#### Bouazizi's Refusal and Ours

Critical Reflections on the Great Refusal and Contemporary Social Movements

Peter N. Funke, Andrew T. Lamas, and Todd Wolfson

#### The Dignity Revolution: A Spark of Refusal

n December 17, 2010, in a small rural town in Tunisia, an interaction that happens a thousand times a day in our world—the encounter between repression's disrespect and humanity's dignity—became a flashpoint, igniting a global wave of resistance. On this particular day, a police officer confiscated the produce of twenty-six-year-old street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi and allegedly spit in his face and hit him. Humiliated and in search of self-respect, Bouazizi attempted to report the incident to the municipal government; however, he was refused an audience. Soon thereafter, Bouazizi doused himself in flammable liquid and set himself on fire.

Within hours of his self-immolation, protests started in Bouazizi's hometown of Sidi Bouzid and then steadily expanded across Tunisia. The protests gave way to labor strikes and, for a few weeks, Tunisians were unified in their demand for significant governmental reforms. During this heightened period of unrest, police and the military responded by violently clamping down on the protests, which led to multiple injuries and deaths. And as is often the case, state violence intensified the situation, resulting in mounting pressure on the government. The protests reached their apex on January 14, 2011, and Tunisian president Ben Ali fled the country, ending his twenty-three years of rule; however, the demonstrations continued until free elections were declared in March 2011.

Bouazizi's alienation, as well as his final act of refusal, became a trigger in Tunisia, because his circumstances reflected the life experience of so many in the age of neoliberal capitalism. Bouazizi lived in a place with few

prospects, and he was immobilized by the weight of an unvielding economic system and a corrupt state, which sapped him of opportunity for security or self-realization. In this environment, Bouazizi never asked to be a martyr in fact, one report states that his aspiration was simply to buy a pickup truck to make his work less burdensome1-but in the moment that he demanded dignity, he radiated the widespread feeling of refusal and thus ignited a wave of protests that engulfed North Africa and the Middle East. Following the demonstrations in Tunisia, protests and other forms of collective action developed in Egypt, Algeria, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, eventually spreading to all corners of the region and significantly redrawing the political map. The wave of protests was not confined to North Africa and the Middle East, however, as protests against austerity quickly emerged in southern Europe and then ignited the Occupy Wall Street movement that began in New York City and swept across the United States and eventually the world. In 2014, the United States became a flashpoint again, as protests erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, and then sporadically across the country as Blacks urgently demanded an end to police brutality, state violence, and systemic racism.

The Dignity Revolution, as the Tunisian uprising has since been named, was one of the first rebellions in a profound wave of struggle that emerged from the storm of the 2008 global economic crisis. As the ripple effects of this economic catastrophe confronted communities, people across the world responded to the escalation of poverty, inequality, state violence, and instability. In this moment, new radical forms of organizing and protest rekindled the emancipatory spirit. Communities as far flung as Cairo, London, Reykjavík, Quebec, Athens, Frankfurt, New York, Santiago, Hong Kong, Baltimore, and, of course, Tunis rose up to challenge exploitation, corruption, and oppression. In various forms, these struggles continue and new histories are being written as people say *no* to a system that—in the language of Occupy—burdens the 99 percent for the enrichment of the 1 percent, who, armed with weapons of capital and the state (e.g., law, market, ideology, police surveillance, military), are configured to defend and extend the privileges of power.

Of course, this is not the first time a wave of resistance dramatically shifted the balance of forces in society. At the height of the "long 1960s," Herbert Marcuse surveyed a world in revolt. In *An Essay on Liberation*, he wrote:

The Great Refusal takes a variety of forms. In Vietnam, in Cuba, in China a revolution is being defended and driven forward which

<sup>1.</sup> Rana Abouzeid, "Bouazizi: The Man Who Set Himself and Tunisia on Fire,"  $\it Time$ , January 21, 2011, available at http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2044723,00 .html.

struggles to eschew the bureaucratic administration of socialism. The guerilla forces in Latin America seem to be animated by the same subversive impulse: Liberation. . . . The ghetto populations may well be the first basis of revolt (though not of revolution). The student opposition is spreading in the old socialist as well as capitalist countries. . . . It would be irresponsible to overrate the present chances of these forces . . . but the facts are there, facts which are not only the symbols but also the embodiments of hope. They confront the critical theory of society with the task of reexamining the prospects for the emergence of a socialist society qualitatively different from existing society.<sup>2</sup>

Probing both the alienation and exploitation of the human condition in advanced industrial society, as well as the conditions and strategies necessary for creating a new world, Marcuse became known as a "guru" of the New Left.<sup>3</sup> In many ways his scholarship offered a counterpoint to the explosion of protests and fronts of struggle that emerged in the 1960s. Consequently, Marcuse influenced (and was influenced by) a generation of organizers and activists who were involved in a diversity of radical political projects.

In his writing during this period, Marcuse assessed the New Left and other radical formations, focusing on how many of the organizations and movements were able to unite an antiauthoritarian politics with liberatory aspirations. Throughout his writing, Marcuse examined the subjective conditions of radical social change, as well as the need to reimagine the concept of the revolutionary class, given his assessment that the working class had been effectively integrated into the capitalist system. Marcuse also criticized the New Left for lack of robust organizational forms, and he contended that while radicalized youth, Blacks, and other marginalized populations could be critical catalysts for social change, ultimately, profound social transformation must be rooted in the mass of the industrial working class.

If we jump forward to the current wave of resistance, it is striking to compare the core attributes of contemporary movements to the New Left, as they share many characteristics despite radical transformations in capitalism, the state, and technology. In parallel fashion to Marcuse's broad analysis of the New Left, it is clear that certain dynamics have come to govern the current wave of struggle, constituting what scholars have begun to identify as the dominant logic of resistance of our time. These characteristics include

<sup>2.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, An Essay on Liberation (Boston: Beacon, 1969), vii-ix.

<sup>3.</sup> See, for example, "One-Dimensional Philosopher," Time 91, no. 2 (1968): 38.

<sup>4.</sup> See Jeffrey Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements against Corporate Globalization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Todd Wolfson, *Digital Rebellion: The Birth of the Cyber Left* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2014); and Peter N. Funke and Todd Wolfson, "Nervous Systems: Neoliberal Capitalism and the Cultural Logic of Resistance," in

an embrace of a diversity of actors and fronts of struggles, a commitment to leaderless and prefigurative forms of organizing, and a participatory governance process based in grassroots democracy and consensus decision making. Moreover, much of today's activism displays a distrust of existing institutions, a critique of elite financial power, the physical and virtual occupation of space, and a strategy of change, grounded in voluntarism and spontaneous uprisings rather than resilient movement building. Analysis of the wave of protest in the 1960s and 1970s reveals critical similarities to today's movement politics, along the lines just mentioned, and thus calls for a revisiting of Marcuse's engaged critical theory, in order to carefully tease out insights from the struggles he witnessed, participated in, and reflected on. Moreover, this excavation of Marcuse's frameworks may help scholars and activists identify the strengths and shortcomings of contemporary theory and practice of resistance.

