A REPLY TO HERBERT MARCUSE
Norman O. Brown

My friend Marcuse* and I, Romulus and Remus quarreling; which
of them is the real "revolutionary."
He will not see the recurrence in
revolution. Revolution is not a
state wiped clean, but a revolving
cycle (Love's Body, p. 204). Even
newness is renewal. As it was in the
beginning. The idea of progress is
in question; the reality of Marx
cannot hide the reality of Nietzsche.
The thing is to change the world;
but it is also true that everything
remains always the same. The as-
signment then is (to put it simply)
the simultaneous affirmation and
rejection of what is; not in a sys-
tem, as in Hegel, but in an instant,
as in poetry.
There is eternal recurrence; there are "eternal objects" (Whitehead);
archetypes. This is a hard lesson.
There is a sense in which war can-
not be abolished (Love's Body, p.
182). Or, there is an eternal object
of which literal war is a false image,
or inadequate idea. The thing to
be abolished is literalism; the wor-
ship of false images; idolatry. Allen
Ginsberg saw it just the way it is:
Mo-loch. A false idol fed with real
victims. This is no joke. (Nir is
fire; Heraclean fire.)
Idolatry is fetishism, mystifica-
tion; demystification would be an
end to idolatry. But an end to
idolatry is not so easy (Love's
Body, p. 114). It is not the abo-
lation of the temple, but the dis-
covery of the true temple:
Love's body. Karl Barth saw reli-
gion as idolatry; Karl Marx saw
religion as the heart of a heartless
world. The Sacred Heart. The
thing is not to excise the heart but
to put it where it belongs. The real
atheism is to become divine. In
a dialectical view, atheism be-
to become, god-making; demystifi-
cation becomes the discovery of a new

* Mr. Brown is here replying to Herbert
Marcuse's essay, "Love Mystified: A Crit-
tique of Norman O. Brown," which ap-
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mystery; and everything remains
the same.
There is another sense in which
mystification must be affirmed. We
have to surpass the Enlightenment
notion that in the life of the species
or of the individual there is a defini-
tive change-over from darkness to
light. Light is almost always in
darkness; that is what the uncon-
sious is all about (Love's Body, p. 216).
Nor can the light become a current,
always turned on, in ordinary pro-
saic language. Truth is always in
poetic form; not literal but sym-
bolic; hiding, or veiled; light in
darkness. Yes, mysterious. Literal-
ism is idolatry of words; the alter-
native to idolatry is mystery. And
literalism reifies, makes out of
everything things, these tables and
and chairs, commodities. The alterna-
tive to reification is mystification
(Love's Body, p. 234). The world
is actually not a collection of
commodities;

When silence
Bloom in the house, all the para-
phernalia of our existence
Shed the twitterings of value and
reappear as heraldic devices.

—Robert Duncan

Heraldic devices: airplanes as penis
symbols rather than "modern con-
vieniences." One of the eternal veri-
ties is the human body as the meas-
ure of all things, including tech-
nology. The businessman does not
have the last word; the real mean-
ing of technology is its hidden rela-
tion to the human body; a symboli-
cal or mystical relation.

With the whole world still in the
bourgeois stage of competitive de-
velopment and war, the thing to
remember about Marx is that he
was able to look beyond this world
to another possible world, of union,
communion, communism. What
needs to be reiterated is not reassu-
rance to the bourgeois that he
will be able to carry his little old
Self, Person, and Property into that
world, but that the kingdom of
heaven on earth is possible; and
that other world, the negation of
this jungle, cannot possibly be any-
thing except Communitas. A high-
er form of chaos; instead of confu-
sion, fusion (Love's Body, pp. 248,
258).

And, after Freud, we have to add
that there is also a sexual revolu-
tion; which is not to be found in
the bourgeois cycle of repression
and promiscuity, but in a transfor-
mation of the human body, an
abolition of genital organization.
Indeed, Love's Body shows that
sexual organization is the same
thing as Self, Person, Property; and,
therefore, the abolition of genital
organization, foretold by Marcuse
in Eros and Civilization, turns out
to mean what Marcuse calls the im-
possible unity and union of every-
thing.

Yes, indeed, there was a God that
failed; that mortal God, the great
Leviathan; or Moloch; discovered
to be not only mortal but also
dead, an idol. From literalism to
symbolism; the lesson of my life.
The next generation needs to be
told that the real fight is not the
political fight, but to put an end to
politics. From politics to meta-
politics.

From politics to poetry. Legisla-
tion is not politics, nor philosophy,
but poetry. Poetry, art, is not an
epiphenomenal reflection of some
other (political, economic) realm
which is the "real thing"; nor a
still contemplation of something
else which is the "real action"; nor
a sublimation of something else
which is the "real," carnal "act." 
Poetry, art, imagination, the creator
spirit is life itself; the real revolu-
tionary power to change the world;
and to change the human body.
To change the human body: here is
the crisis, hic Rhodus, hic salta;
which, as Hegel said, is to be trans-
lated "here is the Rose, here begin

to dance." To begin to dance; who
can tell the dancer from the dance;
it is the impossible unity and union
of everything.

