' Man only lives in freedom by submitting his will to the Absolute. Kierkegaard rejects this totally. "I am no part of a whole, I am not integrated, not included. To put me in this whole you imagine is to negate me." 6) Hegelian philosophy implies the dispersion of man in the world process, a factor which led to self-estrangement. Kierkegaard always emphasises the value, of the individual, deploring the levelling tendencies of his age (which Nietzsche also denounced later).

The crisis created by the levelling process leaves the individual confused and lost in meaningless abstraction. What can save him is his self-discovery as a being who stands in a direct relationship with God. Kierkegaard attempted to restore a personal religion as a means of leading man out of the cultural crisis. He hated fervently the crowd, the mass, etc. That is why he protested also against the idea of socialism as the salvation of the age. The exaltation of 'mankind' as a first principle negates the value of the individual being. Yet "the 'individual' is the category through which, from a real point of view, our age, our race and its history must pass." 7)

The Hegelian system is false to human existence since it does not correspond with what is. Its abstraction was an object of derision to Kierkegaard.

He writes, ..... 32/.....

He writes, "I am a human being.....and I assume that everyone I have the honour to talk to is also a human being. If he presumes to be speculative philosophy in the abstract.....I must renounce the effort to speak with him, for in that case he instantly vanishes from my sight and from the feeble sight of every mortal." 8) Elsewhere he wrote, "Our age is essentially one of understanding and reflection, without passion..... Men feel their reality as reflected in something external to oneself, in some abstraction, thus denying the responsibility of an individual existence. " 9) To rescue man from this condition, Kierkegaard proposes a religious 'solution' - the return of the individual from the abstractions he had been swallowed up into, to a direct relationship with God.

Schopenhauer, in his reading of reality, stresses the primacy of the Will in opposition to the Hegelian emphasis on Reason. Deeply pessimistic about life and cultural efforts, he regarded his age as deeply degraded as regards all higher intellectual efforts. Hegel's philosophical idealism had proved a tremendous let-down, bitterly disappointing the hopes it had created in many, of an ideal existence under the benevolent guidance of the Absolute Spirit. Schopenhauer's philosophy appealed to those who found the ideals of a former generation bereft of meaning. The highest values of his philosophy - resignation, fortitude, sympathy, compassion, etc. provided an attractive and satisfying philosophical explanation for the growing feeling of disappointment and despair.

Like Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer rejected conventional Christianity, making no effort to reconcile the truth of revelation with philosophical truth. He saw the existing religion to be lacking in the asceticism and pessimism which made early

Christianity..... 33/...

Christianity meaningful. Schopenhauer was convinced that there is a deep sense of evil in the universe and his pessimism is a sharp contrast to the optimism of Hegel, Marx, Comte and others. He was contemptuous of Hegel and others like him who sought to understand reality by means of the historical method. Historicist systems he dismissed as empty bombast (Fichte) and charlatanism (Hegel). The 'progress' disclosed by an analysis of history is a mere delusion, the result of placing undue emphasis on particular accidents of history. He writes, "The true philosophy of history lies in perceiving that, in all the endless changes and motley complexity of event, it is only the selfsame unchangeable being which is before us, which today pursues the same ends as it did yesterday and as it ever will. " 10)

Hegel had not solved the glaring discrepancy between the ideal aspirations of men and reality itself. Schopenhauer objected to the general belief in the power of reasoning, pointing out the empty and derivative character of all rational knowledge. Reason deals with truth only at second hand. So it is not, as the idealists believe, at the centre of the universe. What governs the universe is a non-rational element which merely uses reason as an instrument to achieve certain ends. The essence of reality is a blind unconscious striving that is only definable as Will. In man the will of the universe emerges into the light of selfconsciousness. This will in man makes him concerned with nothing but the gratification of his own appetites and desires, wholly controlled by the lust for will. Man can never be happy because the will to life is insatiable. Art, especially poetic and musical art does provide temporary relief

by making..... 34/...



by making one lose oneself in contemplation of the Platonic Ideas.

Only in total renunciation did Schopenhauer see the possibility of complete victory over the will. Man must follow the path of asceticism, free himself from the body and its appetites in an effort to save himself from eternal bondage to the will. By realising that 'all life is essentially sorrow' and by denying the will to life, man pierces the veil of Maya or illusion and attains to a state of non-being or Nirvana. Such a condition is one where 'knowledge only is left, will has vanished.' By recognising the striving of the will and attempting to overcome it, man lives in accordance with reality. Rationalism as well as the materialism and scientism of the 19th century held no hope for man. Reasoning and abstraction would never achieve truth about reality as Hegel had believed. Neither would science which can only deal with the world of phenomena and their relations. Life however is not reducible to scientific knowledge. As an antidote to the false optimism of Hegelian rationalism and 19th century scientism, Schopenhauer propounded his philosophy of the Will. This emphasis on the Will was later taken up by Nietzsche, though in an entirely different way.

In addition to the theories of Marx, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer, the emergent scientific spirit in the 19th century led many to believe that in science lay the answer to many of the problems facing man. Science and technology were advancing at a rapid rate. What was more, many scientific discoveries could be applied to everyday life, and emphasized the authority and progress of science.

Men had..... 35/.....



Men had lost faith in philosophical abstractions. The certainty provided by science as well as its power to ameliorate misery appealed to many as a refuge from the confusions and uncertainties of the age. And so the cult of scientism spread. Löwith quotes R.H.Haym's description of the nineteenth century: "At the moment we find ourselves in a tremendous and almost universal shipwreck of the spirit and of belief in the spirit in general.....It is no longer an age of systems, no longer an age of poetry or philosophy. Instead it is an age in which, thanks to the great technological discoveries of the century, the material seems to have come to life. The deepest foundations of our physical as well as our spiritual life are being torn up and remodelled through these triumphs of technology." 11)

The tendency generally was towards a greater realism, a consideration of the influence of material interests on life and culture. It was believed that any conception of reality was incomplete if it did not take into account the development of science and technology. Emphasis on the reliability and fruitfulness of scientific methods led many to believe that a 'science of man' could be created, without resort to anything transcendent and abstract.

Philosophical positivism was upheld as the answer to many problems. The positivists believed that science provides the only kind of knowledge to which man can attain. All that we can know of reality is what we observe or legitimately deduce from our observations. The mind must confine itself to a sober study of experienced facts stated as laws. Knowledge must be capable of empirical verification and must be seen as relative.

Positivism..... 36/...

Positivism denies the validity of a priori means of knowing as well as the possibility of metaphysical and religious knowledge. Affirming the validity of empirical modes of knowing, positivism opposes Christianity in so far as it claims to know the existence of the supernatural.

The man who founded positivism, which filled the void created by the loss of faith in God, was Auguste Comte. He attempted to overcome the crisis of values by the application of his scientific social theory. He had lost his belief in God in much the same way that he severed all attachments to the monarchical regime in France, and declared atheism to be an important part of the new cultural situation. Faith in God was replaced by the dogma 'All is relative', which subsequently became the method of the positive sciences, governing the realm of phenomenal facts.

Comte saw three stages in the development of society -- the theological where belief in gods or a God is predominant, the metaphysical which progresses from belief in God to abstract notions (like Hegel's Absolute Spirit) and finally the positive stage which is governed by scientific laws. He regarded his law of the three stages as a natural law which, of necessity, governs our scientific, philosophical and cultural advance.

In the positive stage (whose features include the real, useful, precise, certain and organic) the mind must limit itself to phenomenal facts as contained in empirical laws. To speak of first causes, ultimate ends and essences is nonsensical, because these are not a valid part of a scientific outlook. The positivist position went hand in hand with the

development of..... 37/...

development of the special sciences. All knowledge is seen as relative and this stems from the recognition that the knower is conditioned by phenomena in the external world. The mind must investigate laws which govern phenomena to observe the relations between them. These scientific laws are not a priori but empirically observed, and in the absence of a meaningful religion they are to determine the new cultural order.

The general study of human nature belongs to sociology of which Comte regarded himself as the founder. In it, he attempted to constitute the scientific attitude into a genuine positive philosophy - of which humanity was the guiding principle. The ultimate aim of positive philosophy is contained in its duty to humanity - the improvement of natural conditions. He believed his philosophy could guarantee order and progress (which were the demands of the new industrial era) and ensure the salvation of man. This was shared by those others who also believed that human progress is an inevitable law and that science and scientists are the guardians of the new society.

The theory of evolution with its purely mechanical explanation of the elements of organic life and its belief in organic laws of development fitted well into the nineteenth century scientific consciousness. Darwin supplied a mass of evidence for this doctrine and gave it a scientific force which it had not possessed before. He maintained that all forms of life had evolved from a common ancestry, through natural processes of adaptation. The struggle for existence and survival of the fittest is the source of evolution. This law then came to be applied to psychology, sociology, ethics, history and so on, as



the only scientific method. The concept of 'progress' was upheld in so far as everything was supposed to be moving towards some goal.

This, then, is the cultural situation as it presented itself to Friedrich Nietzsche in the 19th century. He expressed his profound dissatisfaction with the various interpretations of reality and the alternatives open to man, sharing Goethe's view of the age as one where "confusing theories for confused minds hold sway over the earth." 12)

Nietzsche maintained that the optimism of men like Marx and Comte, as well as the pessimism of Schopenhauer, masked a basic decadence which is inimical to meaningful action. Nowhere does true culture exist. Positivism, Socialism, Democracy, Nationalism, Moralism, Scientism, etc., despite their claims, are still, expressions of a culture divorced from reality. Each presumes to represent 'truth' but they alienate man as much as the crisis they hope to rescue him from.

The age is clearly nihilistic; men persist in living by values which are meaningless. Culture is decadent and life impoverished in the bourgeois - Christian world. Nietzsche writes of the age in gloomy terms: "The waters of religion are ebbing, and leaving swamps or stagnant pools: The nations are drawing away in enmity again and long to tear each other in pieces. The sciences, blindly driving along, on a laissez faire system, without a common standard, are splitting up, and losing hold of every firm principle. The educated classes are being swept along in the contemptible struggle for wealth. Never was the world more worldly, never poorer in goodness and love.... Everything bows before the coming barbarism, arts and science included.....

There is.....39/.....



There is a wintry sky over, and we dwell on a high mountain, in danger and in need." 13)

Nietzsche, who shared in common with Marx, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard a total rejection of Hegel's absolute Christian culture as a false front to cover up a basic decadence and inauthenticity, could not reconcile himself to any one of their basic positions. Neither could he wholly accept scientism and positivism as a solution, though he did recognise the importance of a scientific approach to man's problems. Nietzsche's position on many of the cultural issues of the day echoed the earlier criticisms of Marx, Kierkegaard and Schopenhauer. However, he could not see how any of the alternatives offered by these men could alleviate the position since they merely added to the general cultural confusion. As such, they can only lead to new alienation.

Schopenhauer, for instance, had recognised the primacy of the Will over the rational faculty but had pessimistically branded it as evil. Nietzsche on the other hand saw in the Will an instrument of cultural regeneration. The positive exercise of the will, of will as will to power can provide man with a new grasp of reality and lead to a more meaningful life.

Equally unsatisfactory to Nietzsche was Kierkegaard's 'leap' into religion, which he describes as: "Weariness, which seeketh to get to the ultimate with one leap, with a death-leap, a poor ignorant weariness, unwilling even to will any longer; that created all gods and backworlds." 14) Christianity, even if rejuvenated, can only enfeeble and destroy. "All the possibilities of Christian life have been tried out. It is time to discover something new." 15)

Marxian.....40/..

Marxian socialism certainly could not provide this. With its emphasis on equality (which went contrary to the laws of nature) and its attempt to create the Christian heaven on earth, it was merely leading man astray from his real nature and his true needs.

Democracy, nationalism and state worship appalled Nietzsche just as much. Democracy with its levelling influence, could only breed mediocrity. The growing nationalism of his time which emerged as an accompanying factor to the rivalry and competition among nations, was a corrupt and perverse emotion of the herd man. State idolatry intimidates man into conformity. It appeals to his tribal instinct and relieves him of individual responsibility. Collins writes "From a cultural standpoint, Nietzsche draws up a severe indictment against the Moloch of the State. Its main effect is anti-cultural since it levels down talents and encourages conformism among its citizens." 16)

As far as the sciences are concerned, Nietzsche agrees with its stress on the examination of the changing historical world since man belongs to the earth and not to some other-worldly realm. He approved also of a scientific procedure, but the cult of scientism is quite another matter. He could not accept its absolutisation of itself, nor its secularisation of Christian values.

Nietzsche was equally sceptical of the Darwinism that was sweeping the 19th century. While acknowledging change and conflict as basic, Nietzsche could not accept that the struggle for life, enforced by external circumstances, determines our whole existence. The struggle which he finds is the consequence of

overflowing energy.....41/..

overflowing energy. Natural selection and will to power have little in common. Nietzsche also rejected Darwin because, like Schopenhauer, he did not take his theory to its logical conclusion. If life is a struggle, then strength is the ultimate virtue and weakness the only fault. The 'good' is that which survives, the 'bad' that which fails. Durant writes: "Only the Mid-Victorian cowardice of the English Darwinians, and the bourgeois respectability of French positivists and German socialists could conceal the inevitableness of this conclusion. These men were brave enough to reject Christian theology but they did not dare to be logical, to reject the moral ideas, the worship of meekness and altruism which had grown out of that theology." 17)

Nietzsche could not see how any of the existing alternatives could lead man out of the cultural crisis into which man had been precipitated. A new culture was urgently needed, a new conception of man and reality in order to rescue man from the sterility of alienation to a more meaningful, creative existence. Nietzsche proposed the 'I will' of the Superman to replace the now meaningless 'Thou shalt' of Christianity. Hegel had elaborated the Christian doctrine that 'God is spirit'. The new culture must witness the birth of a corporeal god - Superman.

What is needed is the realisation that strength, pride, intelligence are more important to life and culture than pity, meekness, humility and so on, and the realisation that the goal of evolution is not the mass of mankind but only the Superman. Man's nature is unfixed, open to change but the direction of change is the outstanding individual - warriors, artists, philosophers, statesmen.



"Culture is nothing else than the means for keeping human nature fluid and progressive, so that the great man may break through to a higher mode of existence (what Nietzsche will call later on the level of the Superman)." 18)

The historicism of men like Hegel and Comte, Schopenhauer's rejection of the will as evil, Kierkegaard's religious 'solution' and Marx's socialistic 'solution' - all these dissatisfied Nietzsche. Nor could he reconcile himself to scientism, nationalism and democracy. The machine-made ugliness of the bourgeois world, devoted to the production of 'the cheap and the nasty' was even more horrifying. As a 'solution' Nietzsche proposed the 'will to power' doctrine and the splendidly audacious Superman to burst the chains of the existing cultural decadence and guide the creation of a new culture which will enable man to live more meaningfully since it is in line with reality and with real human needs. The revaluation of the existing values in the direction of will to power will bring about a cultural regeneration by which also the question of man's authentic existence will be answered.

NOTES.....43/....



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## CHAPTER THREE

### NIETZSCHE'S STAND WITH REGARD TO NINETEENTH CENTURY CULTURE

This chapter will concern itself with a detailed analysis of Nietzsche's criticism and rejection of the trends in nineteenth century culture in so far as these trends contribute to man's alienation from the world and himself. In addition, an examination will be made of Nietzsche's proposed solution for the crisis of culture.

Nietzsche believes that true culture can only begin when man frees himself from metaphysical and religious notions. Any form of philosophical idealism was abhorrent to Nietzsche. Because this world is apparent, conditioned, contradictory, evolving, metaphysicians believe that there must be a real, unconditioned, uncontradictory, static world. Resentment against reality leads philosophers to create an imaginary world from which they condemn everyday existence, in a desire to escape from the pain of reality. Nietzsche writes: "The history of philosophy is the story of a secret and mad hatred of the pre-requisites of Life.....Philosophers have never hesitated to affirm a fanciful world provided it contradicted this world and furnished them with a weapon wherewith they could calumniate this world.....even today our science which pretends to be the advocate of Life has accepted the fundamental position of slander, and treats this world as 'appearance' " 1)

Philosophers like Kant and Hegel who take the

absolute as ..... 45/...

absolute as their highest value deny this finite, temporal existence. Nietzsche regards the absolute as an absurd concept. An absolute mode of existence is impossible since the concept 'being' is always relative to man. The conditions of a metaphysical world (if it exists) are inaccessible to man, and also an irrelevant form of knowledge. European culture leads man into self estrangement by teaching him to lose sight of actual things and hunt after problematic ideal aims. What the world is, man has created according to human needs and emotions.

Metaphysics deals with fundamental errors as if they were fundamental truths, but neither faith nor knowledge of metaphysical matters are necessary in the reality within which man lives. Idealism in all its forms, Nietzsche saw as opposed to the highest 'Yeasaying' to life. Where men saw ideal things he saw human, all too human things. The desire for a beyond, for an ultimate condition is a symptom of sickness.

Nietzsche desires to apply an axe to the root of the 'metaphysical need' in man. Philosophers have mummified real things by divorcing them from history and from Becoming. They have rejected the senses because they reveal an apparent world of Becoming. In this way man has been misled. Rather than deifying the unknown and transferring joy to a false world, man should determine to what extent he creates his own values within the world of Becoming. Man must put an end to the tyranny of the old idealist values and create a new order of more realistic ones.

Religion was another obstacle in the way of the creation of a new, more meaningful culture.

Nietzsche.....46/.....

Nietzsche sees belief in God as a result of man's weakness, his inability to understand reality. As such 'God' is a crime against life. He writes "The concept 'God' was invented as the opposite of the concept 'life' .....The concepts 'beyond' and 'true world' were invented in order to depreciate the only world that exists..... The concepts 'soul' and 'spirit' were invented in order to throw contempt on the body.....The concept 'sin' was invented in order to confuse and muddle our instincts." 2)

Nietzsche saw God as a "too palpably clumsy solution of things..... At bottom, He is no more than a coarse and rude prohibition.....ye shall not think ! " 3) To the Christian religion, so insidiously dominant in the nineteenth century, Nietzsche was totally opposed. He condemned it in the strongest terms : "I regard Christianity as the most fatal and seductive lie that has ever yet existed - as the greatest and most impious lie " 4) and "I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge.....I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind." 5)

Nietzsche saw religion and the concept of God as a danger to human cultural activity. Men experience a feeling of power and attribute it to God because they dare not think themselves the source of it. He rejects his strength as 'God' and accepts his weaknesses as 'Man'. In this way religion has degraded the nature of man. Man feels proud to deny responsibility for his power. Human energies, instead of being concentrated on the construction of culture, are focused on God and a religious otherworld. The result is a perversion of man as a striving being.

In everyday ..... 47/...



In everyday reality - in art, science, industry, etc. Christianity had ceased to be an active meaningful force. It was built on conditions and needs long vanished and in no way satisfies existing needs. It is now no more than a 'soft moralism', what Nietzsche calls the 'euthanasia of Christianity.'<sup>6)</sup> In spite of this failure of Christianity, men still try to solve the problems of life with Christian concepts like altruism, self-sacrifice, denial of the will, etc. David Strauss for instance frankly proclaims that he is no longer a Christian but is loath to disturb the contentment of Christian morality. Like Feurbach, Nietzsche saw Christianity and its morality as irreconcilable with the modern world and the needs of men who lived in that world. So a Christian civilisation has no permanence because it is based on conceptions long vanished. Man has outgrown Christianity. It is time to find a new home.

In its appeal to the disinherited everywhere, Christianity reveals its foundation to be resentment. The resentment which the weak feel for the strong makes them accept Christianity which offers blessedness to the most wretched and insignificant men. Resentment has fostered a slave morality which expresses its desire for revenge against the strong by branding every aristocratic instinct as evil. The truly good are supposed to be the weak, the poor in spirit, the degenerate.

So, in this way, the Christian slave morality has destroyed the higher values of life. Pride, responsibility, passion, adventure, knowledge, which the higher man desires, are condemned. Man is tamed, his cultural vitality sapped. The high tone of life,

vital for ..... 48/...

vital for culture, is weakened. The happiness of the weak becomes the standard of values. "The morality of paltry people is the measure of all things: this is the most repugnant kind of degeneracy that civilisation has ever yet brought into existence. And this kind of ideal is hanging still, under the name of God, over men's heads." 7)

The Christian has polluted the world with his concepts of sin, guilt and punishment. "The Christian resolve to consider the world ugly and bad has made the world just that." 8) Man has been emasculated into a weak, humble sinner - a sick animal. Similarly, Christianity and the Church have perverted man's attitude towards the passions. They preach the despising of the body. And, Nietzsche asks, how can one carry a 'beautiful soul' in a despised body. Everything associated with man's natural impulses are associated with eternal damnation. Nietzsche writes: "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body." 9)

The only passions Christianity encourages are love of God, fear of God, fanatic belief in God." The passions become evil and malignant when regarded with evil and ugly eyes. It is in this way that Christianity has succeeded in transforming Eros and Aphrodite-sublime powers, capable of idealisation - into hellish genii and phantom goblins.....We connect the procreation of man with a bad conscience." 10)

Depreciation of the sexual life by the concept 'impure' is a crime against the Holy Spirit of Life. The need for redemption stemming from a feeling of sin is a sign of a decadent culture. Also, the Christian recognition that all men are equal

before God..... 49/...

before God thwarts the principle of selection. It is unnatural to regard the sick man (the Christian) to be of the same value as the healthy one (the pagan) or even that the sick man has a higher value.

