

posing women's suffrage organizations, the National and the American, merged in 1890. The interpretation Spender offers is that Anthony was willing to sacrifice Gage and her embarrassing radicalism to appease conservative supporters like Frances Willard, president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Since it was Anthony who told the story of the union, she seems intentionally to have made Gage invisible.

It is difficult to convey the richness and magnitude of this work, which must be savored slowly over time for its treasures. If Spender plays all the notes up full, sometimes with the stridence of the evangelist, she still leavens her sermon with brio and wit. We are in the charge of a spirited pathfinder, refreshingly candid about her bias and never boring. Her answer to the central problem she addresses is an elaboration of Virginia Woolf's advice: Women can serve their interests best by being the outsider, by refusing to help, imitate, or support men, by staying out of patriarchal institutions, by finding their own critical and creative means for promoting change. Spender uses the term "nonviolent noncooperation" and advocates a knowledge strike. "I want women...to cease making our resources available to men who are likely to then use against us what they have taken." She may inspire others to follow, but the likelihood seems remote. We have been socialized into a patriarchal system that circumscribes our lives and provides the only context in which we can work.

The anger in this book is solid, congealed. If it will inflame feminists, it will make most men apoplectic: Men are the enemy who allocate to women the qualities they most despise in themselves. It is to be hoped that many of those who take up the book, males included, will stick it out and reflect upon why it offers a priceless gift to the history of ideas. **[WV]**

### **THE RAPE OF TAHITI** by Edward H. Dodd

(Dodd, Mead & Co.; 257 pp.; \$14.95)

*Norman Meller*

"The central theme of this book...[is] the forcible subjection or rape of the old Tahitian civilization by the aggressive colonizers of Europe. We...[see] the first tentative overtures take place...in 1767 when the explorers landed and introduced iron, liquor and gunpowder to the Stone Age inhabitants of the land. The next shock, thirty years later, was the obliterating impact of

a new and foreign God on their traditional religion. These corruptions were subsequently augmented by an intermittent stream of traders, whalers, beachcombers and other foreign rascals....Lastly, the military forces [of France] some fifty years later...came to seize their lands, exploit their labor and change their laws."

To quote the author so extensively is but to honor his example. As Dodd himself writes: "A good many quotations, sometimes lengthy ones, have been used in this book. Almost all of them are from people who were in Tahiti at the time, on-the-scene observers or participants." Yet only in rare cases does Dodd provide identifying titles for the people who supply the numerous snippets of history around which he weaves his colorful prose. Despite its scholarship, this is not the usual "academic history with its customary specific references to back up all of its key arguments."

Much of the same ground has already been covered by others, but here the hyperbole of popularization replaces the balanced statement of academe. The major Tahitian and European participants, their strengths and foibles, are all exposed to opinionated scrutiny. Woven through the account of events from the first encounter of islanders and Westerners to the incorporation of the Leeward Islands into the Colony of French Polynesia in 1899 is the story of the long competition between the English Protestants and the French Catholics, between French militarism and British diplomacy. In the end, French force triumphs but, perversely, Protestantism prevails. There is no gainsaying that all this makes for very interesting reading.

The author's "twenty-five or thirty years of immersion in the subject of Polynesian culture" has resulted in a number of published works. *The Rape of Tahiti*, volume four of a series entitled "The Ring of Fire," includes references to aspects of indigenous life in the Polynesian Triangle that could be made only by someone fully conversant with its many subcultures. But because the author assumes that each region of Polynesia has its own story, the Europeans who had major roles throughout the Pacific become nearly unidimensional, their exploits reduced to the parts they played on the Tahitian stage alone.

There are, of course, various types of rape. While generally antipathetic to the French takeover of Tahiti, Dodd concludes that "in colonial days everyone had to have a master. It was the destiny of the times and, villains though the French may often seem today, no colonizer has hit a fairer balance of good and evil than the country-

men of their romantic first Pacific hero, Louis Antoine de Bougainville." As the penultimate paragraph of a book that for several hundred pages has detailed the Tahitian's fall from their idyllic state, this evaluation comes as something of an anticlimax. Perhaps there will be another volume extending Tahitian history into the twentieth century. It may be conjectured that the sequel might well bear the title "The Seduction of France." **[WV]**

### **MARX: A PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN REALITY** by Michel Henry

(Indiana University Press; 376 pp.; \$27.50)

### **MARX AND HUMAN NATURE: REFUTATION OF A LEGEND** by Norman Geras

(Verso Editions, New Left Books [distributed by Schocken Books]; 127 pp.; \$5.50)

### **A DICTIONARY OF MARXIST THOUGHT**

edited by Tom Bottomore

(Harvard University Press; 587 pp.; \$35.00)

*Brian Thomas*

In 1891 Oscar Wilde wrote a masterpiece called "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." He spoke in noble, moving terms of his desire for a government that would encourage individuals to fully realize their capacities, to cultivate themselves in all directions without hindrance. Not surprisingly, platoons of Fabians and Marxists disdained the essay as the twaddling of an aesthete incapable of grasping the subject. Yet now that the "scientific" socialists have had their innings, Wilde's emphasis on the individual has acquired a luster. In any event, Wilde kept coming to mind as I studied Michel Henry's *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*, an abridged translation of a whopping two-volume work published in France in 1976. Wilde's name never appears in Henry, who draws more on Heidegger and phenomenology, but the kinship is unmistakable. Both begin with the inner person and move outward in an expanding circle until they encounter the widest possible ring—society.

By putting subjectivity at the center, spelling out in a formidably detailed way the insights that Wilde tosses off in a string of epigrams, Henry radically alters the standard notions of what Karl Marx really said. In place of the usual dour materialism, Henry discerns an ethic of abundance and laughter.