From politics to life. And there-
fore revolution as creation; resur-
rection; renaissance instead of pro-
gress. To perceive in all human cul-
ture the hidden reality of the hu-
man body. This is to discover as
Freud did, the Holy Communion as the basis of community; the Eucharist; the cannibalism, the hidden eating; one of the forms of which is war—making children pass through the fire unto Moloch. Go to the end of the road and that is what you will find. And so the God is not Freud's God Logos, abstract or disembodied Reason, but the Human Form Divine. And the language is the language not of reason but of love. Reason is power; powerful arguments; power-politics; Realpolitik; reality-principle. Love comes empty-handed (Love's Body, p. 237); the eternal proletariat; like Cordelia, bringing Nothing.

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CAVEAT EMPTOR JUDAENS

Cecil Roth

The antique market is booming: and as one who purchased his collection long since, and in any case is in no position to purchase anything more now, I cannot but rejoice at the fact. The market in Jewish antiques on the other hand is not merely booming. It came into existence only a very short while ago, but it has already become affected by a runaway inflation. It is little more than a half century since a few eccentrics in France, Germany, England, one eccentric in the United States, began to be interested in the artistic relics of the Jewish past—objects of Figotry and Virtue, as a friend of mine once paraphrased the French bijouterie et vertu: Chanukah lamps for use in the home, pewter or majolica dishes for the Passover, the hanging lamps formerly kindled for the Sabbath, the brocades which hung before the Ark in the synagogue, the silver adornments which decorated the Torah scrolls, the illuminated megilloth or Books of Esther, the beautiful marriage contracts formerly common in Italy and elsewhere. But everybody knew that these collectors were eccentrics, and pitted them somewhat for not investing their capital in objects of more general interest or more profitable prospects. However, in a way such eccentricity was condonable, for the competition was so slight that the prices were negligible.

Now, however, the scene has changed. The universal collecting fever has spread to the field of Judaica. The economic well-being of Jews in some Western countries has made it possible for the circle of collectors to be immensely widened; and to some extent, doubtless, the abandonment of Jewish rituals has created a sort of guilt complex which results in an attempt to assemble the vehicles wherein these rituals were expressed in the past. As a result, apart from the newly-developed major Jewish Museums in New York, Cincinnati, London, and so on, there are smaller museums of Jewish ritual objects attached to synagogues and temples all over the United States, as well as overseas: and travelers to Europe or the East are anxious to bring back some object of interest to add to these collections and thus perpetuate their own names. Moreover, a very, very large number of private persons, including many enthusiastic young married couples, are now engaged in beginning to build up private collections of the same type, based in the first instance on the objects they may be able to use in their domestic rituals, but later extending more and more.

As a result of the growing demand, there is a growing supply, but unfortunately it is of frequently dubious origin. (Some sales by auction, for example, at renowned auction galleries, which purport to be of important collections and gain status thereby, turn out on investigation to be based on the recently and deliberately acquired stock-in-trade of professional dealers.) Since the supply of authentic antiques is limited (especially after the wholesale destruction of 1933-45, and the concentration of worthwhile specimens in the major museums), a lively manufacturing trade in Jewish antiques has sprung up in recent years, with its centers in Spain and (I regret to say) in Israel, both particularly suggestive centers for distribution: for what comes from Israel is even now imbued with some odor of sanctity, and what was purchased in Spain is ostensibly of very great antiquity—a relic of the ancient communities expelled from that country in 1492.

So far as this latter area is concerned, one may be quite categorical. To my knowledge, there is only one single authentic piece (or rather pair of pieces) of synagogue silver now extant which goes back before the 16th century: a pair of rimonim (Torah bells) preserved in the Cathedral of Palma (Majorca), though in fact not Spanish but Sicilian in origin. Other pieces may be extant, but I do not know of them, and would want to have their date authenticated by expert opinion were I to spend any substantial sum on them. And objects of the sort dating from before the year 1600 are also very, very uncommon (and should be correspondingly costly). To the collector, I can give only one piece of advice: Never buy a Jewish antique in Spain! (That is, qua Spanish antique: for indeed, a few authentic fairly old German-Jewish pieces have found their way into the Peninsula also.) Some little time ago, a pair of rimonim, described as being 15th-century Spanish, turned up for sale in New York: to the best of my judgment, they are 19th-century Moroccan, and poor quality at that: and I do not think that if they were presented to me I would put them on display.

The most ostensibly appealing and remarkable of the Jewish objets d'art now being put into the market has a romantic story attached to it. It is said to emanate from the Marranos (or crypto-Jews) of Spain and Portugal, who manufactured it in this way in order to conceal their observance of the rites of their former faith from the prying eyes of the Inquisition. (Sometimes, as a further embellishment, the purchaser is informed that it was formerly owned by a Grand Rabbi of Istanbul: the relevance is not obvious.) This precious object consists of a silver chalice (sometimes authentically old, and even of some value), which purports to be a kiddush cup. Into this are fitted ingeniously (1) a pair of candlesticks for the Sabbath (2) a Hanukkah lamp (3) a Scroll of Esther (4) a mezuzah or some similar object, or whatever else appeals to the curious mind of the craftsman. Oc-