# Recent Research on Contemporary Social Movements

With the recent surge in political protest, scholars have responded with efforts to map different aspects of contemporary struggle. At the broadest level, scholars have investigated the impact that neoliberal capitalism has on the nature of resistance,<sup>5</sup> on democratic alternatives,<sup>6</sup> and on transnational formations in the global justice movement.<sup>7</sup> Analysts are engaging questions regarding the forms of movement networking,<sup>8</sup> democratic practices,<sup>9</sup> and political futures.<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey Juris, for example, argues that models of organizing have changed and hierarchical forms are giving way to largely unstructured,

Culture, Catastrophe, and Rhetoric: The Texture of Political Action, ed. Ralph Cintron and Robert Hariman (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 106–121.

<sup>5.</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2009).

<sup>6.</sup> Juris, Networking Futures.

<sup>7.</sup> Janet Conway, *Identity, Place, Knowledge: Social Movements Contesting Globalization* (Halifax, Canada: Fernwood, 2004); Janet Conway, *Edges of Modernity: The World Social Forum and Its "Others"* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Ruth Reitan, *Global Activism* (London: Routledge, 2007); Ruth Reitan and Shannon Gibson, "Climate Change or Social Change? Environmental and Leftist Praxis and Participatory Action Research," *Globalizations* 9, no. 3 (2012): 395–410; Peter N. Funke, "Building Rhizomatic Social Movements: Movement Building Relays during the Current Epoch of Contention," *Studies in Social Justice* 8, no. 1 (2014): 27–44.

<sup>8.</sup> Wolfson, Digital Rebellion; Juris, Networking Futures.

<sup>9.</sup> David Graeber, Direct Action: An Ethnography (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).

<sup>10.</sup> Alex Khasnabish, *Zapatismo beyond Borders: New Imaginations of Political Possibility* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

fluid networks of resistance. Similarly, Arturo Escobar suggests a networking model that stresses self-organization and nonhierarchical, complex, adaptive behavioral systems. Geoffrey Pleyers and Alain Touraine examine the ways in which the alterglobalization movement writ large asserts itself as a globalized actor against neoliberalism. Manuel Castells map the new cycle of protest as it intersects with capitalism, communication tools, and networking technology. Along these lines, Paul Mason looks at Egypt, Great Britain, Greece, and elsewhere to argue that we are witnessing the expanding power of the individual, which enables new, dramatic political alternatives. Paolo Gerbaudo studies Egypt, Spain, and New York to argue for the increasing hybridity in social protest between online and offline worlds.

While this scholarship has been both rich and insightful in uncovering some of the core practices and underlying ideologies of contemporary struggle, we see two tendencies that this volume aims to critically address. The first is an inattention to history and, therefore, to the relationship between the contemporary cycle of struggle and previous periods as well as to the particular mode of the shifting capitalist political economy. Second, while some scholars, such as Gerbaudo, are critical of some aspects of contemporary resistance, most scholarship tends toward a celebratory embrace of current movement practice. An intended contribution of our book is the application of a historically contextualized and renewed critical theory—as informed by Marcuse's radical legacy—for the study of contemporary social movements in the current cycle of resistance.

#### Summary of the Book

This book features analysis of contemporary social movements with particular reference to Marcuse's revolutionary concept of the Great Refusal. In 2005, during the height of the global justice movement, Douglas Kellner maintained the continued importance of Marcuse.

<sup>11.</sup> Arturo Escobar, "Other Worlds Are (Already) Possible," in *World Social Forum: Challenging Empires*, 2nd ed., ed. Jai Sen and Peter Waterman (Montreal: Black Rose, 2009), 393–404. See also Arturo Escobar, *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>12.</sup> Geoffrey Pleyers and Alain Touraine, *Alter-globalization: Becoming Actors in a Global Age* (London: Polity, 2011).

<sup>13.</sup> Todd Gitlin, Occupy Nation: The Roots, the Spirit, and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street (New York: HarperCollins, 2012); Manuel Castells, Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age (London: Polity, 2013).

<sup>14.</sup> Paul Mason, Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions (London: Verso, 2012).

<sup>15.</sup> Paolo Gerbaudo, Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism (London: Pluto, 2012).

I would argue that in the present conjuncture of global economic crisis, terrorism and a resurgence of U.S. militarism, and growing global movements against corporate capitalism and war, Marcuse's political and activist version of critical theory is highly relevant to the challenges of the contemporary moment. Marcuse is especially useful for developing global perspectives on domination and resistance, radically criticizing the existing system of domination, valorizing movements of resistance, and projecting radical alternatives to the current organization of society and mode of life.<sup>16</sup>

A decade later, following a new wave of resistance, we join in recognizing the ongoing significance of Marcuse for understanding the strategy and sociopolitical horizons of contemporary struggle. The acknowledgement of Marcuse's continued relevance for critically analyzing both contemporary forms of domination and the possibilities for resistance frames this book, in which we revisit the Marcusean tradition as we survey the current moment of crisis and change. Oriented around Marcuse's concept of the "Great Refusal—the protest against that which is," this book maps the underlying logic of this new figure of resistance as it has materialized across the globe.

The chapters in this book analyze different elements and locations of the contemporary wave of struggle, drawing on the work and vision of Marcuse in order to reveal, with a historical perspective, the present moment of resistance. The chapters utilize and invoke various Marcusean concepts, insights, and claims, including those related to the catalyzing role of students and the materially oppressed, the state's use of repressive tolerance, the far-reaching dynamics of advanced capitalism, Eros, revolutionary subjectivity, repressive desublimation, and the liberation of consciousness. While embedding recent uprisings in their respective historical contexts, the book highlights the novel and common dimensions of the contemporary protest wave—tracing it from the 1960s to the Zapatistas, the East Asian uprisings of the 1980s and 1990s, the global justice movement of the 1990s and 2000s, and more recent mobilizations, including the Arab Spring, Occupy, Black Lives Matter, anti-austerity protests in Europe and the Americas, and rural migrant labor resistance in China.

While, of course, this book is not the first effort to critically assess contemporary social movements or to revitalize Left theory and practice in the twenty-first century, it does seek to understand recent uprisings by making use of Marcuse's powerful conceptual apparatus and, in the process, to

<sup>16.</sup> Douglas Kellner, "Introduction," in *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, vol. 3, *The New Left and the 1960s*, ed. Douglas Kellner (London: Routledge, 2005), 3.

<sup>17.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society, 2nd. ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1991), 63. Originally published in 1964.

critically assess, extend, and rework Marcuse's philosophical contributions in light of these developments. This volume is not a hagiography. As with the work of all theorists, Marcuse's frameworks and concepts must be reread and understood—with due respect but without nostalgia—as a product of their time and thus revisited for their validity and adapted, where appropriate, to the present condition.

