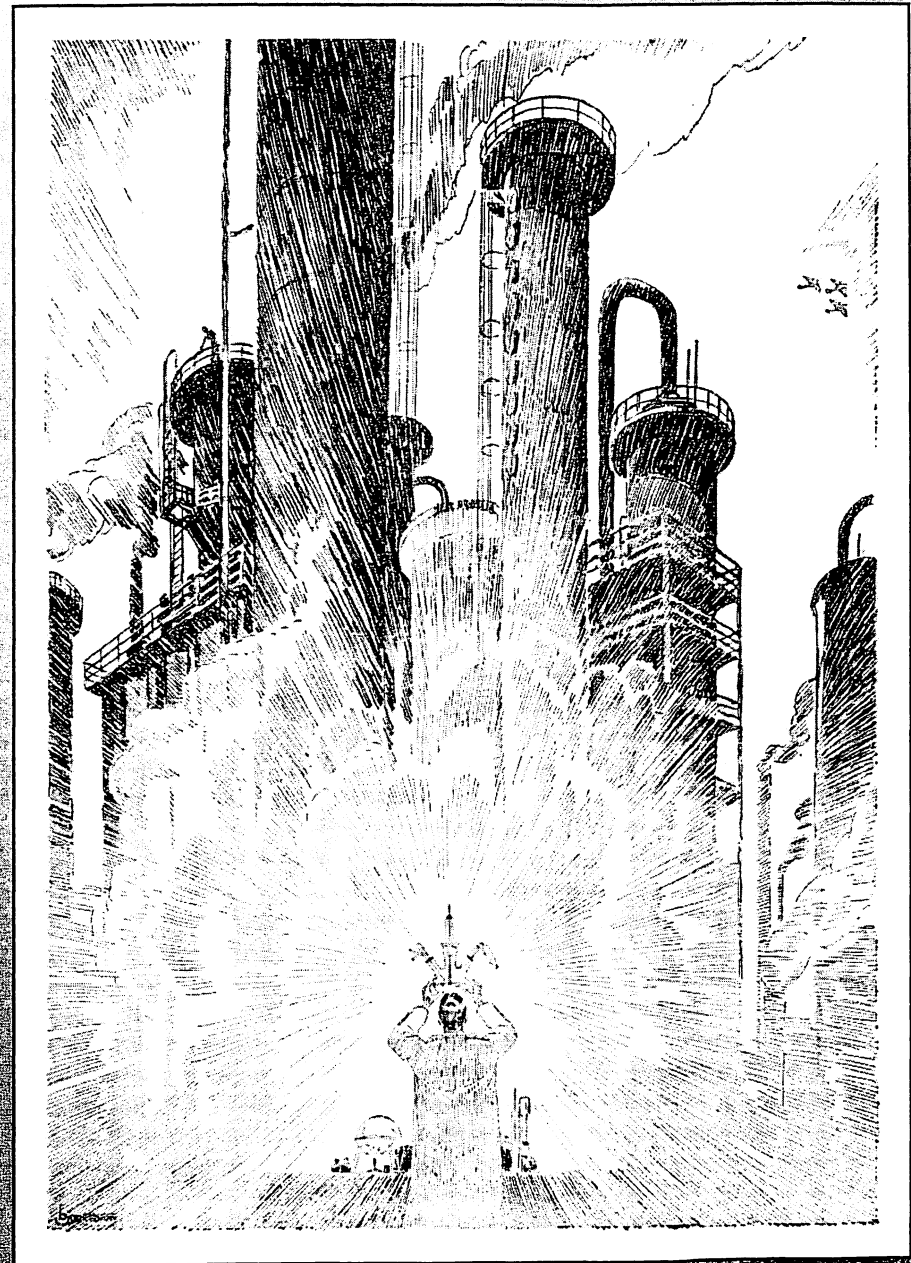


# SOCIAL THOUGHT & RESEARCH

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CRITICAL THEORY MOVEMENTS GLOBAL RESEARCH

# Social Thought & Research

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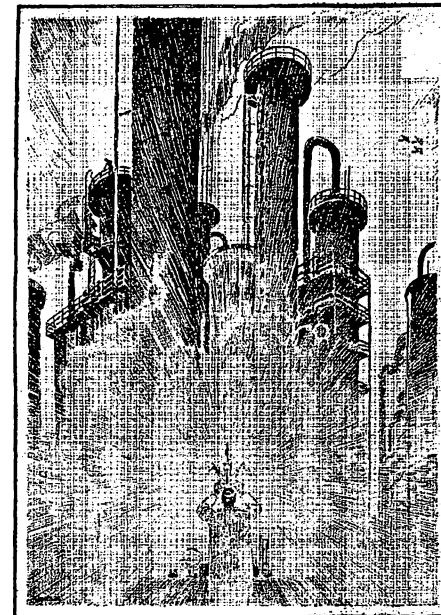
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On the Cover: The striking image of the scientist-priest worshipping at the altar of industry is one of a series of illustrations created by Leon Soderston for the book, *Man in a Chemical World*, written by A. Cressy Morrison for the Executive Committee of the American Chemical Industries Tercentenary (1937, Charles Scribner's Sons). Too much of contemporary social thought and research has this same reverent attitude toward industrial capitalism. The special section in this volume explores and extends one tradition of social thought intent upon critiquing, rather than worshipping and serving, the social system dominated by wage-labor production. — dk

### Acknowledgments

We would like to thank a number of people for their contribution to this volume and for their promotion of the interests of *Social Thought & Research*. David N. Smith and Jack Weller have both served above and beyond the call of duty as advising editors during our tenure. Loretta Porter has been exceptionally patient, thorough and speedy in her preparation of the text for this journal. Gwen Claassen has coordinated the physical production of the journal. We are grateful to you all.

Dan Krier and Mark Worrell, December, 1999

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## MARCUSE AND THE QUEST FOR RADICAL SUBJECTIVITY

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Douglas Kellner  
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### Abstract

*In this paper, I maintain that the Marcuse anticipates the post-structuralist critique of the subject, that these critiques suggest that the concept of the subject contains too much philosophical and political baggage, and that we need a reconstructed notion of subjectivity that Marcuse and the Frankfurt School initiated and enable us to further develop. In drawing on Nietzsche, Freud, and aesthetic modernism, Marcuse posits a bodily, erotic, gendered, social, and aestheticized subjectivity that overcomes mind-body dualism, avoids idealist and rationalist essentialism, and is constructed in a specific social milieu and is challenged to reconstruct itself and emancipate itself from limited and oppressive forms. In following Marcuse's reconstruction of subjectivity, I'll accordingly, first, offer a re-reading of Eros and Civilization to demonstrate how it anticipates the poststructuralist critique of the subject and offers an alternative conception of subjectivity. Then I pursue some of the contributions to rethinking subjectivity in Marcuse's later writings, focusing on his notion of radical subjectivity. At stake is developing a reconstructed Marcusean theory of subjectivity which emphasizes the need for a transformation of the affective dimension, the sensibility, and our very conception of the subject to help create a reconstructed conception of subjectivity for contemporary theory and to provide conceptions of the subjective conditions for radical social change and of agency in order to promote individual and social transformation.*

The past two decades have witnessed a relentless philosophical assault on the concept of the subject, once the alpha and omega of modern philosophy. Materialists have decried the idealist and essentialist dimensions of the traditional concept of the subject