So, Nietzsche sees every aspect of Christianity as anti-cultural. It prizes everything that should be rejected - the condemned, the leprous, the sinners, the outcasts. Culture is deprived of its clean conscience by the profanation of all higher creative values. The Christian 'truth', hostile to life, has exposed man to the danger of perishing. But in the 'death of God' Nietzsche sees the possibility of a new creative freedom for man. 'God' had destroyed man's nature and dignity. His 'death' meant that man could surmount himself towards the goal of Superman. But this could only be achieved on the basis of radical atheism, not on a semi-Christian foundation.

The entire Christian morality built on faith in God must be eliminated. This will be a disaster for culture since there will be nothing left of value to man but it could also be a blessing since it could lead to the creation of a new, more realistic culture. The higher man can begin his search for new knowledge. "Perhaps man will rise ever higher from the time when he no longer flows away into a god." 11)

Nietzsche saw morality, Christian or any other as being inimical to culture. Morality is an illness afflicting Europe. Every sphere of culture has been dominated by moral values which are opposed to the fundamental instincts of Life. "Morality is the life denying instinct. Morality must be annihilated if life is to be emancipated. " 12)

Morality ..... 50/..



Morality is no more than obedience to custom and tradition. That is why it perverts man's real nature which accepts morality out of laziness or cowardice or fanaticism or resignation - none of which should be a guide to action. The authority of morality undermines man's independent thinking faculty. The higher man will depend on his own will, not on moral precepts. That is why morality is useful to the mediocre, the weak and the lowly.

European morality is one of sympathy, pity sacrifice, living for others. Schopenhauer and J.S. Mill played a prominent role in popularising pity as the basis of action. But sympathy degrades man. "He is in distress and straightway the 'compassionate' ones come to him and depict his misfortune to him. At last they go away again, satisfied and elated, after having gloated over the unhappy man's misfortune and their own, and spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon." 13)

In the morality of sympathy Nietzsche sees a fear whose basic principle is to separate life from any dangerous aspects, but this is to rob it of all meaning. The proud man allows himself no pity or sympathy for others. Pity is a weakness, detrimental to the well constituted man who says 'yea' to life. Pity is really a perverted will to power since the weak feel pleasure and superiority when others exhibit pity for them. Nietzsche writes :

".....in this very instinct I saw the great danger of mankind, its most sublime temptation and seduction .....in these very instincts I saw the beginning of the end, stability, the exhaustion that gazes backwards, the will turning against life, the last illness announcing itself with its own mincing melancholy. I realised that the morality of pity which spread wider and wider.....51/...

and wider, and whose grip infected even philosophers with its disease, was the most sinister symptom of our modern European civilisation." 14)

The morality of Europe is that of herdsmen. Such mediocre men seek to maintain a decadent uncreative life, distrusting all exceptional men as dangerous. The moral standards of the weak are modesty, pity, obedience, resignation, peacefulness. Morality has replaced the aristocratic values, vital to culture, with a desire for "the distorted, the dwarfed, the stunted, the envenomed." 15) The 'masters' have been done away with and the morality of the vulgar man has triumphed. Yet men call their lives blessed. The valuation of declining, feeble, exhausted men is posited as primary. Nietzsche laughs at this "artificial hoisting up of a small species of man to the position of an absolute standard of things." 16)

The result is that man has been civilised and domesticated to a dangerous level. Morality has led to the decline of vitality, to a senile existence. By elevating the claims of the weak, morality has thwarted the claims of life. Its Socratic spirit, its concern with happiness and virtue, is an expression of decadence. It is preventing Nature's efforts to arrive at a higher type of man. Instead of promoting life and culture it destroys these. Its injunction that men should prefer the good and shun the evil is life denying since "in all its instincts life has both yea and nay." By sanctifying errors as truths, morality has led man astray.

With the death of God, morality stands in self-contradiction since the divine sanction for moral values has disappeared.

Once morality..... 52/...

Once morality had postulated man's goal.. Now he must create a new meaning for himself and reality. He must create new values which will be life promoting. These values must be evaluated according to life, according to their tendency to foster the feeling of increased power. Moral systems must recognise that the values of the herd cannot be applied to the higher men. These men, whom society condemns as cursed, evil, immoral, are really its most valuable aspect since they will create the new level of existence. The mediocre man can have his mediocre morality but must not aspire to a position of supremacy. "My philosophy aims at a new order of rank.....The spirit of the herd should rule within the herd but not beyond it: The leaders of the herd require a fundamentally different valuation for their actions. " 17) Everything which morality had condemned out of fear and resentment - the passions, power, strength, will, danger, etc now come into their own.

Nietzsche greatly admired a proper scientific spirit. He saw that it could prove valuable in questioning the convictions of those in authority and in this way break through to truth. It can assist man to gain control over emotional sensations that Christianity has induced. "Science makes us somewhat colder and more sceptical, and in particular cools the faith in final and absolute truths." 18)

But, unfortunately, the manner in which man pursues scientific study is corroding and poisoning life. "Life is diseased, thanks to this dehumanised piece of clockwork and mechanism..... The object which is culture is lost sight of: modern scientific activity as a means thereto simply produces barbarism." 19) Scientific knowledge cannot give knowledge of being,



only of particulars. Since there are other kinds of knowledge, science cannot claim to be an end in itself.

The goal of science is to create the most pleasure possible to man and the least possible pain. But, Nietzsche states, pain and pleasure cannot be separated. He who wants the greatest amount of the one must also want the greatest amount of the other. By minimising all pain science depreciates man's capacity for enjoyment. Science is harmful to culture since it regards problems of pain and suffering as alien to her world. Man places great store by scientific knowledge. Morgan writes: "The theoretic man pursues truth in the delusion that reality can be fathomed and even purged of evil by rational thought and its applications." <sup>20)</sup> Nietzsche believed that reality is irrational and cannot be fathomed.

Scientific optimism is only leading man into greater alienation. It satisfies man's longing for certainty, for stability. In this way it is a refuge for the weak, "a hiding place for every kind of cowardice." It has become a self - anaesthetic, hiding the fact that man has no clear ideal. The subdivisions of science are dealt with purely in relation to themselves. Their relation to life, to culture, is not examined. Man only seeks knowledge, nothing beyond it. The individual, when subjected to the enormous range of science, becomes fragmentary instead of being enriched.

Science assists the metaphysical belief that this world is one of appearance, a representation of the 'real world'. But what other world is there? The 'real world' (which suggests that this one is dishonest) since it depreciates the value of this

world..... 54/..

world is dangerous to Life. The road to genuine scientific knowledge is blocked by belief in the 'real world'. Ideally, science should confirm and support the highest and profoundest conception - which is saying yea to Life, the Dionysian attitude.

As far as Darwinism is concerned, Nietzsche accepted its fundamental implications - that man has evolved from animals in a purely naturalistic way through change and accident. There is nothing outside the world (God) directing man's progress. But evolution is not mere adaptation to external circumstances. This is no more than a second class activity which does not take into account the real essence of life which is its will to power. The theory of adaptation negates the idea of true creative activity. The struggle for power more than the pressure of environment, the desire to be master, rather than for self preservation shapes man's life. "The influence of environment is nonsensically overrated in Darwin; The essential factor in the process of life is precisely the tremendous inner power to shape and to create forms, which merely uses, exploits environment."21)

Nietzsche did not accept the argument of the 'survival of the fittest' either. In the struggle for existence the weaker creature does not always perish, so that there is an increase in the perfection of creatures. The weak survive because of their larger numbers and their craftiness. The will to power of the mass overwhelms the exceptional man. Real evolutionary progress will consist in the fact that the mass of humanity is sacrificed for the higher men. The goal of evolution must be the production of the highest specimens of humanity - Superman. "Conclusion concerning the evolution of man: the road to perfection lies in the bringing forth of

the most.....55/..

the most powerful individuals, for whose use the great masses would be converted into mere tools." 22)

The various sociological and political ids in which man has sought refuge, Nietzsche sees as having resulted in the 'mediocratisation' of culture. He sees no hope for man in democracy, socialism, nationalism and state worship. The steady democratisation of Europe disgusted him. He saw in it the great leveller of quality. "Democracy represents the disbelief in all great men and in all elite societies: everybody is everybody's equal. At bottom we are all herd and mob." 23) European democracy, by equating the lazy, the weak and the exhausted with the strong, has led to the decline of culture. The will to power is undermined and mankind is transformed into cattle. Modern politics has been diseased by the belief in the equality of all men.

Socialism, like democracy, is another attempt to transfer the Christian ideal of heaven to earth. It ignores the basic inequality of man and will result in the perpetuation of mediocrity. Nietzsche writes: "I do not wish to be confounded with these preachers of equality. For within me justice saith : 'Men are not equal'.....We wish to possess nothing in common." 24) Socialism is anti-biological in that it doesn't recognise the inequalities in Nature and in its denial of the desire to have more, which is fundamental to life. It demands a comfortable life for the greatest number of people. If such a state were reached the ground out of which superior intellects could emerge would be destroyed. Mankind would be too indolent to be capable of producing men of genius. Man should desire

rather that..... 56/.....



rather that Life retain its wild forces and energies so that men of genius could, by sublimating these forces, live creatively. The Socialist utopia is fit only for weary men. "I am opposed to Socialism, because it dreams ingeniously of 'goodness, truth, beauty and equal rights'. (anarchy pursues the same ideal but in a more ideal fashion." 25)

Nationalism, like socialism, is motivated by envy, laziness and hate for higher individuals who do not allow themselves to be drawn into the herd for a collective effort. Nietzsche contemptuously defines a nation as consisting of "men who speak one language and read the same newspaper." 26) By insisting on belonging to a particular nation men lose the breadth of vision which enables them to grasp the values of culture.

State idolatry is equally anti-cultural. When man dissipates his reason and will in the interests of the state he has no interest in a broader culture. He writes : "The state, I call it, where all are poison drinkers, the good and the bad : The state where all lose themselves, the good and the bad : the state, where the slow suicide of all - is called 'life'" 27) The state breeds conformity by quelling all individual aspirations. "Everything that a man does in the service of the state is against his own nature." 28)

Above petty nationalistic concerns Nietzsche visualises a 'United Europe'. The 'European' man must emerge from the various nationalities. In him will be embodied the perfection of culture. When God was alive all men were equal before him. And so democracy, socialism and other humanitarian theories flourished. But now that God is dead the higher men will not be equal to the herd men. The aristocracy of the super-men must guide the masses in a more realistic society.

Nietzsche was of the opinion that the above cultural trends point only in one direction - to Nihilism. It is not only the 'death of God', the collapse of the Christian Weltanschauung, which has precipitated man into this cultural Nihilism. Even the values which seek to replace Christianity are degrading. All the cultural values that constitute the nineteenth century consciousness have driven man into this crisis of culture. The goals and values towards which man moves in his cultural activities are no longer suited to his needs. The result is cultural decomposition. Nihilism has triumphed over culture. "What does Nihilism mean? - that the highest values are losing their value. There is no bourn. There is no answer to the question - 'to what purpose?'" 29) Man lacks purpose, truth, goals, unity. The pessimism of Schopenhauer's philosophy is a symptom of this nihilism (not a solution to it).

The 'death of God' - the loss of all effective belief in God, began man's journey towards uncertainty, nothingness, towards nihilism. The Christian urge to ultimate truth led to its own downfall. Man was driven to a realisation of the falsity of the Christian interpretation of reality. This loss of faith resulted in the inability of man to live and act meaningfully. The result was an escape into various equally nihilistic directions - commerce, scientism, romanticism (Wagner), historicism (Hegel, Comte), democracy and socialism, humanitarianism which was no more than a degenerate Christianity. But all these 'solutions' seemed to Nietzsche to be "but temporary veils over an ultimate conviction of the worthlessness of existence." 30

The soul..... 58/.....

The soul of nineteenth century culture was commerce. The products of artists, thinkers, scholars, philosophers, statesmen were all valued in commercial terms. What was once done for the love of God is now done for love of money. That is why, despite the optimism and prosperity in nineteenth century Europe, culture was spiritually sterile. Scientific optimism was replacing the traditional confidence in religion. But science, like democracy and other offshoots of Christianity, promised no adequate goal for living, only the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Nietzsche is nauseated by modern man. Culture is suffering from 'man' who is no more than a miserable worm. Nihilism is due to the fact that the "tame man, the wretched, mediocre and unedifying creature has learnt to consider himself a goal and a pinnacle, an inner meaning, an historic principle, a higher man." 31)

Men who lack the Dionysian spirit, value the world according to their mediocre standards. The herdman over-values himself in cosmic terms, the result being a vulgarisation of life and culture. The higher species of man is lacking, who could enrich life with his abundant power. Subsequently, the culture of Europe has the air of a madhouse or a hospital. "The sick are the great danger of man, not the evil..... They who are botched, oppressed, broken, those are they .....who most undermine the life beneath the feet of man. " 32) These 'sick' men evade the real needs of man in terms of will to power, by shunning the stronger, more masterful instincts. Man must be freed from his chains - "the ponderous and significant errors of moral, religious and metaphysical ideas. Only when the disease of chains is overcome

is the first..... 59/...



is the first great goal reached - the separation of man from the brute." 33)

Nietzsche warned against the nihilism of the culture philistines. Their smugness and contentment threatened the elevation of man as well as the creation of a vital culture which Nietzsche defined as "a harmony of living, thinking, appearing and willing" or as "the unity of artistic style in every expression of the life of a people. " 34)

The culture philistine is the opposite of the genuine man of culture. His 'culture' is really barbarity, masking an ugly mediocre existence. Nietzsche once regarded Wagner as the Dionysian man who could lead man away from the cultural decadence but later discovered that Wagner's music was a symptom of the declining culture and not evidence of a regeneration of culture.

But if Nietzsche was deeply disturbed at the nihilism of nineteenth century Europe, he also saw in it the possibility of an awareness of the need for new values. Its extremism could emphasize the need for a new condition of existence for man. Löwith writes : "Nihilism as such can have two meanings : it can be a symptom of final and complete downfall and aversion to existence; but it can also be a first symptom of recovery and a new will to existence." 35)

The paralysis of existing culture could point in the direction of a new culture of self-transcendence, the kind of culture that will promote the development of a higher species of Man. The function of culture will point, to the development of the highest species of humanity.

The way out.....60/...

The way out of the nihilism and alienation, which have enveloped man, towards a more authentic form of existence is the recognition that the basic motive in life is the will to power : "Wherever I found a living thing, there found I Will to Power." 36) The will to power is the integrating principle of life and culture. Anything which increases the will to power is judged to be valuable. All that is good involves the constant affirmation of the will and an increase in its power: "I value a man according to the quantum of power and fullness of his will." 37)

This principle is applicable to every aspect of human life. Man's conception of reality is the outcome of his will to power. The unfamiliarity and constant change in the world lead man to interpret facts, schematise things in such a way that he feels secure. Man's will to power creates the impression of Being out of Becoming. But this is a perversion of the will to power. Men must accept the reality of the world - change, evolution, contrast, contradiction, becoming - and live creatively guided by their will to power.

With regard to truth Nietzsche declares that the criterion of truth lies in the enhancement of the feeling of power. Similarly, happiness is also derived from an increase in the feeling of power. Every degree of power leads to the elevation of man. Nietzsche makes it clear that there is no such entity as the will, e.g., a force emanating from the body. Willing is simply the act of commanding, the act of overcoming oneself.

He did not deny that the will to power was a dangerous force. Its value lies in its being controlled,..... 61/...

controlled, sublimated into creativity. Only man can desire mastery over himself. And that which demands the greatest power is the mastery of oneself. By means of the will to power man can aim at the overcoming of himself, at the transcendence of man. "Man is a rope tied between beast and Superman - a rope over an abyss. What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal.....Behold, I teach you the Superman. The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say : The Superman shall be the meaning of the earth." 38)

In this way the will to power becomes the driving cultural factor in that it prepares the way for the creation of Superman - the man who is "strong enough for freedom, who can allow himself every liberty because he has his passions under control, who is master of his life and not its victim, and who, because joy consists in the exercise of one's will to power, enjoys life and subsequently affirms it." 39)

Superman is a person who has organised the chaos of his passions, integrated them into a harmonious whole and thus achieved mastery over himself and nature. He has given style to his life and so has become creative. This is the new goal of man. To raise himself above the senselessness of existence, man must surpass himself. He must be valued in a new way - according to the degree of power he possesses. In this way he will become lord of the earth and take the place of God. Man must be recreated in his own image.

Since there is no God, no purpose, no goal, man must fix his own goal and work towards it. And this goal is Superman - the transcending and perfecting of man, whom Nietzsche calls "this man of the

future who..... 62/...



future who will redeem us from the old ideal, as he will from that ideal's necessary corollary of great nausea, will to nothingness and Nihilism .....who gives back to the world its goal and to man his hope, this Anti-Christ and Anti-Nihilist, this conqueror of God and of Nothingness." 40)

The Superman with his overflowing spirit and fullness of bodily vigour possesses a great healthiness which enables him to feel the joy of life. His mature, disciplined spirit is unafraid to follow a path of danger and strife - a proud man on an ascending path of Life. These men in whom there is "The union of intellectual superiority with well-being and an overflow of strength," 41) are the causes of all great movements. Since a tremendous amount of power is concentrated in them, they alone are necessary for a vital culture. The rest of mankind, the masses, form the foundation on which the culture of Superman rests. Handicraft, commerce, art, agriculture, science, all professional and business callings are to be undertaken by this foundation of mediocre men.

So mediocre men are not to be completely eliminated from society. On the contrary, they must live for the good of the more valuable man. In this way man aids Nature in the production of genius and also enters 'the circle of culture'. The Supermen will stand above the masses as their leaders and lawgivers.

Superman dares to live in a world purged of morality, beyond good and evil. To him what is good is that which increases the feeling of power; what is bad is that which stems from weakness. This is the foundation of the new system of valuation. It is with this principle that the Superman effects a transvaluation of values. Nietzsche offers a transvaluation

as a formula..... 63/...

as a formula for "mankind's greatest step towards coming to its senses."

Transvaluation involves a repudiation of the type of man now regarded as the highest - the good, kind, compassionate man. His valuations are incompatible with ascending life, since reality does not always constitute beneficent instincts. The new values are judged according to their relation to life. Loyalty to life would thus exclude any supernatural, idealistic values. "Remain true to the earth, my brethren, with the power of your virtue. Let your bestowing love and knowledge be devoted to the meaning of the earth." <sup>42)</sup> This world is the highest ideal possible.

Since life is will to power, all value perspectives are measured according to the standard of power. All other motives lead only to weakness and decadence. The result of the new valuation will be a Dionysian attitude to life. Nietzsche uses the term 'Dionysian' to describe a synthesis of Dionysian and Apollinian qualities. The Dionysian is the explosive ungoverned force of creation, whereas the Apollinian is the power of self-restraint and serenity. The one is the will to power, the other the sublimation of it. A synthesis of the two is ideal for culture since creative energy is controlled and redirected.

It is the Dionysian man who will shape the future culture. Such a man is not afraid to face reality in spite of its terrors and pains. He lives by "a formula of highest affirmation.....a yeasaying without reserve to suffering's self, to guilt's self, to all that is questionable and strange in existence itself. This final cheerfullest, exuberantly mad

and merriest..... 64/...

and merriest Yea to life is not only the highest insight, it is also the deepest, it is that which is most vigorously confirmed and upheld by truth and science. " 43)

The weak man's desire to seek only after happiness is replaced by a Dionysian strength that willingly accepts the whole of reality. By this acceptance of his fate man is on the road to a higher life. "My formula for greatness in man is amor fati. The fact that a man wishes nothing to be different, neither in front of him, or behind him or for all eternity." 44) Rescued from nihilism, the way is now open for meaningful cultural activity.

The Supermen - "that new party of life - advocates " undertake the destruction of all degenerate values and create a new system which will elevate and perfect man. They reject the belief that God directs the fate of the world, and in investigating the conditions of a higher culture, they adopt new aims embracing the whole earth. Whereas previously, man had developed unconsciously, he can now consciously create a new culture which will lead to the elevation of man.

The new direction lies in the emancipation of man from the existing morality of altruism, self-renunciation, towards a trust in all that which has up to now been forbidden, damned and despised.

Man realises that there are no more sins in the metaphysical sense and also no virtues. His perspectives are the creation of his own valuing mind. Since it is man who creates and values his world - this is an indication of what lies in the power of the human will to create. What Nietzsche desires is to give man a clean conscience about the



use of his will to power. Instead of attributing it to God he must accept it as his own. With this new innocence and faith in the will to power man can create a better world. Since there is no causality, no eternal design, life is rendered innocent and the individual is free to act. By thus denying God man saves himself and the world.

The question of what is valuable takes a new direction. Anything is of value if it promotes the highest form of human life on earth - the Dionysian. The world is neither good (optimism) nor bad (pessimism). Good and evil, moral and immoral are measured in terms of the will to power. "All emotions are traced to a single will, the will to power, and are called essentially equal. The concept of life: in the apparent antithesis good and evil, degrees of power in the instincts alone are expressed." 45) Once man realises this, he is freed from the concepts of reward, punishment, guilt, sin, etc, and can now live creatively with a clean conscience. Worldly justice, instead of proceeding from the guilt of man, must now proceed from his innocence. He must adopt the Greek attitude to man. "All in man that has power they called divine, and wrote it on the walls of their heaven." 46)

The ego must come into its own. Religion and morality had endeavoured to suppress it by stipulating that man should act for the benefit of others. But "No man ever did a thing which was done for others without any personal motive; how should he be able to do anything which had no relation to himself.... How could the ego act without ego?" 47) Man must rather devote himself to his own personality and his own highest good instead of sacrificing himself to

the state..... 66/.....

the state, the science or to his neighbour. When man centres his will on something else, he has no reason to exist: "Strong ages and noble cultures see something contemptible in pity, in the 'love of one's neighbour, and in a lack of egoism and self esteem - Ages should be measured according to their positive forces." 48)

In the transvaluation Nietzsche re-establishes what he calls the order of rank. The higher rank of man is the type which represents ascending life, the lower is the type which represents decay and weakness. The purpose before man is to assist the higher species to come into being. The concept of equality had so far prevented this. The higher men must declare war on the masses. They must strengthen the strong and destroy the weary. The growing self-sacrifice of everybody is of no value since it has no purpose. In fact it is a collective loss. But the exploitation of mankind would have some meaning, if it is in the interests of the higher men, the aristocracy - for the highly gifted in intellect and will.