#### The Great Refusal Contextualized

Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) was born in Berlin. As a young soldier in 1918, Marcuse was "deeply influenced" by the wave of mass strikes and uprisings in Germany and the launch of the workers' councils movement, in which he became involved, and he "sympathized" with the radical Spartacus program of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.<sup>18</sup> He received his Ph.D. in 1922, studied philosophy with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, wrote his second dissertation in 1932,19 and became a member of the Institute for Social Research, or the Frankfurt School, in 1933. With the rise of Adolf Hitler, Marcuse—along with many scholars affiliated with the Institute immigrated to the United States in 1934. He supported the United States in the fight against fascism during the Second World War, and after the war, he began his academic career in earnest, first at Columbia University and Harvard University, then at Brandeis University, and finally at the University of California-San Diego. Marcuse attained international renown during the 1960s as "the philosopher of the student revolts." His many books—all still in wide circulation, including Reason and Revolution, 20 Eros and Civilization, 21 One-Dimensional Man,<sup>22</sup> Counterrevolution and Revolt,<sup>23</sup> and An Essay on *Liberation*<sup>24</sup>—resonated deeply within the social movements then underway against the war in Vietnam and in response to consumerism, conformity, profitable waste, and poverty in the United States. He showed how various forms of repression within democracy—such as race- and gender-based inequality and the manipulation of bodily pleasures—integrated individuals into the destructive political economy of capitalism. Today, given the

<sup>18.</sup> See Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 14–15.

<sup>19.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, trans. Seyla Benhabib (1932; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987).

<sup>20.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* (Boston: Beacon, 1941).

<sup>21.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (Boston: Beacon, 1955).

<sup>22.</sup> Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man.

<sup>23.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, Counterrevolution and Revolt (Boston: Beacon, 1972).

<sup>24.</sup> Marcuse, An Essay on Liberation.

intensification of inequalities worldwide, his critical theory and humanist socialism are arguably more relevant than ever.

In the broadest sense, Marcuse's work and the project of the Frankfurt School more generally started out as a reaction to the perceived "crisis of Marxism," stemming from the absence of revolution and the bureaucratization of the Soviet experiences as well as the cooptation of the working class and the apparent stabilization of capitalism. <sup>25</sup> Broadly aligning with a Marxist humanism (as against the positivist dimension of a then ossified version of Marxism with its diminishment of conscious, human agency), Marcuse's response to this crisis consisted of restoring Marx's dialectic and focusing on the subjective factors that were the basis of radical social change. Hence, his oeuvre "can be seen as an attempt to rescue radical, socially transformative subjectivity." <sup>26</sup> In this light, the Great Refusal takes on a special significance as a hallmark of Marcuse's revolutionary project. As Douglas Kellner has written:

Marcuse . . . constantly advocated the "Great Refusal" as the proper political response to any form of irrational repression, and indeed this seems to be at least the starting point for political activism in the contemporary era: refusal of all forms of oppression and domination, relentless criticism of all policies that impact negatively on working people and progressive social programs, and militant opposition to any and all acts of aggression against Third World countries. Indeed, in an era of "positive thinking," conformity, and Yuppies who "go for it," it seems that Marcuse's emphasis on negative thinking, refusal, and opposition provides at least a starting point and part of a renewal of radical politics in the contemporary era.<sup>27</sup>

Marcuse wrote during the "golden age" of capitalism, when "a comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevail[ed] in advanced industrial civilization." The historical conjuncture in which he wrote had a deep impact on Marcuse's scholarship, as he, like many scholars of that period, believed that struggles over material needs were receding as capital was increasingly able to fulfill the basic needs of everyone in society. With

<sup>25.</sup> See Kellner, Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism, esp. 363-375.

<sup>26.</sup> Arnold L. Farr, "Herbert Marcuse," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2014 ed., ed. Edward N. Zalta, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/marcuse/. Farr also writes, "Indeed, Marcuse's entire project can be viewed as a quest for a new subjectivity." Arnold L. Farr, *Critical Theory and Democratic Vision: Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2009), 8.

<sup>27.</sup> Douglas Kellner, "From 1984 to One-Dimensional Man: Reflections on Orwell and Marcuse," Current Perspectives in Social Theory 10 (1990): 223–252.

<sup>28.</sup> Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, 1.

capital's alleged increasing ability to meet the basic needs of society, Marcuse saw that Marx's revolutionary subject, the industrial proletariat, had become integrated into a stabilized capitalist system within a one-dimensional society, "conforming to existing thought and behavior and lacking a critical dimension and a dimension of potentialities that transcend the existing society."<sup>29</sup>

In this environment, where consumerist affluence and technological rationality replace freedom and authentic individuality, Marcuse became discouraged about the revolutionary potential of the working class. Because so many misinterpret Marcuse on this point, it is important to emphasize that Marcuse does not give up on the working class as *central* to the success of emancipation; rather, in the historical period of capitalism in which he was writing, he regards the working class as in need of a catalyst for realizing its own revolutionary role. Marcuse located the catalyst in those sectors of society that stood at society's margins, excluded from or discontented with the relative affluence and deathly stillness of the 1960s. When the student protests erupted, Marcuse saw this catalyst—in the same way that he would later turn to the women's movement—as a spearhead of emancipatory politics. It was the excluded and the discontented, because of their exclusion and discontentment, who made the Great Refusal and, with it, a radical new subjectivity possible.

In hindsight, while the movements of the New Left made great progress, the result was not a full-scale revolution, as some expected. As Marcuse himself notes, the movements of the period were not able to transcend problems of strategy and historical circumstance. State repression against Black radicals and others also played a significant role in explaining the demise of liberation movements in the United States. While extremely valuable, Marcuse's work must also be interrogated to determine whether it carries intended or unintended implications that limit its strategic power. Many of the strategic and organizational problems of the New Left are mirrored in today's epoch of contention, and thus we caution against too celebratory an embrace of the New Left's protest logic of the 1960s, and, correspondingly, the unrefined adoption of Marcusean frameworks for contemporary struggle.

#### Marcuse's Insights

Here we point to a few critical dimensions where Marcuse's thought converges with the contemporary wave of resistance or where the radicality of his thought has not been sufficiently explored by activists or scholars.

<sup>29.</sup> Douglas Kellner, "Introduction to the Second Edition," in Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, xxvii.

<sup>30. &</sup>quot;Black militants pay with their lives: Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Fred Hampton, George Jackson." Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, 1.

Specifically, in this section, we address Marcuse's reflections on the subjective dynamics of class formation, the necessity of Eros in movement politics, and his dialectical approach to social transformation that "understands the critical tension between 'is' and 'ought." These critical dimensions of his thought have a great deal to offer contemporary political praxis. In the next section, "The Deep Grammar of Marcusean Politics," we confront some critical questions and possible shortcomings, arguably of relevance to a consideration of the New Left and contemporary uprisings. So, then, the goal in this section and the next is to examine, in broad strokes, the strengths and limitations of Marcusean political praxis.

#### Subjectivity

Marcuse's work emphasizes the subjective element of revolutionary agency. Radical subjectivity is vital for advancing emancipatory struggles—for understanding, theorizing, and furthering the critical processes of identity formation in general and class formation in particular. From a Marxist perspective, while people's structurally determined objective conditions (e.g., contemporary neoliberal capitalism) are key to creating a set of shared social circumstances (e.g., precarious working situations, burdensome debt, inadequate public schools, racial segregation, mass surveillance), it is through a set of collectivizing processes that classes of people recognize these common conditions. Put differently, "class in itself" exists on the objective basis of the capitalist structures of production, whereas the same working class only becomes a "class for itself" through developments that include processes of self-making within these given structures.<sup>32</sup> The focus on the subjective elements of radical consciousness was critical in the era of mass society, as Marcuse convincingly illustrates, and, arguably, is equally apt in the era of neoliberal capitalism. Struggles around subjective consciousness in general and class identity in particular remain a critical dimension of contemporary struggle. Occupy exemplified this outlook with the slogan "We are the 99 percent," which sought to frame a common class identity across a diversity of participants; note the slogan's declaration of a shared economic situation vis-à-vis the 1 percent. While Marcuse is not the only scholar to emphasize the subjective dimension of identity formation within struggle,<sup>33</sup> he clearly

<sup>31.</sup> Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, 133.

