

# HERBERT MARCUSE AND ERNST BLOCH: CRITICAL DIALOGUES WITH FREUD ON MEMORY AND ART

---

[Herbert Marcuse ve Ernst Bloch: Bellek ve Sanat Üzerine Freud ile Eleştirel Diyaloglar]

Nina Cemiloğlu

Yrd. Doç. Dr., Department of English Language and Literature, Yeditepe University, Istanbul  
[nina.cemiloglu@gmx.net](mailto:nina.cemiloglu@gmx.net)

## ABSTRACT

This paper explores Herbert Marcuse's and Ernst Bloch's ideas on memory and art and tries to show how Marcuse and Bloch developed their notions of memory and art through their engagement with Freudian ideas. Primary points of reference will be Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud* (1955) and Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* (1959). Besides, I will illustrate Marcuse's and Bloch's ideas on memory and art through references to the following literary texts: Rainer Maria Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* (1923) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust I* (1808) and *II* (1833). This paper is divided into two parts. The first part is about Marcuse and *Sonnets to Orpheus*. The second part is about Bloch and *Faust I* and *II*. Please note that I have translated all quotations from Bloch's *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (*The Principle of Hope*) and *Geist der Utopie* (*The Spirit of Utopia*), and Rilke's *Sonette an Orpheus* (*Sonnets to Orpheus*).

**Key Words:** Psychoanalysis, Freud, Marxism, utopia, memory, art.

## ÖZET

Bu makale Herbert Marcuse ve Ernst Bloch'un bellek ve sanat üzerine düşüncelerini ve Freud'un bu düşünceler üzerindeki etkilerini inceliyor. Marcuse'nin *Eros ve Uygarlık: Freud Üzerine Felsefi Bir*

*İnceleme*'si (1955) ve Bloch'un *Umut İlkesi* (1959) bu yazının temel referans noktaları olacaktır. Ayrıca, Marcuse'nin ve Bloch'un bellek ve sanat üzerine düşüncelerini şu edebi metinlere referans vererek inceleyeceğim: Rainer Maria Rilke'den *Orpheus'a Soneler* (1923) ve Johann Wolfgang von Goethe'den Faust I (1808) ve II (1833). Bu makale iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm Marcuse ve *Orpheus'a Soneler*'e ayrılmıştır. İkinci bölüm Bloch ve Faust I ve II ile ilgilidir. Tüm alıntıları Bloch'un *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Umut İlkesi) ve Geist der Utopie (Ütopyanın Ruhu), ve Rilke'nin *Sonette an Orpheus* (Orpheus'a Soneler) metinlerinden çevirdiğimi bilgilerinize sunarım.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Psikanaliz, Freud, Marksizm, ütopya, bellek, sanat.

Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* can be read as a response to Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930). The first chapter of *Eros and Civilization* is entitled "The Hidden Trend in Psychoanalysis" (Marcuse, 1959, pp. 11-20). As this title indicates, Marcuse's attitude toward Freud's ideas is more exploratory than critical. Rather than refuting Freud's ideas, Marcuse has drawn attention to aspects in Freud's thought which have been overlooked. *Eros and Civilization* is primarily concerned with Freud's concepts of the pleasure principle and the reality principle. As Marcuse (1955, p. 12) has pointed out, the pleasure principle makes human beings strive for pleasure, joy and immediate gratification of desire. The pleasure principle stands for the absence of repression and is associated with play and receptivity. By contrast, the reality principle forces human beings to accept delayed gratification of desire, restraint of pleasure, and toil. The reality principle validates and promotes productivity. It promises relative security in exchange for the individual's submission to its repressive demands (Marcuse, 1955, pp. 12/13). In the course of civilization, human beings had to undergo a transformation from the values of the pleasure principle to the values of the reality principle (Marcuse, 1955, p. 12). The same transformation takes place in the mental development of young children (Marcuse, 1955, p. 15). The individual who has accepted the validity of the reality principle has learned to strive for what is useful and for what can be obtained without doing harm to the body and the environment. He/She has developed the function of reason, including the faculties of attention, judgment and memory (Marcuse, 1955, p. 14). Marcuse (1955, p. 141) has argued that the establishment of the reality principle has a harmful effect on the development of the human mind:

The mental process formerly unified in the pleasure ego is now split: its main stream is channeled into the domain of the reality principle and brought into line with its requirements. Thus conditioned, this part of the

mind obtains the monopoly of interpreting, manipulating, altering reality – of governing remembrance and oblivion, even of defining what reality is and how it should be used and altered. The other part of the mental apparatus remains free from the control of the reality principle – at the price of becoming powerless, inconsequential, unrealistic. (Marcuse, 1955, p. 141)