Philosophers must describe the order of rank and the difference of values between men, the reverse of the equalisation of men. Their task is to discover to what extent man can elevate himself, how far his powers extend. In doing so they must not shirk an examination of the repulsive and atrocious aspects of existence. In this way, living by the Dionysian formula of amor fati, the philosophers become the creators and lawgivers of the new values.

The Superman no longer regards his natural instincts with an 'evil eye' and associates them with a bad conscience. Life, instinct, passion as

opposed to..... 67/...

opposed to intellectual theorising, are seen to be more valuable for culture. Freed from a repressive morality, man can elevate himself to his highest glory. The passions must be liberated. Nietzsche sees that the mightiest passions are the most valuable since they are the strongest sources of power. Man must dominate and utilise the passions, not extirpate them. The great man is one who has full control over his passions. By disciplining himself in this way man gives style to his life.

Culture depends on the style that man gives to life. "To give style to one's character - that is a grand and rare art. He who surveys all that his nature presents in its strength and weakness and then fashions it into an ingenious plan until everything appears artistic and rational - exercises that admirable art." 49) Thus the sublimation of passion is the source of the highest cultural values. The greater the passions of an age or people, the higher their culture. The passions - pride, happiness, health, strong will to power, discipline, gratitude to earth - all say yea to life. To attack them is to destroy life at its source.

The Dionysian men, full of overflowing vitality, are not afraid to face the fearful thought or deed. Nor is their life a mere search for happiness and security. They rejoice in danger, war, adventure, conquest. Nietzsche urges : " Build your cities on the slope of Vesuvius. Send your ships into unexplored seas. Live in war with your equals and with yourselves." 50) Only then do men live creatively, accepting will to power as the vital principle of life. Their heroic spirit enables them to accept pain together with joy. Pain is part of the will to Becoming, growth, creation. "The highest state of Yea-saying

to existence .....68/...



to existence is conceived as one from which the greatest may not be excluded - the tragico - Dionysian state." 51)

The Dionysian attitude enables man to accept the fact that the world is ceaseless becoming. However, every thing becomes and returns an infinite number of times. This is the doctrine of eternal recurrence with which Nietzsche replaced the former metaphysics. He believed that: "Everything goeth, everything returneth, eternally rolleth the wheel of existence. Everything dieth, everything blossometh forth again." 52)

If the world was moving towards a goal or a final state, it would have been reached by now. The universe has a definite quantity of energy. It must therefore go through a calculable number of combinations. In infinity every possible combination must have been realised an infinite number of times. Since Nietzsche rules out the existence of God (who could provide endless variety) the universe must be a circular movement repeating itself an infinite number of times - a "Dionysian world of eternal self creation, of eternal self destruction." The universe is without aim or will.

However the senselessness of existence did not drive Nietzsche to despair. He saw it as a ground for man's freedom. Man can fix his own goal amid the eternal recurrence of things. He must live according to what he believes is his highest value and gives him greatest happiness. "Live so that thou mayest desire to live again - that is thy duty - for in any case thou wilt live again." 53) Only the most exuberant, life - affirming man can desire to live in such a way.

The consequence..... 69/...

The consequence of the realisation that everything - good or bad, joy or sorrow - return everlastingly, can crush a man unless he can attain to some supreme moment of existence for the sake of which he would be willing to relive his whole life. He would not mind the evil and pain in his life since they were necessary for the achievement of this one moment. The sensation of joy, which comes from the increase of power, is the greatest advocate in favour of eternal recurrence for joy desires "the eternity of all things..... deep profound eternity." 54)

The doctrine of eternal recurrence stems from Nietzsche's desire to see this world as it had to be seen for man to live creatively - as acceptable. Love of the fate which returns everlastingly enables man to live meaningfully since the universe is endless becoming and there is no other world to which man can aspire.

I have tried to show how Nietzsche rejected every aspect of nineteenth century culture as leading man into false avenues which only deepened his self-alienation. To replace the culture he rejected with a more vital one - one that was in conformity with the demands of reality - Nietzsche proposed a revolution in human thought and action.

The recognition that life is will to power finds expression in the Superman who alone affirms life as will to power. This new pattern for living demands a transvaluation of the existing values, a transvaluation which is effected by the Superman. The transvaluation involves the acceptance of the eternal recurrence of things within which man posits his own goal and works creatively towards it.

In this way..... 70/...

In this way Nietzsche proposes to lead man out of the alienation and nihilism in which nineteenth century culture had resulted. By the revival of man's creative urge on life's Dionysian basis, Nietzsche hoped that man would set about to form a new positive culture and, in the performance of this creative task, return to an authentic form of life.



NOTES:

1. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 379.
2. NIETZSCHE, F. : Ecce Homo, P. 142.
3. IBID., : P. 29.
4. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 164.
5. NIETZSCHE, F. : Twilight of the Idols, P.231.
6. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Dawn of Day, P. 92.
7. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 164.
8. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Dawn of Day, P. 74.
9. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra, P. 32.
10. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Dawn of Day, P. 77 - 8.
11. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Joyful Wisdom, P. 217.
12. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 278.
13. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Dawn of Day, P. 232.
14. NIETZSCHE, F. : Toward a Genealogy of Morals,  
P. 8.
15. IBID., : P. 42.
16. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 171.
17. IBID., : P. 237
18. NIETZSCHE, F. : Human, All Too Human,  
P. 227.

19. NIETZSCHE, F. : Ecce Homo, P. 76.
20. MORGAN, G.A. : What Nietzsche Means,  
P. 49.
21. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 2,  
P. 127.
22. IBID., : P. 135.
23. IBID., : P. 206.
24. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 138.
25. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 206.
26. NIETZSCHE, F. : Toward a Genealogy of Morals,  
P. 226.
27. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 51.
28. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 184.
29. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 8.
30. MORGAN, G.A. : What Nietzsche Means,  
P. 45.
31. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 43.
32. NIETZSCHE, F. : Toward a Genealogy of Morals,  
P. 157.
33. NIETZSCHE, F. : Human, All Too Human,  
P. 363.
34. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thoughts Out of Season, Vol. 1,  
P. 8.
35. LOWITH, K. : From Hegel to Nietzsche,  
P. 190.
36. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 124.

37. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 304.
38. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 6-8.
39. NIETZSCHE, F. : Twilight of the Idols,  
P. 49.
40. NIETZSCHE, F. : Toward a Genealogy of Morals,  
P. 117.
41. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 329.
42. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 81.
43. NIETZSCHE, F. : From Notes on The Birth of  
Tragedy, P. 192
44. NIETZSCHE, F. : Ecce Homo, P. 54.
45. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 1,  
P. 235.
46. NIETZSCHE, F. : Human, All Too Human,  
P. 113.
47. IBID., : P. 154.
48. NIETZSCHE, F. : Twilight of the Idols,  
P. 93.
49. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Joyful Wisdom, P. 223.
50. IBID., : P. 219.
51. NIETZSCHE, F. : The Will to Power, Vol. 11,  
P. 291.
52. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 244.
53. NIETZSCHE, F. : Twilight of the Idols, P. 254.
54. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra, P. 364.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL CONDITIONS.

In the previous chapter we saw Nietzsche as a superb diagnostician, probing culture with a view to eliminating all that was diseased and life - destroying, and offering, as a cure, Superman and his glorious culture. Nietzsche as a prophet is equally illuminating. His penetrating analysis of nineteenth century cultural trends led him to prophesy widespread catastrophe if man continued along the same path he had been following up to now. He had warned against the growing nationalism and the even graver danger of racism joining forces with nationalism. He had foreseen the danger of extreme nationalism and the danger also of absolutising science as a solution to all human problems.

In a sense, then, the two world wars can be seen as a horrible materialisation of Nietzsche's prediction of cultural disaster. The wars shattered man's confidence in his ability to live in a rational, meaningful way. The result was, that men easily drifted into various abstractions which relieved him of the responsibility of making meaningful decisions and coming to grips with the problem of truth and reality. The new century was one that embraced the greatest number of people, the greatest technical control over nature as well as the greatest number of theories of truth the world has ever known. But there was no centre, no focal point around which a culture could develop as a meaningful reflection of reality. W.B. Yeats wrote :

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. <sup>1)</sup>

In these lines..... 75/..

In these lines he expressed the concern of philosophers, poets, artists, etc., - man's dreadful alienation, the absence of a core of meaning to which he could attach himself.

Even the lure of science had paled. Disciples of the cult of scientism lost their belief in science as the key to salvation. They were too well acquainted with the horrors of war that science had made possible. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, men came to appreciate science as a power for great evil and misery as well as for good. The naïveté of men who had seen in science the benevolent creator of a fabulous Utopia where all conflicts would cease, was shattered for ever. Freud wrote: "Science herself has lost her passionless impartiality." 2)

As far as democracy was concerned, Nietzsche had emphasized the inadequacies of democratic liberalism and expressed his fears about mass culture. Men like J.S. Mill and de Tocqueville were also to voice their concern over the tyranny of the majority. Carlyle and Ruskin, for instance, were disturbed about the ugliness and bad taste which the masses did not seem to mind. Contemporary fears about machine-made mass culture echo Nietzsche's own thoughts on the matter.

Among many others, Grisebach, Camus and Kafka concerned themselves with the problem of meaningfulness in the modern age. Grisebach, for instance, maintained that the various 'truths' offered to man served only to divorce him from real existence. "In all these cases, he (man) would be estranged from real experience and would be neatly and ingeniously blended into some absolute, which represented nothing but the making of his own self absolute, so that by

the construction of all these various methods, he really kept moving within the circle of the self." 3)

Albert Camus saw the twentieth century as an age of ideologies, all seeking absoluteness. Man's penchant for living by absolutised ideologies has perverted his judgement to such an extent that he now uses reason to justify crime, murder, bloodshed and violence. Crime takes on the air of rationality and innocence. Man had accepted Nietzsche's pronouncement about the death of God. But having escaped from God's prison, man lands in another - the self constructed prison of history and reason. 4) The nihilism which Nietzsche had exposed in the nineteenth century, Camus sees as still prevalent in the twentieth century. The enshrining of historicism (Marxism) as the highest source of value can lead only to servitude, terror and the world of the concentration camp.

Kafka's indictment of modern culture is conveyed most vividly in his novels The Trial and The Castle. His characters inhabit a world of absurdity not unlike the one Camus visualised. The interminableness of these novels conveys vividly the tedious, abstract and mystifying nature of the kind of lives men lead, the strange mysterious forces in control, the anonymity to which men have surrendered their individual responsibilities. Modern life seemed to be a reflection of the quality of life depicted in Kafka's novels.

It became increasingly clear to many that a way had to be found out of the confusions that had ultimately led man to the two world wars. The second World War had intensified the division of the world into two ideological camps. It seemed that on both sides, man was completely immersed in ideology with no contact with reality. Men desired a re-creation

of man.....77/.....



of man and his culture in the light of a changed and still changing world. It was hoped that a more realistic evaluation of the nature of man could be arrived at.

Heidegger, for instance, realised the acute need for man to create himself anew and replace the cultural void with new values. In his philosophy he called for a re-thinking of man's situation, exhorting man to free himself from the nihilistic Weltnacht and take responsibility for himself as a cultural being.

In short, men sought a new abode, and it is in terms of this need for a new focus of meaning that we will examine a few contemporary alternatives which offer themselves to man as roads to authentic existence. It is against the background of these alternatives that Marcuse measures the cultural crisis of the twentieth century. He was to flirt with each of them before working out his own outlook on the cultural crisis. The result is that, like Nietzsche in his relationship with Marx, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, Marcuse utilises elements from each of these cultural alternatives, although he rejects each in its totality.

We will now examine Neo-Positivism, Soviet Marxism, Existentialism and Freudian theory insofar as these attempted to resolve the problem of authentic existence and to what extent, in Marcuse's eyes, they fail to provide man with an adequate conception of culture.

Neo-positivism is a re-emergence of nineteenth century classical positivism in the form of a purely descriptive and functionalistic theory, having been purged of the metaphysical (teleological) implications of Comtean positivism. Neo-positivism seeks to overcome

philosophical..... 78/..

philosophical and cultural problems in terms of a functionalistic scientism. This explains its close alliance with scientific procedure and development.

In accordance with the scientific spirit, it confines itself to the question how. By dispensing with the what question, neo-positivism claims to have abolished philosophy as speculative theory. It holds that philosophy, in order to be meaningful and free of pseudo-problems, must confine itself to description and analysis. Hence it must be purged of all metaphysical propositions, which are empirically non-verifiable. The doctrine of verification was made famous by the logical positivists who saw in it "a way of eliminating, as meaningless, all references to entities which are not accessible to observation."<sup>5)</sup>

Metaphysics, then, could be dismissed as nonsense. This links up with the emphasis of the linguistic analysts on the therapeutic and corrective function of philosophy. They claim that philosophical problems throughout the history of philosophy were due to the abuse of language, and their fundamental aim is to restrict philosophy to language issues.

Ludwig Wittgenstein set the pace for neo-positivism with his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Here he claimed that the world is a totality of facts or states of affairs. Knowledge, then, is no more than a copy of these facts. A sentence is literally a picture. "The proposition is a picture of reality... a model of reality as we think it."<sup>6)</sup> To say that a state of affairs is conceivable means that we can construct a picture of it, and consequently a proposition.

By means of language man becomes embedded in the world and since this is so, he cannot reflect on

it but.....<sup>79/...</sup>

it but merely record facts about the empirical world. If we do reflect on the world by metaphysical theorising, we estrange ourselves from the world and arrive at mock questions. In fact, we make an illegitimate transgression into the realm of the ineffable. One cannot pass beyond the boundaries of language to ask metaphysical questions. Such a view affects the status of philosophy. "Philosophy is not a doctrine but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions' but to make propositions clear." 7) It is sufficient in order to live meaningfully that man simply records his experience of the world.

On the basis of the Tractatus, logical positivists went on to develop a theory which holds that the laws of logic provide grammatical rules which make the data of sense experience more meaningful. Carnap, for instance, stated the need for a meta-language (a language about language) in order to determine the truth-condition of propositions.

Linguistic analysis, based on ideas from Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations denied even that philosophy could add to the scope of knowledge as theory.

Bochenski had written of the logical positivist view of philosophy as consisting of metalogical analysis which "works out a system of signs to signify the words of scientific knowledge and so becomes capable of analysing the expressions of natural science." 8)

Linguistic philosophers wish to restrict philosophy to the analysis of the uses and functions of language. Philosophic problems are believed to arise from the 'ordinary use' of words or deviations

from it,.....80/.....



from it, and can be solved by the correct usage of language. The task of philosophy, then, is to analyse and clarify empirical knowledge as it is contained in the functional relations of language. Facts about language become the tools with which one solves philosophical problems. Great emphasis is placed on philosophy as an essentially therapeutic activity designed to clarify the uses of language.

Neo-positivism, as we have seen, dispenses with all metaphysical questions (which are supposed to be devoid of meaning) and confines itself to description and analysis, thus abolishing philosophy as traditionally understood. This new outlook on human truth, which was a reaction to the disappointment and frustration in which idealist metaphysical systems had resulted, is essentially scientific and functionalistic. Values which had previously been projected above as ideals are now assimilated into the functionalistic system and analysed as part of it.

However, by dismissing metaphysical questions as leading to pseudo-problems, neopositivism has by no means 'solved' the problems of life and culture. The problems of human existence are not all due to aberrations of language. Restricting man to controversy - free description and analysis seems an attempt to find peace at any cost rather than make a genuine attempt to face up to human problems.

As Gellner says in Words and Things - our philosophical problems, like the Soviet state, have not withered away. What is more serious is that man's alienation is deepened by neo-positivism in so far as all human action is viewed as just so many functional events. The reflective individual subject is eliminated from human experience and replaced by man as the mere

analyst of .....81/.....

analyst of functional relations between language."... the functionalistic method, which is applied by the sciences to the material world in order to bring it under our control.....is applied to human striving and action in general. By the mere propositional description of man's acts, by which their meaningfulness or their truth character is to be determined in conformity with some underlying principle of verification, these acts are deprived of their actual existential basis.....The application of the propositional method to man's moral, aesthetic and religious feelings, values and views completely depersonalises him and converts him into a kind of anonymous propositional computer." 9)

Exclusive emphasis is placed by the neo-positivists on scientific description and analysis and this one-sidedness is undesirable in an alternative offered to man as an answer to the problems which speculative idealism for instance could not resolve. Heinemann points out that a mere technological approach to philosophy carries the danger of a loss in substance. When technique becomes paramount, philosophy is in danger of vanishing.

Neo-positivism makes the mistake of regarding its procedure as the whole of philosophy, when in fact it is no more than a method. "A technique as such is not a philosophy. A tool or a method is necessarily limited in its scope, and its limits may easily be mistaken for the limits of the subject matter." 10)

To limit human activities to the purely technical shows that they have lost their ground in human existence. In this connection, G.A.Rauche writes, "Philosophy must never permit itself to be shrunk to a mere functionalistic method. Its true field is man's

actual experience.....82/..

actual experience.....It thus becomes clear that, if philosophy identifies itself with the scientific method as such, and neglects or even ignores important aspects of man's existence .....then philosophy loses its real function of dealing with all aspects of human truth and all kinds of human experience." 11)

The neo-positivist outlook, then, can lead to a functionalistic pattern of life and culture which cannot be transcended, as Marcuse points out, because thought is limited to a functional analysis of the status quo. Essentially, neo-positivism is an outlook which can prevent man "from building up again a new genuine western culture, which overcomes the mere technological and methodical civilisation of contemporary western functionalism, which frees man from the chains of anxiety and insecurity, and which will restore his balance as an intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and religious being." 12)

Marcuse also censures the neo-positivist outlook and we will deal with his specific criticism later on in this chapter.

From here, we go on to examine Existentialism in so far as it offers to man an alternative means of approaching the problems of life and culture.

The existentialist 'solution' achieved its maximum appeal between and after the two world wars. It sprang, like neo-positivism, from the despair of men who sensed deeply this "crisis-ridden situation," 13) a crisis resulting from over-confidence in rationalist and idealist systems of thought as well as in science and technology. The realities of war had proved Hegel's rationally ordered world to be an illusion. Ideas and ideals were not of much use in the face of suffering and death. Science, despite its obvious advantages, carried a hidden and fatal sting.



It was a threat just as much as a promise. It seemed at the time that there was nothing man could turn to as a valid source of authentic cultural values. All he was certain of was a sense of his own existence, his being-there in the world. And so, the existentialists made this their new starting point in the search for a more realistic attitude towards human existence, undertaking the creation of new cultural values in the face of nothingness. Man realises that he is thrown into the world as a stranger who is surrounded by nothing and that to live meaningfully he must create values which take into account the real nature of man - his temporality, historicity and so on.

Anti-scientific and anti-rationalist in character, existentialism rejects all objective abstract philosophical systems as remote from life, and replaces these with a concern for real human existence and the problem of being.

Man's awareness of his being thrown into nothingness as well his inability to grasp the universe through intellect results in anxiety and despair at the painful and precarious nature of human existence. However, this burden of anxiety contains also a positive significance in that it points to the discovery of existence or "being - there" (Dasein) as primary. Man realises that since nothing is determined or given with certainty, everything is possible. Man is free to commit himself to a scale of values he alone chooses.

G.A.Rauche writes, "It is true that the realisation by man of being thrown into the nothing will result in the experience of Angst or anxiety, but at the same time this anxiety which leads to Sorge or care, has a purging effect.

The resolution of being oneself in the above sense i.e. being determined to keep oneself open to one's real self, would constitute Treue or fidelity to real existence or the true nature of the self. It leads to freedom from the fetters and chains of the intellect and the material world, and allows us to perform our true function viz. to enter into communication with the absolute through our very being-there....." 14)

Man, then realises the need to re-assess his situation more realistically, in terms of his being-there in the world rather than according to metaphysical constitution or scientific functionalism. The absolute cannot be known or comprehended, only experienced in one's own existence. Idealism and functionalism lead man to unfreedom, in fact to his abolition as a cultural agent since they absolve him of the responsibility of choice.

Jean-Paul Sartre, for instance, rejected the old cultural values and attempted to fulfil what Heidegger had called for - the re-creation of man by himself. Sartre sees man as a being who is condemned to be free. In fact he is freedom that chooses. God has long been dead. It is man who must make the decisions in whatever he does. It is in this way that he creates himself freely within the nothingness which he occupies, accepting responsibility for his actions and values. By committing himself to a particular course of action, man creates values. In avoiding commitment and responsibility and in ignoring his essential nature (which includes finiteness and historicity) man acts in bad faith. Despite the 'viscosity' of things in the world and man's inability to assume total control over them, despite the fact that man always ends in nothingness (for that is his nature), man must still accept total responsibility for himself and embark on a life of complete engagement.