<sup>32.</sup> Georg Lukács, a significant influence on Marcuse, uses Marx's concepts of "class in itself" and "class for itself" to elaborate his notion of class consciousness. See Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968). Originally published in 1923.

<sup>33.</sup> See E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1963).

centers this discussion for the New Left, and it remains an ongoing theme that contemporary social movements must consider.

#### **Eros**

Deeply entwined with the subjective dynamics of class formation is Marcuse's critique of overemphasizing reason (Logos) at the expense of desire (Eros). Drawing on Freud, Marcuse's work fruitfully understands the role of Eros as a motivating force when analyzing and theorizing mobilizations, protests, and class formation.<sup>34</sup> Developing shared identities and solidarity, realizing the just struggle, and empathizing with others, Marcuse suggests, is not a process guided by mere rationality. It is not enough to analytically understand what is right and wrong or why resistance is necessary. Marcuse's discussion of Eros highlights the destructiveness of instrumental, domination-supporting reason and emphasizes the cultivation of imagination and new sensibilities, through, among other things, aesthetic education. Fantasy and art can be important for liberation, as they refuse "to accept as final the limitations imposed upon freedom and happiness by the reality principle."35 Art for Marcuse practices the "Great Refusal," incarnating the emancipatory contents of memory, fantasy, and the imagination by producing images of happiness, by protesting "against unnecessary repression," and by struggling "for the ultimate form of freedom"—a life "without anxiety." 36 In Marcuse's view, fantasies and hopes embody the eruption of desires for increased freedom and gratification; hence, they can serve as resources for political engagement to create a better world. Marcuse's work on Eros brings back into the center of political analysis and action dimensions of political struggle—and, more broadly, of the human condition—that have been sidelined for the past few decades with the positivist turn in dominant research on social movements. Marcuse reminds us that emotional aspects are vital for understanding and acting on the political. Building on this legacy, the radical scholar George Katsiaficas (who was Marcuse's student and also has a chapter in this book) develops—through substantial research across the globe on the genesis of mass social movements—a theory of the "eros effect."37 In addition, other scholars, such as Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper,

<sup>34.</sup> See Stanley Aronowitz, "Marcuse's Conception of Eros," *Radical Philosophy Review* 16, no. 1 (2013): 31–47.

<sup>35.</sup> Marcuse, Eros and Civilization, 149.

<sup>36.</sup> Ibid., 149-150.

<sup>37.</sup> See George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End, 1999).

and Francesca Polletta reintroduce passion more generally into the analysis of social movement politics.<sup>38</sup>

#### Dialectics

As Marcuse details in *One-Dimensional Man*, the inability to think dialectically—to imagine "what ought to be" as against "what is"—is the foremost problem for radical social change in advanced industrial society. The acceptance of the given state of society as stable and fixed offers no vantage for imagining a better world within the contours of the actually existing world. Thus, without the dialectical imagination, structural transformation, in Marcuse's assessment, is impossible. Kellner amplifies this point, arguing that "critical and dialectical social theory should analyze containment and stabilization as well as contestation and struggle" and "*One-Dimensional Man* showed that the problems confronting the emerging radical movements were not simply the Vietnam War, racism or inequality, but the system itself, and that solving a wide range of social problems required fundamental social restructuring."<sup>39</sup>

The practice of seeing the limits of contemporary society, and thus the outlines of a new world within the present, is a continuing challenge for the working class and radical social movements. In fact, Margaret Thatcher gave form to the ever-increasing one-dimensionality of society when she uttered the now famous phrase "There is no alternative." The belief that we have reached "the end of history," and, consequently, that there is no alternative to the rule of neoliberal capital, has forged a smooth and seemingly impregnable wall, making it difficult for social-movement organizers and activists, or artists and scholars for that matter, to penetrate society with a new logic that challenges the organization of society at its root. The call for organizers, activists, scholars, artists, and organic intellectuals to think and act dialectically, is arguably one of Marcuse's most important contributions to radical political praxis. In the past few decades of struggle, we have wit-

<sup>38.</sup> Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>39.</sup> Kellner, "Introduction to the Second Edition," xxxiv, xxxv.

<sup>40.</sup> The Conservative Party politician and the U.K.'s prime minister from 1979 to 1990, Margaret Thatcher reportedly often used the phrase "There is no alternative," which may be traced to the Victorian-era political theorist Herbert Spencer. See Margaret Thatcher, "Press Conference for American Correspondents in London," June 25, 1980, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, available at http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/104389.

<sup>41.</sup> See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). This book expands on an earlier essay, Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989): 3–18.

nessed the dialectical commitment—from the World Social Forum's narrative that "another world is possible" to the prefigurative, nonhierarchical politics on display in protest movements like Occupy, in economic justice initiatives such as the worker-recuperated enterprises in Argentina, and in the continuing struggle in the past two decades not only for regime change but for deep forms of democracy in the revolutions across Latin America and elsewhere. While these narratives and practices—aiming to imagine what ought to be in the shadow of what is—may be incomplete and at times deeply flawed (and subject to backlash and counterrevolutionary politics), they are illustrative of what contemporary movement activists have implicitly or explicitly learned from (or, perhaps more likely, how they are in sync with) Marcuse's critical theory.

#### The Deep Grammar of Marcusean Politics

In this section, we sketch some of the possible challenges to and limitations of Marcusean thinking for our time. More specifically, we argue that Marcuse's assessment regarding the stability or durability of the capitalist political economy and the affluence it generates needs to be questioned and updated or extended to account for the increasing fragility and crisis-prone nature of capitalism as well as the growing impoverishment and alienation of widening swaths of society. We then also question some of the central implications of his writings, which may have—intentionally or not—motivated or validated a particular approach to resistance, struggle, and movement politics based on anarchist principles broadly understood. Or, perhaps, this political tendency arises not from Marcuse's work per se but rather independently and from misreading, misinterpretation, and misapplication. In any case, in a time of its ascendance on the Left, questions should also be raised about whether the anarchist approach to movement politics imposes limitations on sustained organizing, movement building, resilience, and, ultimately, movement success.

We are not suggesting that Marcuse, who updated Marxism for his time and considered himself a Marxist, necessarily advocated for a voluntarist, nonorganizational movement praxis. Rather, we want to ask questions about his understanding of the nature of capitalism and its relevance for the

<sup>42.</sup> See, for example, William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah, eds., *Another World Is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum* (London: Zed, 2003).

