

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,

an insistence on "the free play of forces of body and spirit." He also says that Marx was primarily a philosopher of subjectivity, that the dialectic and social classes play a secondary role; he disputes the contention of classical Marxism that individuals exist only to the extent that they participate in entities like social relations, relations of production, countries, and so on. Such views naturally have generated plenty of controversy in France, and this edition is sure to bring the wrangling to the English-speaking world.

By subjectivity Henry means human affectivity, everything from human needs viewed abstractly to bodily motion. Throughout Henry's often forbidding exercise in interpreting Karl Marx, the laborer's inner self serves as the key that unlocks the texts.

Many of Henry's themes are familiar to students of non-Soviet Marxism, yet his method of arriving at familiar-sounding conclusions is original and often startling. He maintains, for example, that Marx stuck with the same cluster of philosophical intuitions throughout his career. The progress of Marx's works was a matter of sharpening his insights with increasing precision and power. Many others have claimed as much, but Henry pursues his ideas through a scrutiny of the text so close and resourceful that other treatments seem slapdash in comparison. He often turns up hermeneutic wrinkles that confound positivistic or Stalinist interpretations of Marx. (Louis Althusser's theory of an "epistemological break" between Marx's earlier and later work is a *bête noire* for Henry.)

Also like many other students of Marx, Henry considers economics a realm of mere appearance—"the mask that reality wears." It is a fallen world rooted in the specific subjectivity of myriad individuals. Nevertheless, Henry's Wildean conception of subjectivity prevents him from lapsing into vulgar idealism; his highly ramified understanding of the inner life differs sharply from the sundry ideologies attacked by Marx himself. Indeed, Henry's discussion of issues in political economy is as stimulating as it is conscientious. The book demands to be read for the economic chapters alone.

Unfortunately, Kathleen McLaughlin's translation bristles with obscurities. And the difficulty probably does not reside with Henry, for in France he has the reputation of a mellifluous stylist. Moreover, I am told, the English footnotes mostly lack the spirited polemics that light up the French volumes. Perhaps because cutting the 965-page original required too much compression, *Marx: A Philosophy of Human Reality*

often reminds the reader of Hegel's night in which all cows are black.

In *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend*, Norman Geras advances an interpretation somewhat at odds with Henry. Geras argues that Marx never disputed the existence of a human nature that underlies all social and ethnographic variety, despite the widespread belief that he did. Marx's dismissal of reactionary shibboleths concerning human nature should not be taken for an outright rejection of the concept as such.

Much of the book carefully analyzes Marx's sixth thesis on Feuerbach, often mentioned by Althusser and his cronies as proof of Marx's presumed abandonment of human nature. Geras demonstrates that this brief paragraph on Feuerbach does not bolster the Althusserian position, as is commonly thought. "Marx did not reject the idea of a human nature," Geras concludes. "He was right not to do so."

Geras addresses a single issue and is convincing in showing that the repudiators of human nature in Marx's writing base their opinion on slender evidence. He also opposes conservatives who claim that socialism founders on the ingrained violence in man, that people will always be cruel and competitive. Like Wilde, Geras reminds us that our nature is far more flexible than is often allowed. As human beings we deserve better. (Geras does not cite Wilde either, I should add.)

Geras's style clogs his argument. He couples an inability to manage pronouns with a pedantic habit of treating the printed page like a blackboard, constantly requiring a glance back to figure out what the various subheadings refer to. I know he is capable of better because he wrote the Althusser entry in an excellent new reference work, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by Tom Bottomore, with Laurence Harris, V.G. Kiernan, and Ralph Miliband on the editorial board. Here Geras judiciously weighs Althusser's contribution in the pan and recognizes its influence without granting it any truth.

Life is short and scholarship is depressingly long; there is an urgent need for books that save time. Bottomore's dictionary addresses this need with aplomb and erudition. Instead of chopping through a forest of tomes on, say, political economy, how much more pleasant it is to consult a reliable summary, meandering through the related entries on value, surplus value, and so on, following a sequence of definitions to get a handle on the whole. The forthright opinions that abound in the entries do not mar

their educational value; the editor wisely avoided striking an inappropriately "objective" tone, allowing the distinguished, eclectic list of contributors to speak freely.

The sources are given for those who wish to delve further. Some might be annoyed by this nonstop issuing of promissory notes—topics are routinely deemed "worthy of much serious further study"; still, the nature of the enterprise makes for a collection of points of departure. Besides, this *Dictionary* is a powerful tool, a boon to students who need a helpful outline to guide them through a welter of interrelated concepts. (Spurred by these entries, for example, I want to peruse Rudolf Hilferding and a few other neglected figures.) My estimate is that Bottomore's effort will quietly shape everyone's reading in the field for years to come. [WV]

**AMERICA IN THE WORLD:  
A GUIDE TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY  
by Wallace Irwin, Jr.**

(Praeger Publishers; xv + 246 pp.; \$31.95/  
\$10.95)

*Paul Zigman*

Progressivism is usually associated with domestic political reform. Peaking at the turn of the century, it sought to combat the growing power of corporate trusts and urban machines by restoring to government a sense of "morality," that is, by eschewing special interests and focusing on objective, common public purposes.

This progressive activism at home was mirrored in the rhetoric and often the conduct of government policy abroad. To Woodrow Wilson, for example, as John Morton Blum has put it in *The Progressive Presidents*, "moral principle entailed a duty to end colonialism both in practice and by example; to fulfill the mission of America by parading the benefits of republican government, democratic elections and competitive markets; and to work for peace through 'orderly processes of just government based upon law.'"

With the end of World War I, support for progressivism collapsed. Smitten by what appeared to be the heavy costs of international idealism, Americans turned inward. But if progressivism was down, it was not out. On the foreign front the torch was passed to a new type of institution. These were private, nonpartisan educational organizations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (established in 1910), the Foreign Policy Association (1918), and