Only in this way can man justify his existence and create a meaningful cultural pattern.

Blackham writes, "The nihilism of the modern age had undermined everything, working on every front in the guise of a humanism that had given up thinking about ultimate questions. Sartre proposes to clear the ruins and reconstruct a dogmatic humanism which understands and assumes the eternal human situation, offering a liberation of mankind which starts with a total knowledge of man by himself." 15) Sartre, in accordance with the general existentialist outlook, emphasizes the need for man's self-creation in the face of the ever threatening nothingness. The result would be, according to them, the resurgence of new cultural values which would be more in line with man's 'real' nature.

The existentialists perform an important task for man and philosophy in so far as they focus attention on the existential aspects of human life, which had not been adequately treated by idealism and neo-positivism. However, they display an exclusive concern with the negative aspects of human experience only.

Otto Bollnow, for instance, points out that the negative experiences of anguish, dread, despair and so on are counterbalanced by the experiences of hope, confidence, joy, etc. "...man, in his being-there, is not merely a passive, suffering and experiencing being, but rather an active and creative one." 16) Positive experiences are "complementary to the one-sided heroic virtues of bravery, resolution and readiness of existential philosophy. They convert its pessimism and gloomy outlook into optimism and gay expectation. The future is not only steeped in the shadow of death,

but it also..... 86/..



but it also holds great promises and is full of anticipation .....The absolute is not experienced as mere negativity, but we experience it in our creative acts and in our composure....." 17) Bollnow, in opposition to the existentialists, sees man's link with the absolute in his experiences of ecstasy, happiness, contentment and so on. Man need no longer regard himself as an alien in the world and instead, anticipate a future of creative action.

In another criticism of the existentialist 'solution' Heinemann argues that the existentialists make an unjustified separation of the natura naturans from the natura naturata, assuming that the one could exist without the other. Heinemann appreciates the fact that existentialism deals with concrete problems but he thinks that it is unable to supply a foundation for logic, science or ethics. The ethics of ambiguity, for instance, does not make much sense. "If everybody chooses himself as the creator of his own values and rejects all objective values, this absolute freedom seems open to arbitrariness even if qualified by the desire to see others free." 18) But what seems the most serious shortcoming of the existentialists is that they have incorporated existence into a system. Heinemann regards existence as "a principle of life which escapes all Procrustean systematisation." 19) G.A.Rauche points out that the relationship between man and the absolute as seen by the existentialists is really an immanent construction by man, like speculative metaphysical theories. ".....as the relationship between man and the Absolute is rationally conceived by the existentialists and becomes a dialectical principle in the light of which the structure of the universe and man's existence are rationally explained and understood, it follows

that the ..... 87/..

that the truth of the existentialist is in the end as methodologically constituted and therefore as functional and essential as is every truth-perspective of man."20)

Yet another alternative with which Marcuse had to contend in working out his own approach to the problems that confront man today, was Marxist dialectical materialism effected on a Leninist basis in Soviet Russia and in the East European satellite countries. Nietzsche, in the nineteenth century, had reacted against socialist theory as formulated by Marx and Engels, a theory which visualised the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeois class, and a life of freedom for man as a productive being. "Total man will create the world in his image and recognise himself in all his products." 21) However, Marx's predictions about the collapse of capitalism had not materialised. Lenin realised that Marx's theories would have a greater chance of success in the backward countries. In addition he stressed the important role of the Communist Party for the achievement of Marx's utopian vision. "In the face of the receding revolutionary potential of the working class in the highly industrialised countries of the West, Lenin came to the conclusion that the revolution stood the best chance in a backward country like Russia, where there was the greatest resentment against the ruling classes.....the proletariat must be led in its historical mission by a revolutionary avantgarde, the communist party, which would lay down the revolutionary strategy and tactics that were to be followed in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism." 22) Stalin, in a further adaptation of Marx's theory to conditions in Soviet Russia, proposed the doctrine of socialism in one country, putting aside the theory of a world wide socialist revolution.

Lenin's dilemma, then, was to adopt western Marxism to conditions in an economically underdeveloped and rural society. He was aware of the inadequacy of the Russian working class insofar as a mature, politically conscious socialist force was necessary for the revolution. So he based his hopes on an intellectual leadership elite to achieve what the workers were not yet capable of. This was to lead to the growth in power of the Soviet Communist Party.

When the Bolsheviks came to power in October 1917, the situation was quite unlike Marx's idea of what was necessary for the successful functioning of socialism. In the beginning, some attempt was made to put an idealistic socialist programme into effect. "..... factories were turned over to the workers for administration and control, salaries for managers, specialists and state officials were sharply reduced to working-class levels.....the army was transformed into a citizen militia....." 23)

However, in the face of increasing difficulties, these measures were soon abandoned. "The citizen army gave way to a highly organised and centrally controlled regular army. The inefficient and unproductive system of workers' control was replaced by a rapidly established economy and the familiar staff of managers and specialists. Instead of diminishing to the envisioned point of total disappearance, the state bureaucracy increased steadily along with the salaries for its officials." 24) The foundation had been laid for increasing total control of the country by a power elite - the party.

Stalin built up his own position on the strength of the ~~heritage~~ Lenin had bequeathed - the Party as a 'monopolistic and monolithic' dictatorship. Having assumed control of the Party, Stalin

was able.....89/.....



economic power, has come into existence. And the rift between private and general interests still persists despite state monopolism and its claim to have bridged the gap on a collective basis.

Milovan Djilas, for instance, in his book The New Class links up with Marcuse's own criticism of contemporary Soviet Marxism. Djilas, at one time an important official of the Yugoslav Communist Party, sees the Communist claim of moving towards a classless society as an illusion. In reality, membership of the party means that one belongs to the privileged class. At the core of the party are the masters, the exploiters.

He writes that "for a long time the communist revolution and the communist system have been concealing their real nature. The emergence of the new class has been concealed under socialist phraseology and, more important, under the new collective forms of property ownership. The so called socialist ownership is a disguise for the real ownership by the political bureaucracy." 27) Djilas argues that the new class entrenches its power by relaxing its dogmatic severity and promising a peaceful and good life. But it is only those in power who enjoy inexhaustible sources of benefits and privileges.

So, the Marxist vision of a classless society, where all work for the benefit of all is as remote a possibility in the Soviet Union as it is in the West. Djilas writes, "from the historical point of view, the new class is forced to fortify its authority and ownership constantly, even though it is running away from the truth.....Having achieved industrialisation, the new class can now do nothing more than strengthen its brute force and pillage the people. It ceases to create. Its spiritual heritage is overtaken by darkness." 28)

Soviet Marxism, then, despite its claim to provide the most meaningful philosophical and cultural alternative, can be regarded as continuing human alienation. Its theoretical claims are clearly illusory in a practical context, as Marcuse points out in his criticism (which will be dealt with later in this chapter.)

Marcuse was also influenced by Freudian psycho-analytic theory in formulating his own standpoint (although he attempts to go beyond Freud's own view on culture and repression.) Freud continued in the role that Nietzsche had filled so well - that of sensitive diagnostician of the illness of society and culture. Freud's theory reflects the inadequacy of the old cultural values and the attempt to find new values in the face of increasing industrialisation and functionalisation. His influence can be allied to the growing scepticism about civilisation and morality after the World Wars. Freudian analysis of the existing conditions destroyed the illusion that modern civilisation is essentially good, and evil would soon be stamped out. The wars confirmed Freud's thesis that man is driven by unconscious, irrational and primitive urges over which he has less control than he thinks.

Like the Marxist emphasis on science, Freud also had great faith in rational scientific method, thus sharing the early twentieth century belief that science, properly applied, could end the problems of mankind, and also that man could be studied like other natural phenomena. In this respect, F.Alexander writes: "Freudian doctrine.....from a historical perspective was but the logical continuation of the rationalistic tradition:

to understand.....92/.....

to understand natural phenomena, including those of the mind, on the basis of scientific principles." 29)

Sharing the disenchantment of many with Marxian theory, Freud was convinced that economic motives were not sufficient to explain all aspects of human behaviour. However, he did share Marx's critical attitude towards the status quo, deploring the fact that culture was based on repression and hypocrisy. Marx had argued against capitalist repression and exploitation of the workers. Freud, throughout his life, was a caustic critic of Victorian hypocrisy, and argued firmly for individual self-fulfilment. He upheld real human nature as against the hypocrisies of conventional morality which he saw as damaging to the human consciousness.

Freud presented man with a whole new world - that of the unconscious. He believed that conscious life is the result of the mechanical play of elements in the unconscious. These elements re-appear in the consciousness and influence its operations. The decisive motive force in man Freud called the libido. The highest mental phenomena in the world are sublimations of the libido. The existing cultural values undermine the libido in so far as they lead to the harmful suppression of the sexual life of civilised people through adherence to a "civilised" sexual morality. Nervous illness, feelings of guilt, anxiety and so on (with which the existential thinkers were grappling) Freud traced to the restraints imposed on the libido by cultural development. In The Future of an Illusion he stressed an inner instinctual core in man which strains beyond the reach of culture.



".....for most people, there is a limit beyond which their constitution cannot comply with the demands of civilisation." 30)

Culture, then, according to Freud, has been based on instinctual privation and this, sooner or later, leads to aggression. Civilised society has internalised this aggression, only to leave man with greater feelings of guilt and unhappiness. For example, religion deals with aggression by projecting it to a deity. "In the development of the ancient religions, one seems to discern that many things which mankind had renounced as 'iniquities' had been surrendered to the Deity and were still permitted in his name, so that the handing over to Him of bad and socially harmful instincts was the means by which man freed himself from their domination." 31) Like Marx, Freud condemned religion as a harmful illusion whose unreality would prove harmful to culture.

Despite his belief that cultural restrictions were harmful to human needs, Freud did not think, like Fromm did, that total elimination of cultural authority would lead man to a more meaningful and happier existence. He constantly emphasized the positive aspect of culture though he was aware that one pays a high price in terms of spontaneity. Just as in the individual psyche the id (instinctual drives) is balanced by the ego (rational element of the self), Freud believed that a satisfactory solution must be found between cultural restrictions and individual needs. Through the workings of culture, the libido must be sublimated into creative activity, and aggression directed towards mastery over nature.

Freud proposed psycho-analysis as the means to undo the harm, caused by cultural restrictions,

and to..... 94/...

and to combat widespread neuroses. He wrote, " Our civilisation imposes an almost intolerable pressure on us, and it calls for a corrective.. Is it too fantastic to expect that psycho-analysis, in spite of its difficulties, may be destined for the task of preparing mankind for such correctives?" 32) With the aid of psycho-analysis Freud hoped that man could recapture the directness and spontaneity of childhood to counter the abstractions and conformity of adult life.

Freud campaigned on behalf of man's needs against restrictive social values, opposing, like Marcuse, everything which is 'conventionally restricted, well-established and generally accepted.' By mapping out the innermost labyrinths of the human mind, he initiated a new science and revolutionised man's thinking. It was Freud who introduced into the human cultural order the psychological rationale.

Erik Erikson, one of Freud's students, writes of Freud that he has made "the decisive step towards a true interpretation of the psychological with the technological and the political in the human order." 33) However, despite Freud's invaluable contributions, his proposed 'solution' for coping with the problem of culture has many disadvantages. The worst of Freudian influence is the tendency to believe that all problems are psychological in origin and remediable by psycho-analysis. It is a dangerous generalisation to think that all social sciences are reducible to psychology, since very real problems in other spheres are ignored. It would be as unfortunate for man to look upon psycho-analysis as a panacea as it would be to disregard it completely. .

This, then is the cultural situation as it

as it appeared to Marcuse, a situation which Marcuse regards as one of acute crisis. The sharpness of this crisis is evident in the controversial and even antagonistic relationship that holds among the alternatives offered to cope with it. We have already shown in what sense each alternative proposes to overcome the crisis. Marcuse is aware of the need for a new alternative that can cope more adequately with the complex problems created by increasing technical control over nature. In the light of this, he criticizes and ultimately rejects the alternatives offered by neo-positivism, existentialism, Soviet Marxism and Freudian theory.

However, his own 'solution' bears the marks of each of them insofar as he has incorporated aspects of them into his own total analysis of society and his own alternative for coping with human problems. He accepts, for instance, the necessity for science and scientific method although he does object to the manner in which these are utilised. He appreciates Heidegger's call for the self-creation of man, and also Freud's views on the relationship between culture and repression. He desires also that the economic, political and cultural features of a 'real' classless society be aimed at. All these aspects reflect the influence of the various alternatives which he ultimately rejects.

To deal more specifically with Marcuse's criticisms, we take neo-positivism first. Marcuse's criticism links up with that of Gellner, who had maintained that, like Scholasticism which accepted Revelation uncritically, neo-positivism and especially linguistic analysis takes for granted

the concepts..... 96/...



the concepts and presuppositions of ordinary language. "Linguistic philosophy, as an activity, whether therapeutic or pure, contains doctrines and criteria in a camouflaged form. It insinuates and presupposes those doctrines and the values on which the criteria are based. This is bad for a number of reasons: it makes against critical examination of those values and ideas and against critical examination in general; it inhibits thought and prejudges issues." 34)

It is for the above reason that Marcuse rejects neo-positivism as a valid solution. In One-Dimensional Man he contends that because of its conformism to the functionalistic universe, contemporary logical positivism and linguistic analysis have rendered man incapable of a rational criticism of his social environs. By limiting itself to therapeutic analysis and a mere description of what is, philosophy has rid itself of those concepts which enable man to understand what is happening and to initiate change. Neo-positivist philosophy has no power to change the status quo since its criticisms occur only within the established framework and not of it.

Neo-positivism renders man impotent by bringing his thinking in line with the functionalist universe. "To the degree to which the given reality is scientifically comprehended and transformed.....positivism finds in the society the medium for the realisation of its concepts. - harmony between theory and practice, truth and facts. Philosophic thought turns into affirmative thought; the philosophical critique criticises within the societal framework and stigmatizes non-positive notions as mere speculation, dreams and fantasies." 35)

There will be no qualitative change in the

status quo ..... 97/...

status quo since philosophy avoids unorthodox elements which may constitute a threat to the existing social and cultural order. Marcuse sees neo-positivism as having failed in its attempt to provide man with a meaningful way of life. Not only has it failed but it is even proving detrimental to meaningful human activity and the attempt to lead man out of alienation.

According to Marcuse, neither does existentialism offer much hope for man. In Negations he analyses existentialism as an empty functional gesture, devoid of any concrete content. Marcuse sees that the existential philosophers rightly concerned themselves with concrete historical man in his real life process, attempting to replace abstract mental activity with concrete human experience. Existentialism sought to regain the "full concretization of the historical subject in opposition to the abstract 'logical' subject of rational idealism." 36)

However, Marcuse claims that the existentialists did not attack the presupposition of bourgeois philosophy's abstractions i.e. "The actual unfreedom and powerlessness of the individual in an anarchic production process." 37) The result, as Marcuse sees it, is that abstract reason (which the existentialists criticised) was replaced by an equally abstract 'historicity.' Marcuse claims that existentialism avoids looking at "the historical situation, with regard to its material facticity, of the subject to which it addressed itself.....Philosophy did not go on to ask about.....the people's mode of being, and about the real powers and forces that are history. It thus renounced every possibility of comprehending the

facticity of historical situations and distinguishing between them." 38)

Existentialism does not concern itself with the individual's position in a repressive production process. Also, since it ranges itself against reason (which it sees as alienating man) existentialism fails as a possible instrument against the forces of domination. So Marcuse rejects it because, like neo-positivism, it makes possible the continued existence of the status quo.

Marcuse is equally critical of established Marxism, especially as found in Soviet Russia and in the East European satellite countries. Despite the fact that Marcuse belongs to the neo-Marxist school of thought, he rejects established Marxism on the grounds that the rift between state monopolism and the productive forces still exists despite claims to the contrary.

Marcuse shows in One-Dimensional Man and Soviet Marxism that in the Soviet system the tendency is against transferring economic and political power from those in control (Communist Party functionaries) to those who actually produce. Marx had prophesied that such a transference of power would lead to the withering away of the state. Marcuse writes in this connection : ".....the actual development in present day communist society postpones the qualitative change to the second phase, and the transition from capitalism to socialism appears in spite of the revolution, still as quantitative change. The enslavement of man by the instruments of his labour continues in a highly rationalised, and vastly efficient and promising form." 39)



Marcuse believes that there is little possibility of institutionalised Marxism leading to the fulfilment of man's real needs and the creation of a cultural situation to which all contribute and in which all participate.

As far as Freud is concerned, Marcuse accepts his emphasis on man's libidinal freedom. He agrees with Freud also that a certain basic degree of repression is necessary for the building up of culture and civilisation. However, Marcuse also believes that increasing technological control over nature should lead to the gradual elimination of a great deal of repression.

The kind of repression that exists today is surplus repression - repression that has gone beyond the normal degree necessary for culture, and which is used to maintain specific forms of social domination. Such repression of the libido at this advanced level of civilisation is unnecessary and unnatural. In his book Eros and Civilisation, therefore, Marcuse goes beyond Freud in calling upon man to liberate himself by renouncing the false asceticism imposed on human sexuality by the existing social order.

Marcuse's own 'solution' to the cultural crisis incorporates elements from the various approaches to which he reacted. He calls for the re-awakening of man's historical consciousness and the de-mythologisation of freedom so that it is given a concrete content in the technological medium which exists today. Man can win his liberation by the translation of values into technological tasks.

The application of science and technology to achieve freedom and happiness for all, will bridge the

gap between..... 100/...

gap between real and immediate interests, between the ruling forces and the actual producers, both in the East and in the West. The way to authentic existence lies in the utilisation of scientific and technological progress for the liberation rather than for the repression of man. The various facets of Marcuse's analysis of contemporary society and the alternative he proposes, will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

NOTES .....101/.....

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### MARCUSE'S STAND WITH REGARD TO CONTEMPORARY CULTURE.

In Reason and Revolution Marcuse characterises contemporary society as obtaining "freedom through exploitation, wealth through impoverishment, advance in production through restriction of production,..... The highest development of the productive forces coincides with oppression and misery in full flood..... The negation of this society and its transformation become the single outlook for liberation. " 1)

In One-Dimensional Man he attacks the irrationality which masquerades as Reason. Of our society Marcuse writes: "Its productivity is destructive of the free development of human needs, its peace maintained by the constant threat of war, its growth dependent on the repression of the real possibilities for pacifying the struggle for existence. " 2)

These quotations signify Marcuse's total opposition to the trends which are shaping our society and its culture, and his awareness of the need for a historical alternative, which will enable man to live a kind of life where the 'optimal development and satisfaction of individual needs and faculties with a minimum of toil and misery' is ensured. Like that of Nietzsche, Marcuse's opposition is total. To work for the improvement of existing society will only delay the attainment of a free society. Liberation will never come through an improvement of what already exists, because even the freedoms and satisfactions this culture offers are based on



repression. What he asks for is nothing short of total reversal, a total rejection of this life - destroying culture for a non-repressive one, a possibility which can no longer be relegated to utopia, since material and intellectual resources do exist for its realisation.

In Negations Marcuse cites some of the characteristics of affluent society which have forced culture into its current one-dimensionality e.g.,

(a) A great technical capacity which is unfortunately misused in the production of 'unproductive goods and services' - luxury goods, planned obsolescence, military equipment, etc.

(b) Manipulation of technology by political and economic power groups.

(c) Scientific and pseudo-scientific control of individual and group behaviour, both in work and play, for commercial and political purposes.

(d) Technical progress co-incides with the elimination of personal initiative, taste, etc.

(e) Oversocialisation, crowding, noise, erosion of the need for privacy and independence.

Men are conditioned through mass media to believe that the above characteristics function in the interests of all, when in reality, they represent monopolistic interests of dominant power groups. Technology loses its neutrality in the service of these groups. The technological universe has become a political one. In fact, political power asserts itself by its control of the technological process, exploiting science and technology to maintain itself. The whole of society is drawn into this process. Political power, through its control of technology, "shapes the entire universe of discourse and action, intellectual and material culture. In the medium of technology, culture,

politics and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives."<sup>3)</sup>

Societal forces exercise repression from a position of strength, using technology (which promises increased efficiency and higher standards of living) instead of terror. The result is, that qualitative change, which could establish a new mode of human existence, is contained. The distinction between oppressor and oppressed is eliminated by a common interest in preserving the status quo. "If the worker and his boss enjoy the same television programme, and visit the same resort places.....if they all read the same newspapers, then this assimilation indicates not the disappearance of classes, but the extent to which the needs and satisfactions that serve the preservation of the Establishment are shared by the underlying population." <sup>4)</sup>

Marcuse denounces the false needs imposed on man by monopolistic interests - needs like relaxing, having fun, behaving and consuming in accordance with the advertisements. With these, Marcuse contrasts 'real, vital needs' like "nourishment, clothing, lodging at the attainable level of culture. The satisfaction of ~~these~~ needs is the pre-requisite for the realisation of all needs." <sup>5)</sup>

Marcuse points out how the Welfare and Warfare state are combined in our industrial civilisation. In capitalist society, all opposing forces merge in the face of the threat offered by the enemy (Communism). The result is a universe where all conflict is stabilized by the benefits of productivity and the threat of war. The militarization of society has enabled the uniting of constructive and destructive elements. Men work alongside for life and for death,

unable to imagine a qualitatively different condition of life since the system offers an 'ever-more-comfortable life for an ever - growing number of people.' Despite the 'good life' it supposedly offers to man, Marcuse rejects it as a repressive, totalitarian system. Any negating political forces in society are arrested or reduced to the terms of this universe. And political behaviour like all else is firmly entrenched in one - dimensionality.