<sup>43.</sup> Maurizio Atzeni and Marcelo Vieta, "Between Class and the Market: Self-Management in Theory and in the Practice of Worker-Recuperated Enterprises in Argentina," in *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*, ed. Martin Parker, George Cheney, Valérie Fournier, and Chris Land (London: Routledge, 2014), 47–63; Marina A. Sitrin, *Everyday Revolutions: Horizontalism and Autonomy in Argentina* (London: Zed, 2012).

contemporary period, about the appearance of an affluent society, and about the allegedly regressive character of the working class. Arguably, Marcuse's work, and in particular the matters on which he focused his analytic apparatus, generated a spirit and thus cultivated possible lines of interpretation, some of which may have legitimated a particular and, in some ways, problematic approach to social movement theory and practice.

#### Capitalism

At the most fundamental level, Marcuse's understanding of the exigencies of social change emerges directly out of his analysis of the condition of capitalism in general and advanced industrial society in particular. This analysis plays a determining role in his consequent understanding of the working class and the possibility of mass, organized revolution. That is, Marcuse's penetrating analysis of one-dimensionality within advanced industrial societies sets the stage for a series of analytic insights—from capitalism's ability and interest in meeting basic needs and the consequent cooptation of the working class to the critical importance of students and other discontented groupings, the centrality of subjectivity, and what some might view as a nod to voluntarism and spontaneity. Do these findings and positions, which are products of a particular historical conjuncture, offer insight into the current conditions of neoliberal capitalism? Mobilizations during the six-year period—from the 2011 uprisings that spread from Tunis and Cairo to Madrid, Athens, Madison (Wisconsin), New York, and throughout the world to France's Nuit Debout in 2016<sup>44</sup>—were triggered by the volatility of capitalism and decades of neoliberal policies, which have impoverished increasing sectors of society around the globe. At least since the Great Recession of 2007-2009, but arguably much earlier, a crisis-prone capitalism has taken hold. If one understands Marcuse as highlighting the *stability* of capitalism, then his analysis of capitalism's condition seems problematic and anachronistic; however, if one reads Marcuse as highlighting the durability of capitalism, then his analysis seems useful, even prescient. In other words, does the transition from Marcuse's "advanced industrial society" to our neoliberal capitalism confirm or deny Marcuse's conceptual apparatus? Put another way, has one-dimensionality intensified or dissipated in the transition to neoliberalism? Did this transition require a lessening or a "deepening of what Marcuse called forms of repressive desublimation"?<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44.</sup> Angelique Chrisafis, "Nuit Debout Protesters Occupy French Cities in Revolutionary Call for Change," *The Guardian*, April 8, 2016, available at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/08/nuit-debout-protesters-occupy-french-cities-in-a-revolutionary-call-for-change.

<sup>45.</sup> Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce, "Introduction: Marcuse's Adventures in Marxism," in Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, vol. 6, Marxism, Revolution and Utopia, ed.

On the important question of labor and radical subjectivity, Marcuse's analysis is also tested by the times. The working class around the globe has begun to emerge—but not without a backlash from the Right—as a vital actor in resisting and mobilizing in recent decades. Do these developments call into question Marcuse's notion of labor's complicity in the stabilization of capital, or do they confirm his key insights about the durability of capitalism, its ability to generate the goods for those it needs to produce and consume them, and the significance of the marginalized—even within the labor movement—for catalyzing change?

#### Movement Strategy

Out of this necessity to historicize capitalism and the recognition of changes from the period of Marcuse's advanced industrial society to the neoliberal capitalism of our era, we then also need to interrogate the Marcusean-inspired approach to movement politics as it finds expression in his conception (and in the popular reception) of the Great Refusal. First, does Marcuse privilege the discontented and alienated over the deprived and exploited as the core actors of emancipatory change? Amid historically racialized capitalism, such analysis may require a more explicit embrace and articulation of the critical framework developed by W.E.B. Du Bois. 46 Second, does Marcuse understand voluntarism and spontaneity as central to societal transformation? Third, following from the stress on spontaneity, is Marcuse's theory of social change undertheorized, lacking focus on what it takes to build resilient movement organizations and to move beyond the refusal and toward the collective demand? Arguably, the Great Refusal—or what sociologist John Holloway later called "the scream" 47—too often has been seen as an end in itself rather than as an initial negation that is ultimately part of a broader process of social transformation. Is Marcuse's plea for the Great Refusal only

Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce (London: Routledge, 2014), 4. Douglas Kellner and Clayton Pierce observe in neoliberalism an intensification "of repressive desublimation—with the individuals' whole being integrated within the instrumental rationality of capitalist systems of domination and control, in which pleasures become intensified into forms of domination, such as addictive consumer sprees or obsession with media, sports, or other leisure activities. In short, shaping a subject's identity has become one of the most important targets of neoliberal governing strategies because human life itself has become a site of investment/disinvestment for corporations, governments, and institutions interested in extracting the most possible value from populations and the natural world." Ibid.

<sup>46.</sup> See W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1935).

<sup>47.</sup> John Holloway, Change the World without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today (London: Pluto, 2002), 1.

a reactive "no," or does it also affirm building organizational capacity to transform refusal into collective demand for a new world?

Marcuse himself acknowledged some of these problems in a talk in 1975, which later became an essay, "The Failure of the New Left?" In this piece, Marcuse argued that the New Left in part "destroyed itself by failing to develop any adequate organizational forms and by allowing internal splits to grow and spread, a phenomenon that was linked to anti-intellectualism, to a politically powerless anarchism and a narcissistic arrogance."49 While Marcuse localizes the problem in the logic of the New Left, one might argue that for some the spirit of the Marcusean framework provokes or palliates intentionally or not—this particular movement logic, which, arguably, is also embedded in the current wave of struggle. Similar to some groups and movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Occupy, for example, was mostly composed of the discontented and alienated, rarely engaging in a meaningful way with the poor and working class. Moreover, Occupy—though clearly historically significant as a movement of resistance—displayed a degree of distrust in movement building and relied on voluntarism and spontaneity and was, therefore, unable to develop what Marcuse marked as "adequate organizational forms." Finally, akin to sections of the New Left, Occupy was generally unable to move beyond the refusal and toward the collective demand. These dimensions may be relevant for understanding the short-lived nature of protest formations such as Occupy and force us to ask questions about the dominant logic of contemporary struggle.

Notwithstanding the timeliness and continuing relevance of Marcuse's oeuvre, it must be encountered critically with an eye for not only its insights but also its limitations. Though united in struggle, this volume's editors disagree on the answers to some of the questions above, and we welcome further critical engagement on these issues, given their significance for contemporary social movements. For further provocation and reflection, the authors of the following chapters offer scholars, activists, artists, and organic

<sup>48.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, "The Failure of the New Left?," in *Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, vol. 3, *The New Left and the 1960s*, ed. Douglas Kellner (London: Routledge, 2005), 183–191. As Kellner indicates (191n1), "The Failure of the New Left?" provides an expanded version of a 1975 lecture given at the University of California–Irvine. It was published in German in 1975 in *Zeit-Messungen* and in *New German Critique* 18 (Fall 1979): 3–11, translated by Biddy Martin. But see Wini Breines's classic work, originally published in 1982, on Students for a Democratic Society and other New Left movement organizations, in which she writes eloquently and provocatively about the successes of efforts "to create participatory, non-hierarchical, and communal organizational forms." Her analysis of "prefigurative politics" is invaluable for those committed to the creation of democratic movements for social change. Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left*, 1962–1968: The Great Refusal (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), xxii, 46–52.

