

# Radical Politics, Critical Aesthetics, Queer Pleasure:

A Workshop on Herbert Marcuse

Saturday April 26, 2014

Cornell University

AD White House

Since Herbert Marcuse's death 35 years ago, his legacy has been disconcertingly uncontroversial. He has entered the museum of left-wing theory with a somewhat checkered reputation: On the one hand, he continues to be considered a historically noteworthy 20th century thinker of refusal and liberation; on the other hand he has been marginalized as either too philosophically naïve for academic High Theory or too philosophically difficult for effective political practice.

Rather than merely revisiting Marcuse's well documented rise to public recognition as a New Left activist and a prominent associate of the Frankfurt School, we invite conference participants to read Marcuse's texts on their own terms to avoid reducing them to mere variants of an ostensibly cohesive and unified Frankfurt School Critical Theory.

*format*

With the "workshop" we aim to invert the conventional conference format so that instead of coming with polished papers to present, participants would prepare short texts (15 minutes) that articulate significant problems, questions, topics, examples, intersections, divergences, and interventions. There is a set of touchstone reading from Marcuse that will form the basis of the short presentations and discussions. Pdf copies will be available from Olga Petrova at IGCS.

*morning session 10am-12:30pm*

## Radical Politics

**Paul Fleming** (Cornell): "Democratic Intolerance" (on "Repressive Tolerance")

**Matthew Garrett** (Wesleyan): "Errors of Form: Adorno and Marcuse on the Dialectics of Praxis" (On Adorno/Marcuse correspondence)

**John Abromeit** (Buffalo State University) "Herbert Marcuse and the Social Psychology of Right-Wing Populism" (on "The Historical Fate of Bourgeois Democracy")

afternoon session 2:00-5:00

## Critical Aesthetics and Queer Pleasure

**Ulrich Plass** (Wesleyan University) "Reason and Gratification" (on "Philosophical Interlude" in *Eros and Civilization*)

**Mari Jarris** (Wesleyan University) "Liberation of Nature as Human Liberation" (on "Nature and Revolution")

**Katherine Brewer-Ball** (Mellon Fellow, Wesleyan University) "Remembrances of Freedom: What Can Art Do?" (on "Art and Revolution")

**Peter Rehberg** (DAAD Professor, UT-Austin) "Queer Pleasure in Marcuse and Foucault" (on *Eros and Civilization* Ch 10, "The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros," Chapter 11, "Eros and Thanatos"; and Tim Dean's "The Biopolitics of Pleasure").

## Reception to follow!

### Readings:

"Repressive Tolerance" in: *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (1965)

"Correspondence on the German Student Movement" [with Adorno] (1969), in: *New Left Review* 1999

"The Historical Fate of Bourgeois Democracy," (volume 2, *Collected Papers*, pp. 163-86)

*Eros and Civilization* "Philosophical Interlude"; Ch 10, "The Transformation of Sexuality into Eros"; Chapter 11, "Eros and Thanatos."

Counterrevolution and Revolt: "Nature and Revolution"; "Art and Revolution"

Tim Dean: "The Biopolitics of Pleasure".

A Joint Event of

The Institute for German Cultural Studies (Cornell)

&

The Center for the Humanities/Certificate Program in Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory (Wesleyan)

Organized by Ulrich Plass and Paul Fleming