However, it is not only the capitalist political and economic machine which Marcuse attacks. The Soviet system comes in for equal censure. In fact, Marcuse sees many similarities between the two, despite the widely publicised differences. Marcuse says: "Total industrialisation seemed to exact patterns of attitude and organisation which cut across the essential political and ideological differences. Efficient business-like management, highly rationalised and centralised, and working on equally rationalised and co-ordinated human and technical material, tends to promote political and cultural centralisation and co-ordination." <sup>6)</sup>

Common to both systems is a technical - economic basis which affects all spheres of life even though the one system relies on private enterprise and the other on a nationalized economy. Marcuse does not see Soviet nationalisation as leading to the elimination of alienated labour since the means of production are not in the hands of the immediate producers (a situation identical to the one in the capitalist West).

"Nationalisation is but a technological - political device for increasing the productivity of labour ..... a change in the mode of domination ..... rather than the pre-requisite for its abolition." <sup>7)</sup>



Marcuse maintains that in Soviet society industrialisation proceeds without waste and obsolescence but under the same totalitarian control of resources. Qualitative change towards a liberalisation of totalitarian controls is postponed. The labourer still endures toil and delay in the satisfaction of vital individual needs.

In Soviet society, conflict between individual and social interest is supposed to have been eliminated, since Soviet society professes to cater for the real needs and interests of all its individuals. Statements to the effect that Soviet society is a democracy, free of exploitation, etc., are continually repeated until they elicit a fixed response. However, they have little relation to truth. As Marcuse sees it, their 'truth' lies in their effect. The result is the obliteration of the difference between truth and falsehood. The irrational becomes part of the scientific management of society. Marxist ideology becomes an instrument of domination, no longer containing a meaning which is critical and opposed to the status quo. The Soviet state, instead of withering away, dominates the worker. A monopoly is exercised by the political, economic and military bureaucracy and maintained by an authoritarian organisation of the productive process.

The dialectic, one of the main tenets of Marxian theory, has undergone a drastic change in function. "It has been transformed from a mode of critical thought into a universal 'world outlook' and universal method with rigidly fixed rules and regulations, and this transformation destroys the dialectic more thoroughly than any revision." <sup>8)</sup> The dialectic is no longer part of the revolutionary consciousness directed towards liberation, but part of the established

system of domination. It serves the status quo, with the result that Soviet society is no longer the negation of capitalism but shares part of its function viz., "the industrial development of the productive forces under separation of control of production from the 'immediate producers'." 9)

The Soviet state in fact has taken over a large part of individual rights in its control over the realm of necessity. The state comes to control personal aspirations, objectives and values. Private values are externalised. Everything detrimental to Soviet morality is repelled. Politics co-ordinates traditionally separated areas of human culture e.g. ethics, the erotic sphere, art, literature, etc. These become politicized and geared towards productivity.

The fusion of technological and political rationality results in the creation of a homogenous culture devoid of any transcendent dimension. This is common to both East and West. The result - man and his culture are trapped within a pattern of one-dimensional thought and behaviour, a pattern which does not promote an authentic mode of human existence since it suppresses a legitimate dimension of existence, that is, the negating, transcending dimension - that which contains the possibilities and potential for the future.

When Marcuse considers whether industrialisation in the backward countries could lead to the satisfaction of vital needs and pacification of the struggle for existence, he fears that since the capital for development will be obtained from the capitalist or communist bloc, the backward country in question could adopt one of various forms of 'neo-colonialism'. Most men, it seems to Marcuse, have been seduced into accepting a

repressive mode of human existence in return for the comforts offered by the status quo, at the expense of autonomy, satisfaction of real human needs and liberation.

Marcuse's critique of contemporary culture with regard to the damage caused in the psychological sphere, is to be found in greatest detail in his book Eros and Civilisation. In his preface to the book Marcuse points out how psychological problems have been turned into political ones by the repressive forces in control. Autonomous psychical processes are now being conditioned to the extent that psychology as a legitimate aspect of culture no longer exists independently.

Marcuse is aware that modern culture is based on the almost total conquest of nature. More and more needs of greater numbers of people are being satisfied than ever before. But he feels that this culture is deficient because of the very creation of a 'happy consciousness' within the established framework. Mechanisation of life, mental impoverishment, etc., are overshadowed by the promise of a better life for all.

What is overlooked is that greater progress goes hand in hand with greater unfreedom and repression. Abuse of scientific and technological power, Marcuse sees as responsible for atom bombs, concentration camps and wars. He thinks it ironic that "the most effective subjugation and destruction of man by man takes place at the height of civilisation, when the material and intellectual achievements of mankind seemed to allow the creation of a truly free world."<sup>10)</sup>

Freud saw instinctual constraint as the precondition for culture. Civilisation begins when 'the reality principle' replaces 'the pleasure

principle..... 111/.....



principle'. Marcuse acknowledges the necessity for some degree of repressive control over the instincts in the interests of civilisation. But he notes that the existing reality principle, in the service of specific interests of domination, introduced additional controls above those necessary for civilised human association. This he calls 'surplus repression'. Its presence points to a repressive culture organised in the interests of domination. The existing reality principle has fostered a system of institutionalized social and political controls.

Marcuse is also aware that outside repression is supported by one from within. Men freely accept and live their repression. ".....the unfree individual introjects his masters and their commands into his own mental apparatus. The struggle against freedom reproduces itself in the psyche of man, as the self-repression of the repressed individual, and his self-repression in turn sustains his masters and their institutions." 11)

Marcuse shows how this situation has affected the value system to such an extent that men easily forego immediate satisfaction for a delayed one, pleasure for the restraint of pleasure, joy (play) for toil (work), receptiveness for productiveness and absence of repression for security. Men come to accept the redirection of their energies and instincts away from their sexual activities to work. Pleasure has to be suspended since the satisfaction of needs requires work. So the instincts are repressively modified in the presence of scarcity (Lebensnot).

Marcuse attacks this scarcity as really a specific organisation of scarcity in the interests of a dominant group which desires to maintain and

improve its privileged position. Goods are distributed in such a way that individual needs are not fully satisfied. So men toil on while sexuality is quantitatively and qualitatively restricted and subjugated under a solely procreative function. Sexuality, which Marcuse sees as an autonomous principle whose sole function is to gain pleasure from the body, is turned into a means to the end of reproduction. This is necessary for the repressive social organisation which exists. Any sex instinct not directed towards procreation is outlawed as a perversion.

The specific form of the reality principle which has governed the growth of contemporary culture, Marcuse calls the performance principle. ".....under its rule society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members." <sup>12)</sup> The powers of domination make the interests of the whole co-incide with their own and men are satisfied as long as their needs are fulfilled.

However, Marcuse is positive that men do not live their own lives in terms of their own faculties and desires. They perform set functions, without gratification and in opposition to the pleasure principle. Libido is diverted for socially useful performances. Man's "erotic performance is brought in line with his societal performance." <sup>13)</sup> Even man's leisure time is controlled by the repressive forces in control. The individual is not to be left alone at all. "For, left to itself, and supported by a free intelligence aware of the potentialities of liberation from the reality of repression, the libidinal energy generated by the id would thrust against its ever more extraneous limitations and strive to engulf an ever larger field of existential relations, thereby exploding the reality ego and its repressive performance." <sup>14)</sup>

Society prevents any form of liberation by strengthening its control over the consciousness, both in work and play. Men accept this irrationality as the new reason, since everyone seems to benefit from it. They are content to "find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment." 15) Any opposition to the established system appears neurotic, a crime against that which satisfies human needs. Marcuse is aware of the very real benefits of the production process, but he sees that their effects are negated when they are used to justify a system of domination.

The individual identifies himself totally with the system. The ego has become socialised, with mass media setting the pattern for conformity. The result is that the individual no longer has a private realm in which he can become 'himself', determine his own needs and satisfactions. The inner dimension of the mind which could exercise the power of negative thinking and critical Reason is eliminated. Totalitarian control over formerly free areas of consciousness allow relaxation of sexual taboos and there appears to be greater sexual freedom. However, these sexual relations are tolerated by the system and brought into conformity with it. The result is that they no longer contain a negation of society. Similarly, terror and normality, war and peace, truth and propaganda, destructiveness and constructiveness are assimilated.

As far as the work world is concerned, man no longer realises himself through his labour. His products dominate him. The result is alienation and dehumanisation. The entire work world becomes a system of animate and inanimate things, all subject to administrative control. Consciousness is no longer concerned with autonomy but



with co-ordinating the individual with the whole. This decline in consciousness confines the limits of knowledge and alters the content of happiness. Happiness comes to mean freedom from any knowledge which will induce anxiety. Marcuse writes : "These trends seem to suggest that the expenditure of energy and effort for developing one's own inhibition is greatly diminished. The living links between the individual and his culture are loosened." 16)

Despite the fact that the individual identifies himself fully with the status quo, Marcuse makes it clear that alienation still abounds when judged in terms of true consciousness outside this one dimension which exists. The manipulation of human instincts, energies and needs does not allow for the emergence of an autonomous individual, nor for the creation of a non-repressive culture.

Marcuse then goes on to show how Freud's theory of instinctual repression is related to the basic context of Western philosophy. Freud had maintained that civilisation begins with the inhibition of Eros and its subsequent weakening as a culture - building force. Marcuse sees the history of Western metaphysics as the conflict between the logos of gratification and that of alienation. Hegel had thought that 'on the attained level of civilisation, with the triumph of reason, freedom had become a reality.' But Marcuse writes : "Neither the state nor society embodies the ultimate form of freedom. No matter how rationally they are organised, they are still afflicted with unfreedom. True freedom is only in the idea. Liberation thus is a spiritual event. Hegel's dialectic remains within the framework of the established reality principle." 17)

In Western philosophy the ultimate form of reason and freedom appears as spirit. The empirical world is conceived in negative terms. Spirit is supposed to make no difference to established reality. Freedom is conceived by philosophy in terms of pure thought only, thus eliminating the influence of philosophy on reality. Philosophy becomes no more than a functional part of the academic establishment under the logic of domination. Thought is redefined and brought in line with reality. All transgressions beyond the established universe of discourse and behaviour are eliminated. Linguistic philosophy emphasizes the therapeutic function of philosophical analysis - elimination of illusions, deceptions and obscurities. Marcuse brands this as a perversion of the function of philosophy, since it is not the task of philosophy to cure but to comprehend the world in which we live, "to understand it in terms of what it has done to man, and what it can do to man." 18)

Subversion of the given, Marcuse sees as the legitimate historical task of philosophy. Philosophic concepts must be antagonistic to the realm of ordinary reality. However, today, all negative connotations of concepts are removed and placed in the realm of fiction or mythology. Theories which project genuine historical possibilities are rejected as irrational. Marcuse places linguistic analysis "at the opposite pole from those modes of thought which elaborated their concepts in tension with, or even in contradiction to, the prevailing universe of discourse and behaviour." 19)

Marcuse states that restriction to the existing behavioural universe results in an 'intrinsically positive attitude' which leads to the transformation of philosophy into affirmative thought. Criticism occurs only within

the societal framework. The transcendent dimension is eliminated. Philosophy proclaims its modesty in 'leaving everything as it is', which Marcuse rejects as sado-masochism. This attitude can only lead to the limitation of the scope and truth of philosophy, and the impoverishment of thought and language.

The restriction of thought to the given forces man to live and think in a world closed against any disturbing, controversial elements, not to seek solutions beyond those which already exist. In this way all non-conformity is suppressed and the authority of philosophy is used to endorse those forces which control this universe. In fact, Marcuse sees no value in even the most exact and clarifying description of linguistic analysis since it adds nothing to a critique and betterment of human conditions.

Marcuse admits that the universe is indeed ambiguous and in need of clarification. But philosophy can only achieve this genuine therapeutic function to the extent to which it frees thought from its enslavement to the status quo. Since philosophy is ideology, its function lies in showing reality as it really is and what prevents it from being so. But today the therapeutic function of philosophy is more of a political task "since the established universe of ordinary language tends to coagulate into a totally manipulated and indoctrinated universe." 20)

The universe of communication is equally affected by the forces of domination. Language is allied to promotion of positive thinking and opposition to transcendent critical ideas. It soon becomes functionalised. ".....the tension between appearance and reality, fact and factor, substance and attribute tends

to disappear.....117/.....



to disappear. The elements of autonomy, discovery, demonstration and critique recede before designation, assertion and imitation." 21)

Essentially oppositional categories become integrated into industrial society by operational treatment i.e., identifying concepts and things with their function. Conceptual thinking is impeded by limiting the content of a concept to the word which designates it in common usage. Analytical propositions function like magic formulas whose constant repetition encloses man's mind within the established way of thinking. The mass media reconcile all opposites, mingling truth and half truth, information and propaganda. This language promotes identification of the particular with the general interest. "The unified functional language is an irreconcilably anti-critical and anti-dialectical language. In it, operational and behavioural rationality absorbs the transcendent, negative, oppositional elements of reason." 22)

Marcuse sees the suppression of a transcendent dimension of thought as a suppression of history. Functional language is anti-historical in so far as it prevents remembrance of the past (by the subversive force of memory) and invocation of the future (which is negation of the present). Language has become an instrument of control and repression.

Even universals, which could undermine functionalism, are translated into operational terms. Analytical philosophy dissolves concepts like Mind, Consciousness, Will, Soul, etc., into statements on particular operations, which can then easily be dealt with. It reformulates the meaning of universals in a non-contradictory way, which then eliminates any

hidden negation. The result is the loss of key concepts of critical thought.

As far as logic is concerned, formal logic, purged of all negative elements, is valued above dialectical logic, which Marcuse sees as the logic of contradiction and opposition. Dialectical logic defines the movement of things from that which they are not to that which they are. In this way, it could undermine the abstractions of formal logic as well as deny the concreteness of the status quo. However, this logic is totally rejected because "they belong to modes of thought which are non-operational in their very structure.. ..their historical concreteness militates against quantification and mathematization on the one hand, and against positivism and empiricism on the other. Thus these modes of thought appear to be a relic of the past, like all non-scientific and non-empirical philosophy. They recede before a more effective theory and practice of Reason." 23)

Concerning existentialism, Marcuse believes that it succeeded in "regaining the full concretion of the historical subject in opposition to the abstract logical subject of rational idealism." 24) But he rejects it in so far as it avoids looking at man's historical situation with regard to its 'material facticity.' It displays no knowledge of the real forces of history and does not concern itself with the unfreedom of the individual in a repressive production process. It simply believes that man must act even though he may not know what for. By opposing reason it has become the tool of the established forces of domination, which do not welcome an objective justification of their actions. In this way, having lost its critical

insight.....119/...

insight, it makes all forms of opportunism possible.

Contemporary philosophic trend like neo-positivism and existentialism help to promote the continuation of the status quo. In the Soviet Union, philosophy is also brought in line with reality. By being absorbed into the official theory, it ceases to be transcendent. For that matter, art, literature, music, etc., have lost their critical force. These areas of culture had once constituted another dimension whose truth posed a subversive force to the status quo.

In art, for instance, was once contained 'the Great Refusal' which was a protest in the name of transcendent truth and freedom against repression. But now this dimension has been absorbed by the technological reality. Art is reduced to the societal function of reflecting the existing reality, and has become "an instrument of social control in the last, still nonconformist dimension of the human existence."<sup>25)</sup>

Works of alienation have lost their subversive force by assimilation into the status quo. Art, philosophy, literature and religion are blended with commercials, and rendered in commodity form as familiar goods and services. "It (the ideal) is brought down from the sublimated realm of the soul or spirit or the inner man, and translated into operational terms and problems.....Higher culture becomes part of the material culture. In this transformation it loses the greater part of its truth." <sup>26)</sup>

However, the cultural assimilation does not indicate the disappearance of privileged groups. The fact of cultural equality i.e., making cultural values acceptable to all, does not go hand in hand with the elimination of injustice, domination, etc. The

situation....120/....



situation where the majority still work to provide life's necessities for the benefit of the few, still exists. What does happen is that the indictment contained in culture is removed by its diffusion. "It is good that almost everyone can now have the fine arts at his fingertips, by just turning a knob on his set or just stepping into his drugstore. In this diffusion however they become cogs in a culture-machine which remakes their content." 27)

The result of the above is an 'affirmative culture' far removed from the social process and supposed to exist in an independent realm of value. This view of culture affirms a better world, different from the factual world of the struggle for existence. Abstract happiness is promised to mask the inequality in the social reality. The ideal that all men participate in culture as free and equal beings is used to postpone gratification of real human needs. It emphasizes spiritual values "thus exalting the individual without freeing him from his factual debasement." 28)

Rebellion is pacified by the injection of ideal cultural happiness into real misery. "The truth of a higher world, of a higher good than material existence conceals the truth that a better material existence can be created in which such happiness is realised..... This is the real miracle of affirmative culture. Men can feel themselves happy even without being so at all." 29)

Marcuse condemns every manifestation of contemporary culture as working for the perpetuation of the authoritarian state. In this way, culture has betrayed its original task - concern with man's

claim ..... 121/.....

claim to happiness. It has absorbed all qualitative opposition - in politics, art, literature, philosophy, etc. Even the concepts of love and marriage have been bureaucratized. In The Organisation Man, Whyte points out how the corporation has invaded the employee's life, even to the extent of calculating a man's wife along with the rest of his assets and liabilities.

This has led to the creation of a 'Happy Consciousness' i.e., satisfaction with the established system because it 'delivers the goods'. Culture is fatally entangled within the 'web of domination'. The destruction of this repressive culture is the pre-condition for liberation and for the creation of Marcuse's ideal of culture, which is "the totality of social life in a given situation, in so far as both the areas of ideational reproduction (culture in the narrower sense, the 'spiritual world') and of material reproduction ('civilisation') form a historically distinguishable and comprehensible unity." 30)

A culture must be created where potential material and intellectual resources are utilised fully for the satisfaction of individual needs and faculties. However, Marcuse does not visualise a situation where the economy appropriates the entire life of man. The present organisation of societal resources must be overcome before a free society can emerge. The established technological society has already demonstrated its truth value as an alternative in that it has organised man's struggle with nature, offering a comfortable human existence.

The time has come for a qualitatively different alternative which depends on planning for

all, against minority interests, but which makes use of possibilities available at the attained level of material and intellectual culture. This alternative "offers a greater chance for the pacification of existence, within the framework of institutions which offer a greater chance for the free development of human needs and faculties." 31)

The dialectical process must be carried through by conscious men who must recognise and seize liberating potentialities to attain a more rational form of human existence. It is because of this that Marcuse sees in his alternative a higher historical truth, in that it offers a greater chance for the pacification of existence. But this can only be realised if industrialisation proceeds in different ways and with different aims.

At the moment technology is an instrument of repressive politics. So liberation would involve a political act. Political change would come by a re-direction of technological progress i.e., it must be used solely for the pacification of existence. Pacification can open new relations between man and man. Technological rationality, freed from its exploitative features, will be dependent on political direction, but this will not necessarily result in an accumulation of power. Marcuse feels that the reconstruction of the material base of society, with freedom in mind, could lead to a quantitative and qualitative reduction of power.

Marcuse does not ask for total elimination of the technical base of society, since he believes it is the basis of all human freedom. Nor does he see a total abolition of labour.

What he wants..... 123/...



What he wants is the re-organisation of the realm of necessity in the interests of all men - to eliminate misery, poverty, violence, etc., so that men can concentrate on creating a true culture in accordance with their needs. Marcuse quotes Nietzsche to this effect : "if we are ever happy at all, we can do nothing other than promote culture." 32)

A new conception of Reason must emerge which is characterised by Whitehead's proposition: "The function of Reason is to promote the art of life." 33) Promotion of the art of life must be the goal of the scientific transformation of the world. This can be made possible by the mechanisation of all socially necessary labour. "Complete automation in the realm of necessity would open up the dimension of free time as the one in which man's private and societal existence would constitute itself." 34) Not only would vital needs be satisfied but labour time reduced as well, leaving man to develop in conditions where his needs are no longer imposed on him by the powers of domination.

Marcuse calls for a redefinition of human needs. The false identification of social and individual needs must end. Man in his needs must not reproduce the repression of the exploitative system. Liberation involves the development of new needs and the change must occur in the very nature of the individual, in his 'biology' as Marcuse puts it. "Such a change would constitute the instinctual basis for freedom.....Freedom 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 the aggressiveness, brutality and ugliness

of the established way of life." 35)

To achieve liberation, autonomous individuals with effective control over the production and distribution of necessity, free from indoctrination and manipulation, are necessary. Marcuse visualizes the emergence of a new historical Subject who is free in every sense of the word - free from the struggle for existence, free from ~~being~~ controlled by economic and political forces over which he has no control, free from imposed ways of thinking and acting.

In the backward countries there must be improvement of indigenous modes of life and labour, instead of the imposition of exploitative technology. And in the advanced countries there must be a reduction of over-development. By this, Marcuse does not envisage a return to poverty but the elimination of profitable waste. Human energy, instead of being channelled into mindless tasks, could now go towards creating a new mode of human existence which allows the free play of individual faculties. The standard of living would no longer be measured in terms of cars, television sets, etc., but in terms of gratification of basic needs, and freedom from toil and fear.