<sup>49.</sup> Marcuse, "The Failure of the New Left?," 185.

intellectuals critical frameworks for revisiting the contributions of Herbert Marcuse, a revolutionary philosopher.

#### Highlighting Critical Contributions, Chapter by Chapter

Marcuse's relationship to radical social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, not to mention his enduring relevance to many engaged intellectuals and activists in such movements today, may strike some as perplexing. If those earlier revolts were said to represent, among other things, a challenge to an older generation's understanding of oppression and resistance, and if "don't trust anyone over thirty" was a popularization of the expression of this purported generational divide, then the embrace by young, radical intellectuals of Marcuse—an old German émigré—appeared (and may continue to seem) remarkable to many observers.

What matters, though, is not our age but rather our commitments. The contributors to this book range widely in age—from those in their eighties to those more than fifty years younger. Such an intergenerational and otherwise diverse assembly of editors and authors—from four continents—can arguably be counted as a source of strength and hope for engaged, radical scholarship. It is just this sort of dialogue and comradery—without erasing difference—that characterized Marcuse's relationship to the youth revolt, the Black struggle, the women's movement, the environmental movement, Third World anticolonialism, and other social, political, economic, and cultural expressions of resistance in the 1960s and 1970s.

Angela Y. Davis—Distinguished Professor Emerita in the History of Consciousness and Feminist Studies Departments at the University of California-Santa Cruz-studied philosophy in the early 1960s at Brandeis University, where Herbert Marcuse was then teaching, and she subsequently pursued postgraduate study in philosophy under his supervision at the University of California-San Diego. In reflecting on his mentorship, she stated, "Herbert Marcuse taught me that it was possible to be an academic and an activist, a scholar and a revolutionary."50 In turn, Marcuse explained what he learned about the philosophy of liberation from Davis's writings on Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Frederick Douglass.<sup>51</sup> Such respect and engaged cooperation—such recognition, mutuality, and reciprocity—has been central to the intellectual work reflected in these pages.

<sup>50.</sup> Herbert's Hippopotamus: A Story about Revolution in Paradise, directed by Paul Alexander Juutilainen (Los Angeles: De Facto Fiction Films, 1996).

<sup>51.</sup> See the letter from Herbert Marcuse to Angela Davis, "Dear Angela," Ramparts 9 (February 1971): 22, reprinted in Herbert Marcuse, "Dear Angela," in Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, vol. 3, The New Left and the 1960s, ed. Douglas Kellner (New York: Routledge, 2005), 49-50.

This book presents twenty-one chapters, organized into five parts, which are briefly summarized below. <sup>52</sup> The chapters are preceded by a brilliantly provocative foreword in which Angela Davis associates Marcuse's Great Refusal with the long, historically potent Black Radical Tradition. The book closes with an afterword in which Arnold Farr and Andrew Lamas suggest a dialogue between Marcuse's concept of refusal and Martin Luther King Jr.'s concept of the dream—revealing a symmetry and unity between the two thinkers and their respective, interrelated radical traditions.

#### Part I: Mapping Coordinates

18

Following this introductory chapter, we turn to Chapter 2, "Marcuse in the Crisis of Neoliberal Capitalism: Revisiting the Occupation," in which Michael Forman, while concluding that Marcuse's work retains its relevance in the twenty-first century, nonetheless argues that if one-dimensional society persists, it is different from the world Marcuse addressed more than half a century ago, because the regime of capitalist accumulation Marcuse took for granted is no longer present. "Consequently," argues Forman, "any analysis that will appropriate the tools Marcuse bequeathed must, much as he would have done, do so with due consideration for the important elements that have reconstituted not only the practices of accumulation but also the ideologies that obscure the true nature of capitalist society and systematically undermine efforts at leveling a critique." Forman believes that addressing this challenge remains a problem for contemporary social movements, which, on one hand, continue to offer much promise but, on the other, have had difficulty elaborating a systematic analysis of, and a sustained practice against, the structural conditions they seek to transform. Still, Forman maintains that Occupiers, Indignados, Arab revolutionaries, and many others have given hope a new life and reminded both system administrators and their opponents that history has not come to an end.

In Chapter 3, "Negating That Which Negates Us: Marcuse, Critical Theory, and the New Politics of Refusal," Christian Garland argues that Marcuse's thought is significant for the renewal of a critical theory with a basis in radical praxis or what can be defined as a politics of refusal: the negation of that which negates us. For Garland, who speaks of an ontology of negativity, refusal and resistance should not be mistaken as simply passive withdrawal or retreat; rather, they are the active forms of radically different modes of being and doing—what Garland understands as Marcuse's definition of the Great Refusal.

<sup>52.</sup> These chapter summaries draw in part on abstracts developed in cooperation with the respective authors, to whom the editors extend their sincere appreciation.

In Chapter 4, "Occupying and Refusing Radically: The Deprived and the Dissatisfied Transforming the World," Peter Marcuse addresses two central questions of theory and praxis: What is the Great Refusal? and What is the Long March through the Institutions? It would contradict the critical method of radical inquiry—so central to the Marxist tradition—to seek to answer these two questions ahistorically. Grounding his analysis in what he refers to as the nonrevolutionary, historical situation of the contemporary moment, Peter Marcuse reconceptualizes his father's framework as follows: the Great Refusal might be seen as a bold refusal to accept the dominant wisdom and the dominant practices in one situation after another, while joined in a radical long march—composed of a diversity of struggles—through the dominant institutions, toward the common destination of a democratic, liberatory socialism.

#### Part II: Liberating Resistance

In this section of the book, we are reminded of Marcuse's declaration in his "Political Preface" to the 1966 reissue of *Eros and Civilization*: "But in the administered society, the biological necessity does not immediately issue in action; organization demands counter-organization. Today the fight for life, the fight for Eros, is the *political* fight."<sup>53</sup>

In Chapter 5, "Asia's Unknown Uprisings," George Katsiaficas identifies the international character and connections of contemporary social movements, with a particular focus on the Asian Wave of insurgencies. Katsiaficas maintains that, since 1968, the global movement's mobilizations have changed from being spontaneous and unconscious to evidencing a form of "conscious spontaneity" in which grassroots activists around the world synchronize protests with common aspirations. These Asian uprisings demonstrate the capacities of popular insurgencies to learn from and expand on prior mobilizations—adopting and adapting vocabulary, actions, and aspirations from various popular movements—without the need for a "conscious element" (or revolutionary party). Katsiaficas terms this new phenomenon—of popular movements emerging in their own right as hundreds of thousands of ordinary people take history into their hands—the "eros effect," a means of rescuing the revolutionary value of spontaneity, a way to stimulate a reevaluation of the unconscious. Rather than portraying emotions as linked to reaction, the notion of the eros effect brings them into the realm of positive revolutionary resources whose mobilization can result in significant social transformation.

<sup>53.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, "Political Preface," in *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon, 1966), xxv (emphasis in original).

In Chapter 6, "Chinese Workers in Global Production and Local Resistance," Jenny Chan documents the Great Refusal amid rural migrant workers in China's factories and urban spaces. With a shift in manufacturing from the developed countries of North America, Europe, and East Asia to China and other developing countries, not only has China become "the workshop of the world," but signs show that it is also becoming the epicenter of world labor unrest amid the processes of privatization, global outsourcing, and transnational manufacturing. Drawing on fieldwork in major Chinese industrial cities between 2010 and 2014 and supplemented with scholarly studies and government surveys, Chan's chapter analyzes the precarity and the individual and collective struggles of a new generation of factory workers. Chan also assesses the significance of the growing number of legal and extralegal actions taken by workers within a framework that highlights the deep contradictions among labor, capital, and the Chinese state. Finally, Chan looks into the effect of demographic changes and geographic shifts of population and production on the growth of working-class power in the workplace and the marketplace.

In Chapter 7, "Queer Critique, Queer Refusal," Heather Love maintains that in a moment of widespread assimilation of lesbians and gays, there are also continuing exclusions—of poor queers, queers of color, undocumented queers, disabled queers, nonmonogamous queers, transgender people, and others. Love maintains that Marcuse's reflections on sexuality, freedom, and negation are helpful in articulating a strategy and an ethics for a renewed queer criticism—one alive to both new inclusions and ongoing exclusions. Focusing on Marcuse's concept of the Great Refusal, Love's chapter considers the marginalization of gender and sexual outsiders as a political resource, the basis for a project of difference without limits.

In Chapter 8, "Mic Check! The New Sensibility Speaks," Imaculada Kangussu, Filip Kovacevic, and Andrew Lamas wrestle with the question of how one can find and develop the authentic freedom that, for Marcuse, is "the condition of liberation." In their critical reflections on Occupy, the authors consider the praxis of mic check as an expression of the "new sensibility," whose task is to gather and organize, to motivate and direct the rebellious forces of the future.

#### Part III: Protesting Violence

For the radical and the revolutionary, questions regarding toleration, dissent, resistance, protest, occupation, policing, incarceration, militarization, and violence are significant and perennial.

In Chapter 9, "The Work of Violence in the Age of Repressive Desublimation," AK Thompson observes that the black bloc has become "equal parts wish image and *bête noire*" since breaking onto the scene during the

1999 protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle. Thompson asks, "How are we to understand the new receptivity to violence among American activists, and how are we to understand the intense animosity that the black bloc has provoked?" By foregrounding the Great Refusal, Marcuse made clear that revolution starts not with the affirmation of the possible but rather with a condemnation of the present's inadequacy. For Marcuse, such a refusal amounted to a "protest against that which is." 54 Through acts of negation aimed at confronting the lack inherent in existing reality (regardless of what that reality might be), people discover "modes of refuting, breaking, and recreating their factual existence."55 For Thompson, only with the erection of the barricade—the expression of the "gut hatred" that Marcuse held to be indispensable to the cultural revolution—does "the gesture of love" emancipate itself from the plastic confines of its contemporary repressive desublimation. In this way, explains Thompson, it becomes evident that the animosity generated by the black bloc connects to its capacity to highlight the extent of people's ongoing identification with a fraudulent reality.

In Chapter 10, "Neutrality and Refusal: Herbert Marcuse and Hélder Câmara on the Violence of Tolerance," Sarah Lynn Kleeb considers Marcuse's 1965 essay "Repressive Tolerance," in which he critiques the advocacy of toleration as something inherently and inevitably benevolent, seeing in this ideal the potential for passivity in the face of oppression, or even tacit support of oppressive conditions. Rather than encouraging citizens to challenge social structures that foster suffering and injustice, Marcuse suggests that modern notions of tolerance instead facilitate the maintenance of an often violent status quo, establishing a pattern of willingness to accept norms and policies that hamper the struggle for social justice and liberation. Kleeb notes that the liberation theologian Hélder Câmara—with similar intentions to Marcuse—denounces a passive tolerance that manifests as neutrality in the face of state-sanctioned violence. Reactionary violence on the part of those who are oppressed is generally condemned under the rubric of tolerance; however, the violence of the state in fostering the conditions for such reactionary violence, and in the repression of that reactionary violence once it is unleashed, are often passively tolerated or willingly applauded. Bringing these two insights together enables Kleeb to generate a critical evaluation of the aftermath of the now-infamous Toronto G20 protests in 2010. The widespread toleration of violent police suppression of peaceful protesters, as a tolerance that serves the cause of oppression, fostering violence rather than rejecting the

<sup>54.</sup> Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, 63.

<sup>55.</sup> Ibid.

conditions that spawn it, illustrates the compatibility and continued relevance of Marcuse and Câmara.

In Chapter 11, "Democracy by Day, Police State by Night: What the Eviction of Occupy Philadelphia Revealed about Policing in the United States," Toorjo Ghose examines the eviction of Occupy Philadelphia from city hall on November 30, 2011, and analyzes police tactics to address public protests in the United States. He highlights three aspects of the police strategy deployed during the eviction: (1) a preconceived plan to manage protests, (2) the use of militarized tactics to implement this management plan, and (3) the imposition of a state of dissociative meditation triggered by the incarceration that followed the eviction. For Ghose, the strategy of management, militarization, and meditation (or the 3M strategy) demonstrates the Marcusean notion of repressive tolerance and characterizes the police response to public dissent.

#### Part IV: Communicating Resistance

Marcuse's critical theory of technology has become increasingly meaningful at a time when digital media and other new technologies have become so important in the work of contemporary social movements.

In Chapter 12, "Insurrection 2011: From the Arab Uprisings through Occupy Everywhere," Douglas Kellner discusses how, in 2011, political insurrections emerged as media spectacles. Demonstrating the relevance of Guy Debord, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Slavoj Žižek, and other neo-Marxian theorists to this contemporary moment of resistance, Kellner shows the particular usefulness of Marcuse's theory of revolution—as a totality of upheaval—and the Great Refusal.

In Chapter 13, "Beyond One-Dimensionality," Andrew Feenberg explains Marcuse's conception of a new technology of liberation and how it can be extended to inform our understanding of contemporary movements that contest the technical arrangements that underlie our society. Feenberg focuses primarily on how Marcuse—who formulated a philosophical critique of the dystopian capitalism of our time while holding open the possibility of resistance and imagining a free society—reworked Heidegger to formulate the utopian aspect of his theory of technology.

In Chapter 14, "Herbert Marcuse and the Dialectics of Social Media," Christian Fuchs discusses the relevance of Marcuse's Hegelian-inspired dialectics for understanding contemporary social media and the Internet. With a focus on strengthening public and alternative media, Fuchs considers radical-reformist political demands with the potential to dialectically mediate the Great Refusal and the long march.