Political and technological reversal would signify the end of the tyranny of the performance principle in the psychological sphere. The abolition of this principle would make obsolete the repressive organisation of the instincts and lead to the gradual elimination of surplus repression and the strengthening of the libido. A non-repressive culture can be created through the "non-repressive development of the libido under the conditions of mature civilisation." 36) The elimination of repression would remove the antagonistic

relation.....125/...

relation between the pleasure principle and the reality principle. "Eros, the life instinct would be released to an unprecedented degree," 37)

The result of this would not be savagery and violence but the emergence of a non-repressive reality principle which teaches receptivity, contemplation, enjoyment, etc. Productivity, which contemporary culture values so highly, could then be seen in a new light - as working towards the free development of human needs. The rationality of domination becomes that of gratification, opening up a new experience of being which could totally alter human existence.

The feeling of individual alienation from others and from the world would vanish since power would express the rational decision of autonomous individuals, free from repressive needs. Such a situation would refute Freud's identification of civilisation with repression, of progress with domination. Marcuse believes that the pleasure and reality principles are not irreconcilable. It is possible to have a "non-repressive civilisation based on a fundamentally different experience of being, a fundamentally different relations between man and nature and fundamentally different existential relations. " 38)

The non-repressive release of libidinal energy would reverse the process of desexualisation of the body, and make for a freer world based on mature erotic relations. This could facilitate the creation of a more authentic culture since Marcuse believes that "The sex instinct are the life instincts: the impulse to preserve and enrich life by mastering nature in accordance with the developing vital needs is originally an erotic impulse.....



And the 'struggle for existence' is originally a struggle for pleasure: culture begins with the collective implementation of this aim." 39)

Culture must become the free self-development of Eros rather than a repressive sublimation of it. The taboos on the use of the body as an instrument of pleasure, fostered by civilised morality, must be removed. The whole body 'in opposition to genital supremacy' must be drawn into the orbit of pleasure. Marcuse calls this process the eroticisation of the entire personality. Sexuality would be transformed into Eros since it would no longer be primarily directed towards reproduction.

Marcuse upholds the value of perversions and phantasy as expressions of rebellion against the existing psychological and sexual mores. Perversions, with their claim to instinctual freedom and gratification, uphold sexuality as an end in itself, against society which sees in it a means to an end. Marcuse sees phantasy as containing a truth incompatible with repressive reason; the truth of the 'Great Refusal'. Phantasy "protects against all reason, the aspirations for the integral fulfilment of man and nature which are repressed by reason." 40)

Phantasy, which Marcuse relates to imagination, retains the structure of the psyche prior to any kind of societal organisation. It preserves the memory of a state where there exists immediate unity between the universal and the particular under the rule of the pleasure principle. "The truth - value of imagination relates not only to the past but also to the future: the forms of freedom and happiness which it invokes claim to deliver the historical reality. In its

refusal to accept as final the limitations imposed upon freedom and happiness by the reality principle, in its refusal to forget what can be, lies the critical function of phantasy. " 41)

The liberation of the memory of the identity between necessity and freedom contained in the unconscious, holds hope for the liberation of the future since men would desire the re-creation of such a paradise. And art carries most visibly the return of the repressed, reflecting the image of man as a free subject. The culture heroes of the new reality principle Marcuse sees in Orpheus and Narcissus, as opposed to Prometheus- the hero of the performance principle. They symbolise a revolt against a culture based on toil and domination, and the desire for a freedom that will release the powers of Eros to unite art, freedom and culture.

In terms of philosophy, there will emerge a new conception of human essence which takes into account the utilisation of real possibilities for the fulfilment of human life. "The essence of man is understood in connection with those tendencies which have as their goal a new form of social life..... the real fulfilment of everything that man desires to be when he understands himself in terms of his potentialities." 42) Such a theory of essence would point to a new situation where freedom and happiness are no longer merely philosophical propositions but a historical situation which can be achieved. These cultural values would then become valid for all, as part of general objective truth, as part of common human existence rather than being confined to the 'rank of privilege.'

Such a concept of essence is not utopian

because it points to concrete realisation through historical action. By being directed towards historical practice rather than absolute knowledge, the concept of essence ceases to be pure theory and has the power to shape the future. In a different social organisation, the new essence of man would appear in reality and the antithesis between essence and appearance would disappear.

Philosophy must become active critical theory and regain its subversive power - the 'power of the negative' which was the original concern of Western thought. It can and must aid in 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 dependent in itself - free. " 43)

The result would be a new relationship between science and metaphysics. Marcuse believes that industrial society does have the potential to "transform the metaphysical into the physical, the inner into the outer, the adventures of the mind into adventures of technology." 44) Ideas defining reality in metaphysical terms would lose their emotive, unreal character. Scientific concepts in turn could define the possibilities of a free and pacified existence.

The ability of metaphysics to project different possibilities could combine with science and technology to end misery, toil and oppression. Scientific and imaginative thought could guide the realisation of a pacified existence. "And the ideas of justice, freedom and humanity then obtain their truth and good conscience on the sole ground on which they could ever have truth and good conscience - the satisfaction of man's material needs, the rational organisation of the realm of necessity." 45)



Technological progress has made possible the 'translation of values into technical tasks - the materialisation of values.' Values can be redefined in technical terms. Universals like 'man', 'freedom', 'justice,' etc., which Marcuse regards as primary elements of experience, express real potentialities which can be realised in the technical world. Transformation of human society towards freedom is no longer a utopian idea since men already possess the necessary material and intellectual resources. The only thing that has to be developed is the need for freedom.

The new conception of man will result in the emergence of a new morality, which will be a negation of existing Judeo - Christian morality, which Marcuse sees as part of the repressive needs enforced on man by society. The new morality will prepare man for freedom, showing him that it lies within his power to create hell or heaven on earth - a morality "rooted in the erotic drive to counter aggressiveness, to create and preserve 'ever greater unities' of life."<sup>46)</sup>

The humanistic promises betrayed by the old culture could be fulfilled in the new morality. But for this, a new kind of man with a different sensitivity and consciousness is necessary, "men and women who have the good conscience of being human, tender, sensuous, who are no longer ashamed of themselves."<sup>47)</sup> Marcuse quotes Nietzsche to this effect: 'The token of freedom attained, that is, no longer being ashamed of ourselves.'

Marcuse sees the rise of a new sensibility which desires the ascent of the life instincts over aggressiveness and guilt. Science and technology are to be used for the gratification and protection of

life - "playing with potentialities of form and matter for the attainment of this goal." 48) Then only can one speak of a technology of liberation. Under a non-repressive reality principle "a new sensibility and a desublimated scientific intelligence would combine in the creation of an aesthetic ethos." 49)

Marcuse uses the aesthetic principle to show the inner connection between pleasure, sensuousness, beauty, truth, art and freedom. He proceeds from Kant's philosophy where he finds that the "aesthetic dimension occupies the central position between sensuousness and morality, " 50) because it contains principles valid in both. The basic experience in this dimension is sensuous, not conceptual, and the aesthetic perception is accompanied by pleasure.

The chief categories of the aesthetic order Marcuse sees as 'purposiveness without purpose' and 'lawfulness without law.' These two "circumscribe, beyond the Kantian context, the essence of a truly non-repressive order. The first defines the structure of beauty, the second that of freedom; their common character is gratification in the free play of the released potentialities of man and nature." 51) The introduction of the truth values of the sensuous order into human culture will free man from the repressive order of reason. "The sensuous, the playful, the calm and the beautiful become forms of existence and thereby the Form of the society itself." 52)

The aesthetic will be the form of the free society as opposed to the commodity form of contemporary culture. Morality, political action, in fact, all human cultural activity must be guided by aesthetic principles. In this way, art becomes an important

productive.....131/....

productive force in the material and cultural transformation of society. It helps to shape the way of life in such a way that society becomes 'a work of art'.

Marcuse does not reject reason completely as can be seen in his wish to make sensuousness rational and reason sensuous. Culture could then be based on an interaction between the two, and the function of Reason and Art would converge. The antagonism between Eros and civilisation would then be overcome by the idea of a sensuous reason. Freud's definition of Eros as the culture builder which strives to 'form living substances into ever greater unities so that life may be prolonged and brought to higher development,' would then be validated.

A strengthened Eros could also absorb the 'death instinct' which is today used as an instrument of repression. Free men will accept the necessity of death while seeing that it does not cancel out the possibility of liberation. "Men can die without anxiety if they know that what they love is protected from misery and oblivion. After a fulfilled life, they may take it upon themselves to die - at a moment of their own choosing. " 53)

The one factor which threatens non-repressive development in the aesthetic dimension is death, finiteness. Men become resigned to the passage of time and forget what was and what can be. But Marcuse maintains that to forget and forgive reproduces the conditions which breed injustice. Instead of surrendering to time, men must look to remembrance for liberation. "Time loses its power when remembrance redeems the past." 54) The struggle against time must be translated into historical action by the play impulse. "In this task culminates



the progress of mankind to a higher form of culture." 55)

Time must not be regarded as linear but cyclical, just like the return contained in Nietzsche's idea of the 'perpetuity of pleasure.' This is only possible in a civilisation where work has become play, where work is the free play of human abilities. And the key to liberation from all constraint lies in the aesthetic dimension. Liberation will enable man to explore all possibilities of being, aided by the imagination.

Problems concerning the liberty of the individual in relation to the whole can be reconciled by a 'general will' which must, however, be directed always towards individual needs. For this reason Marcuse's alternative demands a rejection of both capitalist and communist forms of societal organisation, where the majority of the people comes to mean the majority of the masters. A new, real democracy must emerge which would involve the self-government of free people, with justice for all.

Although Marcuse believes in the value of a type of communism which involves the equitable distribution of social wealth according to freely developing human needs, he rejects contemporary socialist society on the grounds that it fails to take into account the 'aesthetic - erotic' dimension, which visualizes the convergence of technology and art, work and play. So he calls for the construction of a new socialism by "creating a genuine solidarity between the leadership and the liberated victims of exploitation." 56)

The institutions of liberation would then be collective ownership and control of the means of production and distribution. This is the foundation

of the new historical alternative - utilisation of all available resources to abolish poverty and create a reality guided by a new sensibility and consciousness. Marx's historical logos must be aimed at achieving the economic, political and cultural features of a real classless society. Only then can a sensuous culture be created, with the ascent of the 'Aesthetic Principle as Form of the Reality Principle.'

And as to the problem of what men will do once a free society has been created, Marcuse answers in the words of a young black girl : ".....for the first time in our life, we shall be free to think about what we are going to do." 57)

NOTES.....134/...

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1. MARCUSE, H. : Reason and Revolution,  
P. 311-12.
2. MARCUSE, H. : One-Dimensional Man, P.9.
3. IBID., : P. 14.
4. IBID., : P. 24.
5. IBID., : P. 22.
6. MARCUSE, H. : Soviet Marxism, P. 195.
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8. IBID., : P.136.
9. IBID., : P.150.
10. MARCUSE, H. : Eros and Civilisation,  
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15. MARCUSE, H. : One-Dimensional Man, P.24.
16. MARCUSE, H. : Eros and Civilisation,  
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17. IBID., : P.101.
18. MARCUSE, H. : One-Dimensional Man,  
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NOTES..... 135/.....



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| 24. | MARCUSE, H. | : | Negations, P. 32.             |
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| 26. | MARCUSE, H. | : | One-Dimensional Man, P.59.    |
| 27. | IBID.,      | : | P. 64.                        |
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| 29. | IBID.,      | : | Pp. 121 - 122.                |
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| 32. | MARCUSE, H. | : | Negations, P. 133.            |
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| 34. | IBID.,      | : | P. 44.                        |
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| 36. | MARCUSE, H. | : | Eros and Civilisation, P.118. |
| 37. | IBID.,      | : | P.128.                        |
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NOTES..... 136/.....

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| 39. | IBID.,      | : | P. 106.                           |
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| 46. | MARCUSE, H. | : | An Essay on Liberation,<br>P. 10. |
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C H A P T E R   S I X

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES  
OFFERED BY NIETZSCHE AND MARCUSE, AS WELL  
AS SOME PERTINENT DIFFERENCES AND SIMILAR-  
ITIES IN APPROACH.

Having examined the cultural climate in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which precipitated the reaction of Nietzsche and Marcuse respectively, as well as having presented the 'solutions' offered by these two different thinkers in order to reverse the cultural malaise, we come now to a critical examination of these actual 'solutions', and an analysis of significant similarities and differences in their approach to the problem of culture.

It has to be ascertained whether Nietzsche and Marcuse have, in terms of their specific alternatives, satisfactorily solved the problem of man's authentic existence and whether their vision of what culture ought to be can indeed rescue man from the alienation and unauthenticity they condemn.

As far as differences and similarities between the two critics are concerned, an obvious similarity is their position with regard to the culture of their respective times. Both stand apart and alienated from the established order of the day - Nietzsche against the debilitating Christian/democratic spirit of the nineteenth century, and Marcuse against the sophisticated but repressive technological culture of today. Nietzsche was openly contemptuous of nineteenth century culture. In Marcuse's writings we find a deep - seated distrust of what he calls



'affirmative culture'. Nietzsche was convinced of the total worthlessness of the cultural efforts of his day, which, far from promoting true freedom and happiness, only serve to lower man to the depths of mediocrity and inauthenticity. Marcuse's distrust of twentieth century culture stems from his belief that the apparent benefits our culture offers to man are used to manipulate him towards a specific way of thinking and acting, a way which will not constitute a threat to the status quo.

The opposition of both philosophers to their respective cultures stem from a common conception of the task of philosophy and philosophers - the Socratic task of 'applying the knife vivisectionally to the very virtues of the time.' Both men probe culture with disregard for all the holy cows upheld by men. Nietzsche speaks of the therapeutic effect of philosophy, where as Marcuse assigns to it the task of negating and transcending the status quo.

Both, after examining their respective cultures and finding them repressive and not in line with the 'real' needs of man, go on to offer, each a different historical alternative, in an effort to rescue man from his cultural alienation and return him to himself as an authentic cultural agent. Both give us their own conceptions of what culture ought to be like and also provide a model of the type of man who is the ideal cultural agent, who lives in line with reality as seen by Nietzsche and Marcuse respectively.

Nietzsche believes that true culture is only for the Superman, for only he is capable of it. The mass of men are quite content to live their average, mediocre lives. It does not matter that they do not enjoy 'true' happiness and 'true' freedom. They do

not qualify for it. Marcuse, on the other hand, wants 'true' cultural values to become part of common human existence and not remain the privilege of a few.

Ancient idealism, Marcuse tells us in Negations, reflected a situation where the realm of the good and the beautiful was pure theoretical speculation, lying beyond the existing conditions of life. The highest truths and values were reserved for the elite. This state of affairs, which Marcuse deplors, is precisely what Nietzsche desires. For Marcuse, cultural values of truth, beauty, freedom and justice must become applicable to all men. This is not a utopian demand but perfectly feasible in terms of the almost total conquest of nature.

Although both are opposed to 'idealist culture' in the sense that cultural values are derived from some spiritual, other-worldly realm instead of being based in existing reality, Marcuse's conception of culture does take into account the majority of men as well as the material struggle for existence, whereas Nietzsche's conception does not. For Marcuse, culture signifies "the totality of social life in a given situation, in so far as both the areas of ideational reproduction (culture in the narrower sense, the 'spiritual world') and of material reproduction ('civilisation') form a historically distinguishable and comprehensible unity." <sup>1)</sup> For Nietzsche, the production of life's necessities, the struggle for existence is the concern of the average man and not a part of 'true' culture. Because the average man makes available the necessities of life, Superman is left free for higher things, that is, the creation of 'true' culture (culture in a more spiritual sense).

Comfort and freedom for all men, which Marcuse

desires..... 140/....

desires, is not what Nietzsche would prefer. He despised the idea of 'bread for all' as leading to spiritual decline. His attitude is well expressed by Harrington: "the world of democracy, science and technology .....must be thin and shallow. In it men will lose contact with their own depths. The sense of tragedy will vanish, the highest value will smother under the weight of material satisfaction. Ultimately, all this mindlessness, this ignoring of the irrepressible irrationalities of life, will lead to a disaster. Gradual progress prepares an apocalypse." 2)

The idea of democratic abundance for all, the ending of economic misery and suffering, which Marcuse espouses as one of the fruits of technological progress, Nietzsche rejects because it is opposed to the natural order of inequality. Nietzsche, like Dostoevsky, believed suffering and unhappiness to be an inevitable condition of human existence. To seek to end this condition would be going against life itself.

As opposed to Marcuse's idea that all men must recognise the dangers of industrial enslavement and guard against it, Nietzsche believes that "there is nothing more terrible than a barbarian slave class which has learned to recognise its own existence as an injustice, and is ready to take vengeance, not only for itself but for all the past generation as well." 3)

Whereas Marcuse sees that technology carries the possibility of abolishing all repetitive enslaving work, Nietzsche is quite convinced that the "internal reform of the technological system towards a freer society is impossible, because he saw an essential poverty at the centre of technology and therefore he felt the eternal impersonality of the factory process



could not be transcended." 4)

Both Nietzsche and Marcuse believe in man's self-creation as a cultural being - Nietzsche by will to power, and Marcuse by man's changing the world, so that, in both instances, man is freed from repression and unauthenticity. Both desire the self-transcendence of man - to create man anew, to perfect nature.

Nietzsche calls on man to cultivate and improve himself, to transfigure nature in the direction of the highest specimens of humanity. By doing so, man lives in accord with the full potential of his being. Marcuse's vision is similar. Man must unlearn everything he knows, free himself from the conditioning imposed on him and remake his own nature. In fact, Marcuse demands a change in the very 'biology' of the individual. Freedom must become a biological necessity in man. Both Nietzsche and Marcuse deplore the fact that men internalise their repression and reproduce it in their own lives.

Both demand, in Marcuse's words : "men and women who have the good conscience of being human, tender, sensuous, who are no longer ashamed of themselves." 5) Both philosophers demand a new type of man, with a different sensitivity and consciousness, and in this way, both arrive at Superman in different ways - a ~~man~~ who is free from all that is abhorrent in men, in fact, a type of ideal man.

Both Nietzsche and Marcuse reject the abstract, the other-worldly, as leading to alienation, and demand that man focus on this finite existence as the starting point of human endeavour. In this, they both realise Heidegger's conception of Being as manifest in finite human existence. Nietzsche rejects any metaphysics which seeks to explain this world in terms of abstract

absolutes, for instance, the manner in which Hegel constituted the Absolute Spirit from which he thereafter derived the values of truth, freedom, etc. One must accept one's contingent experience as real.

Marcuse agrees that this so-called world of appearance is the only reality within which one can act and change the world. To think otherwise is to evade one's responsibility as a human being. Marcuse writes: "The weakness and despondency of man, the inequality of power and wealth, injustice and suffering were attributed to some transcendental crime and guilt; rebellion became the original sin, disobedience against God, and the striving for gratification was concupiscence." <sup>6)</sup> It is time for man to re-assume his responsibility in the only world that is truly his own.

Nietzsche urges man to capture eternity now. Marcuse wants total affirmation of the life instincts instead of their negation. This leads to another similarity between the two thinkers, in that they can be said to allow Freud's libido to live itself out, both in man gaining pleasure from his body and in pouring its vital power into the creative act. Both deplore the restrictions placed on joy among people and see how the wild, breathless pace of life and the glorification of work acts as a powerful restraint on man as an erotic being.

Nietzsche, in his critique of Western rationalism, insisted on joy and enjoyment as the measure of human fulfilment. He envisaged Superman as the being in whom is contained an overflowing spirit and fullness of bodily vigour, enabling him to feel totally the joys of life. The passions, man's natural instincts are to be liberated from the spirit of bad conscience.

Superman lives freely his passion, though realising the necessity for control over them. Sublimation of passion becomes the foundation for the creation of cultural values.

Marcuse approves of Nietzsche's idea of erotic being. He believes that Nietzsche speaks in the name of a reality principle quite antagonistic to that of Western civilisation, by emphasizing joy (Lust). For Marcuse, the new culture must be "rooted in the erotic drive to counter aggressiveness, to create and preserve ever greater unities of life." <sup>7)</sup> He calls for the liberation of the erotic impulse in man, the freeing of sex from the purposes of reproduction only, a widening of the concept 'libido' to include the entire body as an instrument of pleasure. Only in such a state can man preserve and enrich life and culture.

Marcuse finds a way out of Freud's equation of civilisation with repression, by allowing that a certain degree of restraint is necessary for civilisation, but that the larger part of sexual repression in contemporary society is surplus repression i.e., repression in the interests of domination. Marcuse is certain that society can rid itself of its repressive character without disintegrating into chaos.

It is interesting to note the difference in the two critics' choice of the revolutionary element in society. Nietzsche sees hope for society in the aristocratic Superman. He is charged with the task of leading society to a higher level of existence, away from the mediocrity of the average man. As against Nietzsche's elite group, Marcuse chooses the outcasts - those on the fringes of society as those who contain the potential for change to a level of existence which transcends the repressive existing one.



His choice falls on "the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable." 8) Both philosophers reject the average individual as too much a part of the 'happy consciousness' to be able to effect any form of change which will revitalise culture. Nietzsche sees the majority of men as being incapable of the sacrifices necessary for the new level of existence. They are quite content to live by mediocre values. Marcuse regards most men as too deeply ensconced in the material comforts of existence to be able to initiate change. Having rejected the average man, Nietzsche and Marcuse look to the two extremes of society as potential agents of change - the one extreme at the top of society, the other at the bottom.

The alternatives they offer are deficient in that they seek hope only in such extremes - the aristocrats and the outcasts, especially when one considers the fact that society in the large consists of average individuals i.e., men who are neither geniuses nor unemployed outcasts. A consideration of what is beneficial to culture should, of necessity, include a consideration of the role and status of the average man. In this respect, both 'solutions' are problematic. To guarantee an existence that does not degenerate into tyranny, whether it be that of the majority or of a minority, all men must be treated as potentially 'truly human beings'.