In Chapter 15, "Inklings of the Great Refusal: Echoes of Marcuse's Post-technological Rationality Today," Marcelo Vieta claims that Marcuse's

affirmations of hope for a rerationalized technological inheritance—a "post-technological rationality"—still contain evocative theoretical and practical possibilities for contemporary radical social movements seeking alternative socioeconomic organization. The first part of the chapter briefly maps out key elements of Marcuse's politics of refusal. The second part illustrates contemporary echoes, or illustrative inklings, of Marcuse's politics of refusal via three moments of alternative social and economic arrangements that are emerging from the crises and contradictions of neoliberalism: (1) alternative community economies, (2) radical education initiatives, and (3) recuperated spaces of production.

#### Part V: Contesting Theories

Marcuse's own work is often best understood—and perhaps made most useful—when placed in critical dialogue with significant contributions of other theorists, such as Erich Fromm, Raya Dunayevskaya, Frantz Fanon, Jürgen Habermas, Bolívar Echeverría, Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez, and Antonio Gramsci.

In Chapter 16, "Hope and Catastrophe: Messianism in Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse," Joan Braune maintains that Marcuse's and Fromm's thinking about social transformation differ significantly in their understanding of history and the future, yielding distinct conceptions of the way that the past, present, and future ought to be theorized in relation to revolution. Braune shows how Fromm and Marcuse were influenced by the messianism debates among left-wing German Jewish intellectuals in Weimar Germany. She argues that key differences between Fromm and Marcuse in the 1950s and 1960s can be explained by considering the differing messianisms to which each thinker was attracted—prophetic messianism for Fromm and catastrophic messianism for Marcuse. For Braune, Fromm's critique of Marcuse's "despair" and of Marcuse's lack of "concern for the future" need to be situated in the context of the two thinkers' differing messianisms in order to be understood as stemming from a legitimate intellectual disagreement rather than a mere personal feud. Braune's argument offers important insights for how one might interpret Marcuse's Great Refusal as well as the movements that are informed by it.

In Chapter 17, "The Dunayevskaya-Marcuse Correspondence: Crystallization of Two Marxist Traditions," Russell Rockwell and Kevin B. Anderson maintain that any study of the development of radical philosophy since the mid-twentieth century—particularly as it relates to Marxist theories of opposition, refusal, and revolution—would be enriched by a close examination of the significant correspondence between Raya Dunayevskaya and Marcuse. Rockwell and Anderson argue that both Dunayevskaya and Marcuse, albeit in different ways, sought to create a Marxism for their time, an effort

that involved reconceptualizing the dialectic, connecting Marx's *Grundrisse* to his early work and to *Capital*, and conceptualizing new forces of opposition and revolution.

In Chapter 18, "The Existential Dimension of the Great Refusal: Marcuse, Fanon, Habermas," Martin Beck Matuštík suggests a refiguration of Marcuse's refusals through Frantz Fanon's existential inventions in order to generate a concrete critical theory of liberation that gathers refusing voices from multiple margins and that envisions democracy as morally and sociopolitically anticolonial and ethically postcolonial. Matuštík also presents Jürgen Habermas's reading of Marcuse in order to demonstrate, on one hand, how a Marcusean variant of critical theory deploys "existential" categories from the vantage point of social movements rooted in dissensus and, on the other hand, how Marcuse's concepts of radical subjectivity, new sensibility, and the Great Refusal immigrate into Habermas's ethical, moral, and democratic deliberations.

In Chapter 19, "A Critical Praxis for the Americas: Thinking about the Zapatistas with Herbert Marcuse, Bolívar Echeverría, and Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez," Stefan Gandler—in his project of developing a non-Eurocentric critical theory—seeks to articulate a radical social theory beyond the conventional Left dualism of reform and revolution. In focusing on the Zapatista rebellion in Mexico, Gandler juxtaposes the critical, liberatory theories of Marcuse, Echeverría, and Sánchez Vázquez and finds alternative ways of theorizing anticapitalist struggle.

In Chapter 20, "Where Is the Outrage? The State, Subjectivity, and Our Collective Future," Stanley Aronowitz examines the collapse of the so-called American dream and the decline in the working and living conditions of the great majority of those living in the United States, particularly Blacks and Latinos. He maintains that while large sections of the population are uneasy with neoliberalism, resistance remains weak: even where protests are manifest, as with Occupy, they constitute "signs without organization." Aronowitz diagnoses two problems in the history of the Left and in contemporary social movements in the United States—one relating to the enormity of the state and the second relating to subjectivity. While agreeing that the critical analysis of the political economy of capitalism is necessary, he argues that the Left must not fail to analyze everyday life and unconscious desire if it ever hopes to address the problem of radical subjectivity. A rekindling of radical imagination requires not only political economy but also psychoanalysis. In support of his Marcusean argument, Aronowitz proceeds in dialogue with Karl Polanyi, C. Wright Mills, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Jürgen Habermas, and Robert McChesney, with a special focus on Wilhelm Reich's The Mass Psychology of Fascism.

In Chapter 21, "From Great Refusals to Wars of Position: Marcuse, Gramsci, and Social Mobilization," Lauren Langman argues that the progressive social movements of 2011, followed by the rise of Syriza in Greece

and Podemos in Spain, can be best understood as Marcuse's Great Refusal rejections and contestations of domination reflecting a variety of grievances stemming from the multiple legitimation crises of neoliberal capitalism. While explaining Jürgen Habermas's argument that the multiple legitimation crises of the capitalist system migrate to the lifeworlds—the realms of subjectivity and motivation that evoke strong emotions such as anger, anxiety, and indignation that dispose social mobilizations<sup>56</sup>—Langman notes that what is especially evident as a goal of contemporary social movements is the quest for dignity as rooted in an emancipatory philosophical anthropological critique of alienation, domination, and suffering pioneered by the Frankfurt School, which is quite cogently argued in Marcuse's critique of Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. 57 But, as Langman explains, grievances and emotions alone do not lead to social movements; there must be recruitment, organization, organization building, leadership, tactics, and a vision. The chapter's central argument is that the Frankfurt School's critique of domination can be complemented by Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony in which "organic intellectuals" understand how the system operates and the salience of the cultural barriers to change, yet they proffer counterhegemonic narratives, organize subalterns, and initiate "wars of position." Langman appropriately ends his chapter by maintaining that a critical perspective on social movements provides a politically informed critique with visions of utopian possibility, in which membership in communities of meaning that are democratic and egalitarian, and grant and recognize identity, fosters solidarity, agency, creative self-realization, and the dignity of all.

The many contributors to this book take seriously the critical, historical legacy of Marcuse as a philosopher of resistance and liberation who was so significantly engaged with earlier generations of activists and intellectuals. Marcuse demonstrated what theory looks like when it is consciously political and in sync with the refusals and demands of the time. His was a theory of praxis that simultaneously led and followed. As the witticism goes about Marcuse in relation to his students, "They are my followers, so I must follow them." Amid the current cycle of resistance and repression, as the present generation of radicals stands at the crossroads of exhaustion and renewal, we, too, look to each other for sparks of refusal and ways forward.

<sup>56.</sup> See Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon, 1975); and Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System* (Boston: Beacon, 1985).

<sup>57.</sup> Herbert Marcuse, "The Foundations of Historical Materialism," in *The Essential Marcuse: Selected Writings of Philosopher and Social Critic Herbert Marcuse*, ed. Andrew Feenberg and William Leiss (Boston: Beacon, 2007), 72–114. Essay originally published in 1932.