Having attempted a comparative analysis of the theories of the two philosophers, we now go on to evaluate the alternatives offered by Nietzsche and Marcuse. First, we take Friedrich Nietzsche, whose tastes were so offended by the vulgarity and

mediocrity of what passed for culture in his day. Nietzsche's philosophy reflects the process which the whole of European culture was undergoing in the nineteenth century - the breakdown of the old cultural values according to which man had lived up to this time, the traumatic "tearing consciousness loose from its roots." 9) The specific idols by which men had lived so securely were no longer satisfactory. Instead, man was plagued by insecurity, and his culture assailed from all sides by strange, alien forces.

Before the blight of madness engulfed Nietzsche's mind completely, he was able to give us a sound and penetrating analysis of the cultural crisis in the nineteenth century, as well as suggest a road to recovery. Although every aspect of human cultural enterprise seemed to lead man deeper and deeper into alienation, perverting the possibility of a genuinely human existence, this low water mark in human culture also pointed to its dialectical transcendence - the era of a culture dedicated to life instead of its repression.

For the new level of human existence, a new kind of man was necessary, and Nietzsche proposed Superman - bountiful creator of the new culture, a perfect balance of Dionysian passion and Apollinian restraint. Nietzsche's 'solution' to the problem of culture reflects his deep admiration for the early Greeks who lived by a wholesome quality of life which modernity, sadly, could not match.

Nietzsche's indictment of his age is indeed severe. Collins writes of Nietzsche as a critic of culture that "his keen psychological insight into human motives enabled him to detect a basic rotteness

beneath the facade of nineteenth century optimism.....  
However perfervid and mixed with metaphysical myth  
were his cultural observations, they also contained  
shrewd diagnoses, still relevant for understanding  
ourselves as the heirs of the nineteenth century." 10)  
William Barrett in his book Irrational Man comments  
that the problem of man could never again be tackled  
on a pre-Nietzschean level, for it was Nietzsche who  
showed in its fullest sense, the thoroughly problematical  
and complex nature of man. 11)

What Nietzsche deplored was the loss of dignity  
in nineteenth century culture. The characterless face  
of culture, the deference for wealth, the commercialism,  
the impersonality of mechanisation - these were all  
inevitable consequences of the Industrial Revolution,  
consequences which seemed to be driving out any nobler,  
more dignified impulses in man. Culture had become  
'practical' and Nietzsche abhorred this standardisation  
and stultification of human potential. He desired that  
culture reappropriate the dignity lost to it, and become  
a means to self transcendence, to self over-coming.

The new culture and the new man is to be free  
of any form of transcendental justification, of any  
kind of divine sanction. This call to man to remain  
true to the earth, not to be seduced by the promises  
of illusory happiness in some otherworldly realm, adds  
more dignity and demands a greater responsibility to  
the human condition than had been ever required before.  
The self-creation of man as a cultural being within  
the cycle of Becoming, the recognition of Becoming as  
natural, and the acknowledgement of human finiteness,  
contingency and mortality - all these Nietzsche demands  
as part of the cultural re-awakening. In this, he proves  
the forerunner of Heidegger who echoed Nietzsche's call



to accept and to love one's fate, this being the precondition of a more realistic form of existence.

A culture focussed on man as finite being rather than on some abstract absolute - this is what Nietzsche urges man to pursue if he is ever to regain the dignity and self respect of which Christianity, Darwinism, mechanisation, etc., had robbed man. Amor fati and the responsibility this carries could mean the start of a new creative freedom for man, freedom from an ethics which is inimical to the fundamental instincts of life. Celebration of life, rather than its repression, cannot but aid culture to free itself from the deadwood that paralyses it. Nietzsche's probing ethical analysis becomes a pertinent "critique of culture, a vivisection of modern man." 12)

Despite the value of Nietzsche's diagnosis of an alienated and alienating culture, we have to be on our guard when evaluating his 'solution', his vision of the road to recovery. His genuine and legitimate criticisms of many aspects of nineteenth century culture and our own possible agreement with his criticisms must not, by their sheer enthusiasm, lead us to an uncritical acceptance of the alternative he proposes.

We must consider carefully the question of whether Nietzsche, in fact, does provide us with a valid and feasible alternative to the whole problem of culture. His own role he saw as that of a 'herald and precursor' of new values which will guarantee culture as the "self - surpassing activity of man." 13) The focal point of the revaluation of values are Superman, the Will to Power and Eternal Recurrence of the Equal.

As far as Superman is concerned, Nietzsche sometimes refers to the idea as if he means an individual, and other times as if he means the entire species of Supermen. What emerges clearly however, is that Superman is a specific type or model of man on which hinges Nietzsche's 'solution' to the problem of culture. In which case, we must guard against the danger of absolutising it, despite its appeal to the highest potential of man.

The whole history of philosophy is evidence of man's persistent, even obstinate search for truth. It is a reflection also of the perspectival and multi-faceted nature of human truth. Vastly different visions of reality and models of man have been offered by philosophers in different times- each equally valid in the light of specific historical and existential circumstances. Nietzsche's 'solution' must be seen in the light of the above.

Nietzsche himself realised the perspectival nature of truth. He saw how human thought is concerned with imposing form and structure (the Apollinian element) on a formless reality (the Dionysian element). Different men in different societies have specific conceptual schemes according to which they decide the nature of truth. He writes: "suppose that this, too, is only an interpretation - and one will be eager enough to raise this objection. Well - so much the better." 14)

There are times, however, when Nietzsche writes of his own 'solution' as if it were an undeniable and exclusive truth, when he claims the greatest reality and genuineness for his own theory. Who is to say which theory is more valuable since each, to some extent, satisfies the need of its time.

In Nietzsche's writings, we are constantly reminded of his horror at the decline of culture, and of the depth of his desire to see the rise of a new, more vital culture. One gets the impression that it is this intense concern for culture and man which leads him to such excesses of thought and expression as, for instance, "I was the first to discover truth."<sup>15)</sup> He seems to want to shock man into reality, using the most excessive means. And, as a result, there exists in certain respects, a contradiction between his obvious awareness of the many possibilities of truth, and his belief that it is his own philosophy which provides man with ultimate explanations and formulas of existence.

To go on with our examination of Nietzsche's conception of Superman - we consider an important issue raised by Barrett. "Is the Superman to be the extraordinary man, or the complete and whole man? Will the Superman, then, be the titanically striving individual, dwelling on the mountaintop of the spirit, or will he be the man who has realised within the world his own individual capacities for wholeness?"<sup>16)</sup>

Nietzsche proposes noble means to return man to a more authentic form of existence, but are they feasible means as well? It is admirable to call on man to surpass himself, to realise the full potential of his being, but is man capable of the Titanism which Nietzsche demands? For man to become Superman would require the total transformation of his present nature to a condition which seems to me to be quite beyond human attainment.

We must always keep in mind the underside of man's character - the petty, the paltry, the mean, and the mediocre - which exists in the human condition as inescapably as the noble, the brave and the

magnanimous..... 150/.....



magnanimous. This duality is reflected by Zarathustra who wants to climb upwards and the dwarf who wants to pull him downwards to earth. Nietzsche wants only one side of the coin - the ideal side, though he is aware of the existence of the other side, for he says, in man there is not only the creator, the hammer, the sculptor but also matter, excess, clay, mire, folly and chaos. But he chooses only the exalted and the supreme. Zarathustra says "Dwarf, either thou or I." <sup>17)</sup> Barrett writes in this connection: "To be a whole man - a round man, as the Chinese say - Western man may have to learn to be less Faustian. A touch of the average, the mediocre may be necessary ballast for human nature."<sup>18)</sup>

Despite the fact that all men are not equal in potential, that there are some more gifted and more capable than others, Nietzsche's aristocratic ethic can lead to a dangerous situation where one's scorn and contempt for the less capable members of humanity (whom Nietzsche often referred to as 'the botched and the bungled') can lead to a desire for their repression. Nietzsche constantly reminds us that the mass of humans have no claim to the level of existence enjoyed by Superman. In fact, the majority exists only for the good of the highest specimens of humanity. Rather than submit to the will of God, they should submit to the will of Superman.

So, the position of Superman is one which demands the greatest degree of tolerance and care in order not to degenerate into a destructive tyranny. Men without the necessary control and restraint that ought to accompany the role of Superman can impose any measure upon the mass of

mankind, believing that Nature and Destiny are on their side, that they are in fact the 'torchbearers of history'. This is one of the dangers of his elitist conception of culture, that is, culture exists only as a means for the well-being of Superman.

The claim to true happiness, that is, happiness of the kind experienced by Superman, made by the mediocre majority is invalid in the Nietzschean conception of life, since only Superman can live at this exalted level. But why should a truly authentic form of existence be open only to Superman? What about the rest of humanity? The old cultural values satisfy the average man, but, in Nietzsche's opinion, still lead to nihilism and alienation. Why then, should not the average man strive for a more fruitful level of existence, even if it is not the level of the Superman?

Nietzsche's 'solution' to the cultural crisis is flawed by his disregard for the average man. As far as human relations are concerned, Nietzsche had despised pity, sympathy and compassion as weakness. His contempt for these emotions blind him to the fact that meaningful human relations can be founded on genuine love and sympathy for one's fellow man - love which is not self-repression and sympathy which is not weakness.

As far as Will to Power is concerned Nietzsche regarded it as the essence of all being, the activating principle of the universe. Every living thing in the world is driven by the will to power. But is it legitimate to reduce all impulses in the world to one basic impulse, to lay down the essence of Being as will to power? Collins writes: "The tendency towards power is, indeed, an important component of the human personality; it is also a fact that man's will exercises some efficient, causal control over his

cognitive powers. But from these data, it cannot be concluded that all cosmic energies constitute a single, voluntaristic movement of becoming and power-seeking, sufficient unto itself. All things are moved by an appetite for their own perfection. Yet whether this inclination is one, universal, cosmic will and whether it springs from itself alone, with no transcendent implications are speculative issues that cannot be settled in terms of a life-promoting myth." 19)

Nietzsche's reductionism of everything to will to power is harmful to the organic unity of human impulses, where various impulses exist side by side without one being regarded as more basic than the others. In the final analysis, will to power, like the eternal recurrence of the equal remains, in Collins' words, "only a private reading of the universe." 20)

As far as Eternal Recurrence is concerned, the inevitable cyclic return of everything that has happened in the past has certain implications which Nietzsche seems to overlook at times. If things recur to all eternity, what-ever is, whatever has been and whatever will be, all exist legitimately as elements of the cyclic pattern. Superman has been and will be again but so also, will the mediocre and the weak. This is the law of the cosmos.

The peaks of culture as well as the murkiest depths are equally inevitable stages in the rhythm of eternal recurrence. The sterile values of Christianity, democracy, socialism, etc., when seen in terms of the cyclical pattern, are all as necessary as the glorious era of Superman. The negative is not evil ~~from~~ a long range point of view, since it stands in a dialectical



relationship with the positive. Superman can only emerge from the culture of the mediocre man.

In the light of the above, Nietzsche's severe attack on the various aspects of nineteenth century culture seems unjustified. His own theory of eternal recurrence demands that he see the various stages of human culture, whether they be exalted or wretched, as standing in inevitable dialectical relationships with each other, where the emergence of the one is dependent on the perfectly legitimate existence of the other. Nietzsche's alternative may be more valuable in the light of its life - promoting qualities, but it is not more valuable or, rather, it is equally valuable as the existing mediocre culture in the sense that they are both elements of the pattern of eternal recurrence.

The cardinal points of Nietzsche's 'solution' to the question of culture, the essential elements of the new creed are Superman, Transvaluation of Values, Will to Power and Eternal Recurrence. In the final analysis, all these require the same kind of faith, the same degree of strong belief demanded from those who adhere to a Christian God, for instance. In Nietzsche's creed the gods are different. So, too, is the prophet and the eschatology. But the faith and devotion demanded are the same.

What we have said about Nietzsche also, in essence, applies to Marcuse, different though his approach to the cultural situation of his time may be. Like Nietzsche was in his day, Marcuse is deeply disturbed by the state of culture today. This leads him to analyse those trends which seem to be leading man into alienation, and also outline

means by which man can return to a more authentic form of life.

As with Nietzsche, in fact, as with any theorist we must distinguish between the value of Marcuse's exposure of the repressive aspects of contemporary culture, and the validity of the 'solution' he proposes to initiate a new level of human cultural existence. Also Marcuse's criticism of contemporary society, like that of Nietzsche in his time, must be seen within the framework of his model or theoretical scheme. If one accepts his model as totally valid, then his criticisms can also be seen as totally relevant.

However, the fact that his model, like all others, is controversial and debatable, must not lead us to dismiss all his criticisms as purely arbitrary. Other critics of contemporary society echo some of Marcuse's own criticisms. There is no denying that technological society does have a levelling effect on man, that it conditions man and reduces him to a functionalised existence. In this respect, certain criticisms directed by Marcuse against technological society can be regarded as valid.

Among those who point to the warning signals, to the dangers which threaten our culture, Marcuse is one of the most articulate. In his writings, we discover a deep-seated distrust of a culture which seems to offer man so much - so many more material comforts and benefits, so many more luxuries than were ever possible before in the history of man. Yet, beneath the apparent rationality and benevolence of contemporary culture, Marcuse detects a dangerous irrationality. The benevolence is a veneer which only serves to conceal the steady repression of all

possibilities of a truly liberated human existence.

As Nietzsche had pointed out the dangers of uncritical acceptance of the democratic outlook, Marcuse shows the dangers inherent in the 'pluralistic tolerance' of the status quo, which enables it to assimilate all opposition. He warns also against the dangers of the 'happy consciousness' of the majority of men - satisfaction with the establishment on account of the many benefits it provides, so that men no longer desire change.

Marcuse's writings indicates his own alienation from today's culture which, for him, is one complex system of repressive conditioning, a conditioning which, for the most part, men have internalised and made their own. So, no rift exists between public and private interests, between those in control and those being manipulated.

Marcuse believes that, despite its reputed neutrality, technology functions in the interests of those in power. Political power is rendered more effective by its control of technology, which promises greater efficiency and higher standards of living. From this position of control, economic and political power spreads its domination into every avenue of life. The sexual, psychological, philosophical and literary realms, previously traditional areas of freedom, come to reflect the mechanism of repression.

Marcuse does not reserve his censure for the West alone. Bureaucratic elites function equally effectively in the West and in the East. Harrington writes: "As the West becomes more collectivised under a managerial elite and Russia becomes wealthier under a political elite, the conscious self-seeking decisions of a minority could become the basis of both economies.



In terms of their evolution, there would be a tremendous contrast between General Motors and a Commissariat of Transportation. In terms of economic function and practice, the two entities could come to resemble one another more and more." 21)

Marcuse exposes the claims of both East and West to provide man with greater freedom of existence. Alienation is prevalent in both camps, since the means of production are not in the hands of the immediate producers. Totalitarian control of resources still exists, despite the satisfaction of the needs of more and more people. Neither capitalism nor communism really exists for the freedom of the people. They are no more than different modes of domination.

The 'happy consciousness' generated by the satisfaction of needs is, as Marcuse warns, perhaps the greatest danger of all, since it leads to an uncritical acceptance of the status quo which offers benefits and imposes unfreedom contemporaneously. Human beings identify so greatly with the status quo, finding their souls in their cars and hi-fi sets, that they become indifferent to the mechanisation of life, mental impoverishment, absence of self responsibility and so on.

Democracy, popular education, etc., have led to a wider diffusion of culture. Big business concerns realised the value of producing mass cultural products, a process which the media of communication soon accelerated. Technology satisfied the mass demand for trivial and comfortable cultural products, the mass becoming "more and more malleable with every advance in technology." 22) The collectivisation of taste, the transformation of man into homo consumens, of the child into a 'consumer trainee' - Marcuse warns against

these very real dangers.

But can his own 'solution' guarantee the freedom he desires? Marcuse is, at times, rather pessimistic about the possible existence of the new society but at other times he writes as if the new era has already been ushered in. As evidence for this belief he mentions the fight for liberation in Vietnam, Cuba and China, student opposition both in the East and the West, and the prophecies contained in the works of men like Freud and Nietzsche. In this connection Robinson writes: "Marcuse defended the possibility of a non-repressive civilisation on two fronts, one theoretical, the other historical. In historical terms he attempted to identify certain trends in the development of contemporary civilisation which moved in the direction of a non-repressive order, or created the historical precondition for such an order. At the level of theory, he tried to demonstrate how the inner logic of Freud's thought, and that of several other major nineteenth and twentieth century theorists, suggested a way out of the dilemma of repression. Characteristically, Marcuse devoted much less attention to the historical trends facilitating a non-repressive civilisation than to the matter of demonstrating its theoretical legitimacy..... Marcuse seemed to imply that the mere conceptualisation of a particular historical possibility (such as that of a non-repressive civilisation) represented more than half the battle. The simple fact that the writings of Hegel, Marx, Freud and others contained such splendid indictments of the existing order, such trenchant arguments for a non-repressive society, tended to make Marcuse speak as if the new order were already an actuality." 23)

Marcuse confuses the genuine desire for change (and the need for change is indeed great) with the belief that a non-repressive society is already under way. The continued existence of the status quo contradicts Marcuse's theory that the dialectical emergence of human fulfilment out of the depths of repression, is inevitable.

Marcuse's alternative demands that the fruits of scientific and technological progress be used in the interests of all rather than enriching those in power alone. This call seems to me to be rather utopian in the sense that it demands an entirely different type of individual in whose 'biology' self interest is absent and the welfare of other men an important consideration. This would require, as with Nietzsche, the transformation of man into something other than human, for "can man really sacrifice self-interest altogether in favour of general interest..... or is self-interest the very criterion of being human, so that the conflict between self-interest and general interest is natural and cannot be overcome by methodological constitution.....?" <sup>24)</sup> Changes in society will most certainly occur since human life is never static, but it seems likely that these will occur only within the framework of control by the bureaucracy, as Marcuse himself points out in Soviet Marxism. ".....as long as the East - West conflict remains a determining economic and political factor, it precludes the decisive transformation, for it serves to justify .....repressive competition and competitive mobilisation on a totalitarian scale."<sup>25)</sup> To think of more sweeping changes seems over-optimistic especially in view of the contentment of the majority with the existing state of affairs.



Another controversial point is Marcuse's choice of the revolutionary forces capable of effecting a decisive transformation in society. He sees students, blacks, the poor, the unemployed, etc., as revolutionary agents of liberation. It is their confrontation with affluent society that may mark the end of the present era. Undoubtedly, the elements Marcuse refers to, are in conflict with the status quo - this is what they all have in common. But what percentage of them are in conflict with the status quo merely because they cannot themselves participate in the affluent society?

If the poor and the unemployed, for instance, were assimilated into the affluent society, would they still be in conflict with the system? Do they want a better life for all men or just for themselves? To identify those who stand against the system as agents of liberation merely because they stand in conflict with the status quo, is to idealise them and give them a responsibility (i.e., the transformation of this society into a non-repressive one) which, perhaps, they do not even care to assume. So, "to be in conflict with the established order is not necessarily to be an agent of liberation." 26)

We can also ask the question - what will social relationships be like in the liberated state? It is not sufficient, I think, to see them, as Marcuse does, only in terms of the absence of domination and the transformation by libido of all human relations. Marcuse's vision of meaningful social relations is that of a state where all men can achieve free self-realisation. But some form of conflict is bound to continue, since men can choose different modes of fulfilment and satisfaction. It is quite possible, then, that this conflict could lead to new forms of

domination and repression, considering the unpredictable behaviour of human beings.

In his writings, Marcuse maintains that the majority of men are so much a part of the system that they are incapable of determining what their real needs are, as against the false needs imposed on them by the status quo. Marcuse maintains that a distinction between true and false needs can only be made by individuals free from all repression. And as long as men live in a society like ours, they will never be free to decide on what their true needs are.

Marcuse takes upon himself the right to say of others what their true needs are, what true happiness and true freedom mean. But this situation is potentially explosive since Marcuse views the majority of men as incapable of autonomous choice. If the majority are to be merely "objects of benevolent revolutionary concern " <sup>27)</sup> with no say in anything concerning them, then it is quite possible that new modes of domination may arise.

The fact that new modes of domination always arise is a typically human characteristic which Marcuse does not seem to take into account. His aspiration for a society without any form of domination can be regarded as utopian. Is it possible to have a society without any form of control? That there will be some men who assume control and others who consent, in some measure, to be controlled seems to me to be part of the human condition. The question which arises, then, is whether the average man desires the establishment of Marcuse's utopian 'solution', whether, in fact, man can live in a control - free utopia where he has to make his own decisions on a majority of issues.

In any case, the distinction made by Marcuse between true and false needs is questionable. It seems to me that any form of society, at least originally, is based on man's needs as they emerge in the specific historical situation in which he finds himself. So, needs which seem false from Marcuse's utopian point of view, may yet satisfy the majority of men in a specific situation. So the question arises whether man wishes to be freed from the 'false' needs, the 'manipulation' and 'repression' that can be found in technological society? Marcuse is, in fact, aware of the contentment of the majority of men with the existing situation, a contentment which contradicts his call for change.

In this same connection we can also ask another question - whether both capitalism and established communism do not genuinely believe in the good of their respective systems, whether the advocates of the two systems deliberately set out to exploit and repress man or whether they do not adhere in some way to the conviction that theirs is the best way to achieve 'the good life'. Ayn Rand, for instance, in her philosophy expresses her firm commitment to "laissez-faire capitalism as the best defender of the rights of man." <sup>28)</sup> Equally firm is the conviction of theorists of established communism that their system is the most effective one to promote freedom and happiness.

Marcuse hopes that once science and technology are used in the interests of all men, a transvaluation of values will occur. Formerly metaphysical ideas of freedom, justice, beauty, etc., would acquire a concrete content in the technological sphere. This is what Marcuse calls the 'quantification of values'-- using technology to free man from oppression, hunger, anxiety,



war, etc., and to guarantee an authentic existence in this way.

But is Marcuse's conception of freedom an adequate one? Is freedom from want and suffering the entire content of freedom? We can also ask -- freedom for what? What are we going to do in our liberated state? Is it sufficient for Marcuse to answer in the words of a young black girl that "for the first time in our life, we shall be free to think about what we are going to do." 29)

If freedom means merely freedom from material want, what does one do in one's leisure time once this freedom has been secured? Surely the content of freedom should be wide enough to go beyond mere freedom from material want, and include the creative activities of one's free time as also advancing the freedom of man. This contradiction between Marcuse's theory of freedom and the problem of leisure time underlines the danger of Marcuse's reductionism of all needs and values to material ones.

Marcuse has attempted to give us an account of how, once total automation occurs, man ought best to utilise the free time that would be left to him. But his treatment of the problem is inadequate in that all he does is to speak, rather vaguely, about man employing his leisure time for the promotion of the 'art of life', for living by the aesthetic ethos and so on. However, the problem of free time and the absence of work deserves greater attention.

Marcuse has not considered the problem of whether the disappearance of work as a cultural ethic may not lead to a new crisis, to a bewildering, empty freedom. Have all men the capacity to live by the aesthetic ethos, as Marcuse visualises?

Do all men have the ingenuity to live with freedom? The proper utilisation of freedom would indeed demand a new type of human being, or rather superhuman being, and this, as I pointed out before, is an idealistic attempt to alter the human condition to a state where it is unrecognisable.

Another problem also, is one which Freud pointed out in Civilisation and Its Discontents - that without the coercion of work upon the mass of men, society would disintegrate into an orgy of instinctual gratification. Freud had also seen a therapeutic value in work - work as a means of linking man to reality.

To return to the problem of whether all men can live by the aesthetic principle - there would be no point in a situation where only those who can live creatively do so, while the rest merely exist as 'homo consumens', living out a passive, parasitic existence. It becomes quite clear from Marcuse's writings that his is a powerful expression of critical analysis, but when it comes to an explicit tactical programme of how to effect change as well as what one will do in the liberated order, Marcuse remains rather sketchy.

MacIntyre sees Marcuse's failure in the above respect as connected with his lack of interest in empirical facts, for instance, what are we going to do in a sexually liberated state? Marcuse's indictment of monogamic genital sexual culture is severe indeed, but uncontrasted with a serious account of what is possible in its place. MacIntyre argues that the psychoanalytic writer Wilhelm Reich, for instance, has given a more effective and explicit account of the contrast between a liberated and an unliberated sexuality.<sup>30)</sup>

Even where Marcuse gives some indications, for example, where he speaks approvingly of perversions

because these stand in the opposite direction of a repressive sexuality employed in the interest of reproduction only, he tends to resort to extremes. Marcuse views perversions as leading to greater human freedom since they are grounded in genuine erotic impulses. But Marcuse does not consider the kind of perversion that is mere debauchery and, in this sense is still repressive of true human freedom.

A frequent criticism directed against Marcuse is that he preaches anarchy and violence, that by calling for a rejection of the status quo he welcomes lawlessness and disorder. But this is too simplistic and convenient an explanation. Marcuse does reject the status quo because he believes it leads to alienation, but the very fact that he offers an alternative order to the status quo indicates that he does not desire anarchy. His Essay on Liberation demonstrates this most explicitly.

By the transformation of values into technological tasks Marcuse hopes to rescue Nature from exploitation by monopolistic forces, to be used only for civilising purposes. In this way, Nature, Man and Society are to be brought in line with each other. However, one cannot deny that Marcuse's stand can lead to anarchy, even though he does not consciously advocate it. Anarchy could be the practical result if one agitates against the status quo and yet cannot replace it with something qualitatively different. So, the problem really revolves around whether Marcuse's conception of qualitative transcendence is feasible or not.

As far as the problem of violence is concerned, unfortunately, Marcuse is never very clear on this point,



and this ambiguity could prove dangerous. Sometimes when he speaks of the 'Great Refusal', that is, refusal by men in significant positions, for instance, scientists, to participate in the system any longer, thus bringing it to a standstill, he seems to discount violence as a means of effecting change. But, at other times he appears to welcome it, for example, when he speaks of the violence inherent in the status quo in so far as it imposes its will on men, and the need to counter this with violence. Moreover, his giving certain groups the idea that they are the torchbearers of historical reason, may well prove an incitement to violence.

As far as the less developed countries are concerned, Marcuse hopes that the over-production and over-sophistication of life which characterises technologically advanced countries will not be reproduced here. Rather, he hopes that the best features of technology will be combined with indigenous modes of life in these areas to produce a wholesome, individualistic, bureaucracy-free society.

Marcuse's vision in this respect seems rather naive. Harrington asks : "Is it possible to utilize mass means of production and avoid the mass corruption of spirituality ?" <sup>31)</sup> Routinization, bureaucratisation, over-sophistication, etc., constitute an inevitable part of technological life. Mass communication in no time standardizes all reactions and imposes a common way of thinking, feeling and acting. "In point of fact, as Max Weber and Schumpeter and many others realised sometime ago, bureaucracies are a characteristic and inevitable mode of the modern age.....a fate of the age."<sup>32)</sup>

As far as human needs are concerned, Marcuse hopes that the 'quantification of values' will ensure their true fulfilment. Man's material needs will, doubtless, be well taken care of. But will man's other needs - his aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual needs - will these be automatically satisfied once material needs are fulfilled, as Marcuse seems to imagine.

Marcuse proposes that man's intellectual and imaginative capacities will be fully absorbed by scientific and technological planning. But is the sum of man to be the imaginative technocrat? Such a conception is destructive to the unity of man. Reducing man's various facets to one is, like Nietzsche's reduction of everything in the cosmos to will to power, dangerous and unrealistic! "In this way, all values would actually be reducible to one common denominator, namely, man's material needs. But surely this transformation of man's intellectual, aesthetical and spiritual needs into material ones and the translation of all values into technological functions, give a distorted picture of man and his real needs." 33)

As G.A.Rauche points out, Marcuse returns full circle to the same kind of one - dimensionality he criticises so severely. In this respect, Marcuse cannot be said to have 'solved' the problem of man's authentic existence in terms of the outline he presents for a non-repressive society. Neither for that matter has Nietzsche, for, inevitably, both their alternatives pose fresh problems which can again lead to the unauthenticity and alienation Nietzsche and Marcuse fought against in nineteenth century and twentieth century culture.

1. MARCUSE, H. : Negations, P.94.
2. HARRINGTON, M. : op. cit., P.116.
3. QUOTED BY HARRINGTON, : op. cit., P.120.
4. HARRINGTON, M. : op. cit., P.121.
5. MARCUSE, H. : An Essay on Liberation, P.21.
6. MARCUSE, H. : Eros and Civilisation,  
P. 103.
7. MARCUSE, H. : An Essay on Liberation,  
P. 10.
8. MARCUSE, H. : One-Dimensional Man,  
P.200.
9. BARRETT, W. : Irrational Man, P.165.
10. COLLINS, J. : Modern European Philosophy,  
P.776.
11. BARRETT, W. : op. cit., P.
12. KAUFFMAN, W. : The Owl and the Nightingale,  
P. 191.
13. COLLINS, J. : op. cit., P. 806.
14. NIETZSCHE, F. : Beyond Good and Evil,  
P. 172.
15. NIETZSCHE, F. : Ecce Homo, P.
16. BARRETT, W. : op. cit., P. 171.
17. NIETZSCHE, F. : Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
P. 173.

NOTES..... 168/...



18. BARRETT, W. : op. cit., P.175.
19. COLLINS, J. : op. cit., P.804 - 5.
20. COLLINS, J. : op. cit., P.804.
21. HARRINGTON, M. : The Accidental Century,  
P.86!
22. IBID., : P.183.
23. ROBINSON, P.A. : The Sexual Radicals,  
P.162.
24. RAUCHE, G.A. : Contemporary Philosophical  
Alternatives, P. 8.
25. MARCUSE, H. : Soviet Marxism, P. 189.
26. MAC INTYRE, A. : Marcuse, P. 89.
27. IBID., : P. 89.
28. BINKLEY, L.J. : Conflict of Ideals, P. 28.
29. MARCUSE, H. : An Essay on Liberation,  
P.91.
30. MAC INTYRE, A. : op. cit., P. 47-48.
31. HARRINGTON, M. : op. cit., P. 185.
32. IBID., : P.231.
33. RAUCHE, G.A. : op. cit., P. 6.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Having completed a comparative as well as a critical study of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Herbert Marcuse in relation to their specific cultures, we come to a point where we can draw a few general conclusions.

Nietzsche and Marcuse were examined in their roles as critics of their specific cultures (Nietzsche of the nineteenth century and Marcuse of contemporary technological society), and also in their roles as theorists proposing different alternatives to rescue man from what they believe to be situations of cultural crisis, to lead man to a more authentic form of existence.

The alternatives proposed by both philosophers must be seen in the light of the human, all too human condition - that men propose theories and 'solutions' which are bound to be problematic. Utopian theoretical constructions can lead, in practice, to the same kind of alienation and unfreedom which they hope to rescue man from. "Men must hold both ideas and ideals, but they should not regard these as being wholly realisable. We need to comprehend the nature of utopianism. Utopianism, once it achieves power, becomes dogmatic, and it can quite readily create human suffering in the name and in the cause of its own scientism and idealism." 1)

Utopia, thus, is always one step ahead of man. The perfect 'solution' is beyond the reach of man.

Infact, it is an other than human condition. Man and human existence are both problematic because of the contingency, finiteness and historicity of human life and because of changing needs and conditions. Therefore, it is doubtful whether one theorist can effectively solve all problems for all time. This is the lesson that the history of philosophy and the history of man teaches us. It is, however, a situation not to be despaired at, since by the continual search for 'solutions', the horizon of human truth and of human potential is forever widened. "The task for contemporary man is to accept the reality that society is imperfect, but also to understand that humanist, humanitarian dreams and visions are necessary in order to reform society, in order to improve and advance it." 2)

As far as Marcuse is concerned, certain of his criticisms are especially relevant to us in the technology - dominated twentieth century. Marcuse's fears about the functionalisation of contemporary culture are echoed by other thinkers as well.

Jacques Ellul, a French critic of modern technological society, describes in The Technological Society the manner in which "an autonomous technology is in the process of taking over the traditional values of every society without exception, subverting and suppressing these values to produce at last a monolithic world culture in which all non-technological difference and variety is mere appearance." 3)

Ellul points out how man had created technology to free himself from the extremities of nature, but in doing so, has created a new, more oppressive extremity. Ellul believes that technology has alienated man from nature and created an artificial and mechanical

environment..... 171/....



environment in which man's natural inclinations are ~~tempered~~ with. He writes: "The new order was meant to be a buffer between man and nature. Unfortunately, it has evolved autonomously in such a way that man has lost all contact with his natural framework and has to do only with the organised technical intermediary which sustains relations both with the world of life and with the world of brute matter. Enclosed within his artificial creation, man finds that there is 'no exit', that he cannot pierce the shell of technology to find again the ancient milieu to which he was adapted for hundreds of thousands of years..... It is easy to boast of victory over ancient oppression, but what if victory has been achieved at the price of an even greater subjection to the forces of the artificial necessity of the technical society which has come to dominate our lives?" 4)

Another critic, Lewis Mumford, maintains that technology ignores the human factor, and "instead of serving humane purposes, automates even the human being." 5) In The Myth of the Machine he points out how technology which can contribute to human dignity and freedom is not doing so, since it disregards human needs, which should be the centre of all our schemes of thought. Mumford calls on man to "take upon himself, once more, the wide range of capabilities and potentialities he surrendered when he developed the machine." 6)

Erich Fromm speaks of the new spectre haunting the world - not communism but mechanised man and mechanised society. He writes in The Revolution of Hope : "In the search for scientific truth, man came across knowledge that he could use for the domination

of nature. He had tremendous success. But in the one-sided emphasis on technique and material consumption, man lost touch with himself, with life.....The machine he built became so powerful that it developed its own programme, which now determines man's thinking." 7)

Since the keynote of contemporary culture is the dominance of technology, the dominance of the machine, it is not surprising that theorists and critics of society ponder over the complex problems this gives rise to, expressing their fears at the dangers inherent in the over-emphasis on technology. One of the questions invariably asked is whether the present direction of technological progress is not leading man into a greater unfreedom than the one it proposes to free him from, and whether there ought not to be a redirection of scientific and technological progress towards the genuine promotion of life and freedom? One wonders if it is absolutely inevitable that technology should satisfy material needs at the expense of spiritual freedom or is there some way to prevent the technologisation of the human spirit.

In the last two centuries, man has changed more than at any other time since the beginning of history. Any further changes depend on a reversal in man's use of the machine. The tyranny of the machine and of those in control of it must be shattered if we are to achieve a more human level of existence. Man must consciously take control of his world and the potential contained within it, to achieve a truly human existence. The end must not be forgotten because of the magnitude of the means available to us.

The choice of whether science and technology will lead to freedom or tyranny lies with man. And in this respect, the responsibility of the scientist , the

politician - of all those in control - is tremendous. In fact, some people are wondering whether it is safe to leave the problems of society in the hands of the scientist alone, even though the world is penetrated through and through by science. Men are wondering whether science in itself can provide the sum of human values, or whether the pursuit of scientific knowledge is only a part of our Western values.

The creation of a new type of human being in the Marcusean sense, a being who has a highly developed sense of responsibility to others, may be a rather Utopian demand. In any case, it must be remembered that even Marcuse's 'ideal' tends to end up in the technological functionalism that he criticises. However, the realisation that human actions have greater repercussions now than ever before and that no country, however great a power it may be, is a totally self-contained unit, may lead to some kind of concerted effort to tackle human alienation and prevent the total despoliation of the earth. In this respect, the recent conference on environmental pollution problems, held at Stockholm, which was attended by delegates from many countries, is a step in the right direction - a joint effort at dealing with a common problem. Otherwise, culture and more important, human life are in danger from man.

In connection with the collective effort to cope with human problems, which is undoubtedly necessary there is, however, a danger to be vigilantly guarded against. This is that the individual and individuality as a value should not be absorbed and levelled by the collective effort, which tendency is noticeable in Marcuse's teachings. In this respect, we can look to Nietzsche and his warnings that loss of individuality



and individual responsibility are the perils that face mass human efforts. Nietzsche, like Kierkegaard, makes us aware of the facelessness and anonymity that endanger human life and culture. This aspect must be borne in mind when men embark on a joint effort at dealing with the problems with which they are faced.

In Chapter One, I indicated, to some extent, the close relationship between culture (the material and 'spiritual' achievements of man) and specific historical - existential situations. It was shown how both the material and spiritual aspects of human cultural life reflect man's attempt to create meaningful patterns of life in the universe, to free himself from the insecurity and lack of meaning that constantly threaten man. From this, it can be deduced that culture is always rooted in man's specific existential situation, inextricably related to his needs and aspirations, his unique vision of what constitutes 'truth' or 'reality'.

Culture reflects man's attempt to make himself comfortable and safe in the universe, not only in terms of his material conquest of nature but also in terms of satisfying intellectual formulations about the ultimate nature of reality. When man confronts the world and attempts to control his situation, he makes himself at home in a way which gives rise to what we call 'culture'. But men have adopted different ways of making themselves at home in the universe and this accounts for the difference in cultural systems (as I showed in Chapter One by examining the Greek, Medieval and more modern eras).

However, despite the differences between cultural systems there are also certain links, for example, a culture is inevitably related to its predecessor.

It is the deficiencies of one system, its inability to satisfy human needs adequately, that call up its negation-- an alternative system which seems to offer greater meaning and security in the light of changed needs and aspirations. For this reason, defenders of any one culture ought not to condemn past cultures in absolute terms, since these always stand in some form of dialectical relationship with those that follow. Any culture, any society is originally a reflection of prevailing needs in a specific existential situation. As such, it is unfair to reject totally, from a utopian standpoint, past cultures as being based on false needs and hence leading to alienation.

We would do well to keep in mind, also, the danger of absolutising the values of any one cultural system, whether it be the past or the present. There cannot be a 'super culture' because of the nature of man, who is a contingent, historical creature, perpetually creating truth anew. Truth, in its entirety, is beyond our grasp. What man is capable of is to offer perspectives of truth, none of which on its own can satisfy men in different situations. It is for this reason that human life is a perpetual search for Truth, in the process of which man creates cultural values which satisfy him in his situation.

To insist dogmatically on the virtues of ~~one's~~ own culture is to open the doors to authoritarianism and tyranny. The need for fluidity, flexibility is always vital, as is the need for vigilant critics of culture who could point out the dangers of rigid conformity to the status quo, as well as suggest possibilities for a new level of human existence. The existence of critical theories of society indicate that the human spirit is still unfettered and man has not yet

been overwhelmed..... 176/...

been overwhelmed by authoritarianism.

Nietzsche and Marcuse, in their roles as critics of society, fulfil a vital function despite the extremity of their views. They are able to stand apart from their cultures, to evaluate them critically and then offer new alternatives in the light of alienating deficiencies in the cultures which they criticise, even if their own 'solutions' admittedly tend to be dogmatic and point in the direction of a closed system. That their own 'solutions' are problematic does not detract from their value as theorists suggesting new dimensions of human existence and more important, as critics who ensure that society moves in the direction of openness, fluidity and dynamism rather than being enmeshed in rigidity and dogmatism.

Proudhon in a letter to Marx speaks of this spirit of openness which should be our guide. ".... let us give the world the example of a learned, far-sighted tolerance, but let us .....not make ourselves the leaders of a new intolerance, let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even if it be the religion of logic, the religion of reason. Let us never regard a question as exhausted....." 8)

Static conclusions and final answers can only lead to alienation. A culture that is open to change and criticism can only widen the horizon of truth. Just as past cultures ought not to be totally condemned, so, too, the existing one should not be accepted without critical evaluation. The status quo is never so perfect a human condition that it stands in no need of improvement. And the various alternative systems offered to man indicates that the search for satisfying answers, far from being a purely intellectual and theoretical



exercise, is a vital part of human life - an activity which rules out automatic, uncritical acceptance of the established values of society. In this respect, the perpetual relevance of Socrates' dictum can be appreciated. The unexamined life is not worth living.

NOTES..... 178/.....

NOTES:

1. DJILAS, M. : The Unperfect Society,  
P. 2.
2. IBID., : P. 2.
3. ELLUL, J. : The Technological Society in  
Freedom and Tyranny ed. by  
J.D.Douglas, P. 60.
4. IBID., : P.61.
5. MUMFORD, L. : The Myth of the Machine in  
The Philosophy Forum ed. by  
R.Gotesky, P.179.
6. IBID., : P.183.
7. FROMM, E. : The Revolution of Hope,  
P. 2.
8. Quoted by G.Woodcock in Anarchism, P. 111.

S U M M A R Y.

This dissertation concerns itself with a comparative study of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Herbert Marcuse in connection with their positions as critics of their specific cultures, and as theorists proposing new alternatives for the regeneration of culture. In addition, certain observations are made on the relationship between culture and specific existential situations.

Friedrich Nietzsche reacted strongly to the cultural atmosphere of the nineteenth century, rejecting trends like Christianity, scientism, socialism, democracy, etc., as leading man into alienation. To replace the existing alternatives, Nietzsche proposed a 'solution' based on a conception of life as Will to Power, which is to be effected by a new breed of man - Superman. By a complete transvaluation of values, Nietzsche hoped to revitalise life and culture and return man to a more meaningful existence.

Herbert Marcuse, like Nietzsche, is also deeply critical of his cultural milieu, that is, the contemporary situation. Marcuse objects to the manipulation and repression of man by minority forces in control. Such repression has resulted in a one-dimensional level of existence. To overcome such alienation, Marcuse proposes a society guided by the 'aesthetic ethos', where the liberated Eros element comes into play, directing a human existence which is free of manipulation and repression.

Both Nietzsche and Marcuse, then, have this in common, that they are deeply critical of the



cultures with which they are confronted, and offer specific alternatives which they hope will enable the self-creation of man as a qualitatively different cultural being. The 'solution' offered by both philosophers cannot be said to have solved definitively the problem of man's authentic existence since they are specific truth-perspectives and do not represent ultimate Truth which is multi-faceted.

Certain observations are also made on the close relationship between culture and specific historico-existential situations. Both the material and spiritual aspects of human cultural life are seen to reflect man's attempt to create meaningful patterns of life for himself. This means that when one cultural pattern failed to continue to provide the required meaning, due to changed circumstances of life, it gradually gave way to another, in accordance with man's changing needs and aspirations. This brings us to the conclusion that culture and truth are dynamic, and that static conclusions and final answers as to the question of culture and truth (the two being interrelated) can only result in alienation from reality, that is, the ever changing circumstances of life. Such static conclusions and final answers lead to closed and rigid systems that are contrary to actual life and estrange man from his fellowman.

Bibliography.....181/....

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