The reality principle gains control over a part of the human mind. But it does not gain control over the human Unconscious. Besides, the reality principle has no control over daydreams. The ability of human beings to daydream (or fantasize) is a conscious phenomenon, which is not controlled by the reality principle. Fantasy (imagination) is still committed to the pleasure principle and functions as a bridge between the Conscious and the Unconscious (Marcuse, 1955, p. 14). What is more, fantasy preserves the memory of humankind's archaic past, when human culture did not consist of “repressive sublimation” but of the “free self-development of Eros” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 125/126). Human beings were free in an archaic past, but then this freedom became repressed and tabooed by the reality principle. Marcuse (1955, p. 142) has argued that fantasy preserves the unconscious memory of freedom. According to Marcuse (1955, p. 15), this unconscious memory of freedom is a part of both the collective and the individual human psyche. As Marcuse (1955, p. 13) has pointed out, Freud has argued that the Unconscious still contains “the older, primary processes, the residues of a phase of development in which they were the only kind of mental processes”. Freud (1913, p. 183) has also argued that one can assume “the existence of a collective mind, in which mental processes occur just as they do in the mind of an individual”. However, Freud (1913, p. 176) has claimed that the primary content of the human collective mind is not the unconscious memory of freedom but the unconscious memory of the killing of the primeval father by his sons. Thus, according to Freud, the collective mind is dominated by unconscious guilt. Besides, Freud (1930, p. 49) has argued that, prior to civilization, human beings were free, but could not enjoy this freedom, because they were not able to defend it. As Marcuse (1955, p. 232) has pointed out, Nietzsche has claimed that, in the course of human civilization, memory has become associated with remembering duties rather than with remembering pleasures. Like Nietzsche, Marcuse has rejected this notion of memory. For Marcuse, memory is not to be associated with duty and guilt but with freedom and happiness.

For Marcuse, memory is connected to fantasy. Marcuse has a very positive notion of fantasy. According to him, fantasy is not useless and irrelevant for human life but extremely valuable because it provides an alternative perspective on the world and one's self in it: “Phantasy is cognitive in so far as it preserves the truth of the Great Refusal, or, positively, in so far as it protects, against all reason,

the aspirations for the integral fulfillment of man and nature which are repressed by reason” (Marcuse, 1959, p. 160). According to Marcuse, memory is also cognitive. The cognitive quality of memory is rooted in re-cognition (Marcuse, 1955, pp. 18/19). The memory of repressed childhood wishes hints at a truth which reason, the agent of the reality principle, denies and taboos: that the human desire for freedom and happiness is legitimate and can be fulfilled. Marcuse (1955, p. 18) has further claimed that memory is therapeutic. The therapeutic potential of memory derives from the cognitive nature of memory. But what can we do when we realize that we are unhappy because we cannot be truly free? As Freud (1930, p. 31) has remarked, “one can try to re-create the world, to build up in its stead another world in which its most unbearable features are eliminated”. However, as Freud (1930, p. 31) has added, “whoever [...] sets out upon this path to happiness will as a rule attain nothing. Reality is too strong for him”. Nevertheless, Marcuse has argued that change is possible and that memory plays an important role in it. According to Marcuse (1955, p. 19), memory is an explosive force, which can shatter the rationality of the repressed individual. The liberation of memories from the past does not necessarily lead to a reconciliation with the present. It can also lead to a new orientation on the future. The liberation of memories from the past can motivate people to change their lives and to create a better future for themselves and other people. Therefore, according to Marcuse (1955, p. 19), psychoanalysis (because it aims at the liberation of memory) is progressive, not regressive.

Liberation and freedom play an important role in Marcuse's thought. His notion of freedom has been inspired by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Based on Hegelian ideas, Marcuse (1955, p. 115) has defined freedom as “the overcoming of that form of freedom which derives from the antagonistic relation to the other” and as “the transparent knowledge and gratification of being”. He has further defined freedom as “the transparent unity of subject and object, of the universal and the individual” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 116) and as the end of history and of alienation: “The labor of history comes to rest in history: alienation is canceled, and with it transcendence and the flux of time” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 116). Hegel has suggested that memory can conquer time (Marcuse, 1959, pp. 116/117). But this is only possible if humankind knows and understands its history (Marcuse, 1955, p. 117). Marcuse has defined human history as follows: “The history of man is the history of his estrangement from his true interest and, by the same token, the history of its realization” (Marcuse, 1941, p. 246).

As mentioned earlier, Marcuse has argued that the human mind still contains memory traces of an archaic past, of a time when human beings were not alienated from themselves, each other, and nature. This unconscious memory continues to have an effect on modern man: Marcuse (1955, p. 56, p. 106)

has argued that “[c]ivilization is still determined by its archaic heritage” and that there is “a dimension of the mental apparatus where the individual is still the genus, the present still the past”. What is more, according to Marcuse (1955, p. 18), “the past continues to claim the future: it generates the wish that the paradise be re-created on the basis of the achievements of civilization”. This is the main thesis of *Eros and Civilization*: That a non-repressive civilization is possible. Freud (1930, pp. 51/52) has argued that civilization is necessarily repressive and can only be maintained under the domination of the reality principle. However, Marcuse (1955, p. 35) has claimed that Freud's thought hints at the possibility of a non-repressive civilization governed by a new reality principle – a reality principle which is based on the values of the pleasure principle. Marcuse (1955, p. 164) has argued that this kind of reality principle has been depicted in the ancient Greek myths of Orpheus and Narcissus. In the Western world, Orpheus and Narcissus have been regarded as marginal and negligible figures. By contrast, Prometheus has been regarded as one of its culture-heroes (Marcuse, 1955, p. 161). According to Marcuse (1955, p. 161), Prometheus is “the culture-hero of toil, productivity, and progress through repression” and “the archetype-hero of the performance principle”. Prometheus “symbolizes productiveness, the unceasing effort to master life; but in his productivity, blessing and curse, progress and toil are inextricably intertwined” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 161). Prometheus embodies the reality principle as defined by Freud. By contrast, Orpheus and Narcissus stand for everything which the reality principle rejects: joy, fulfillment, play, receptivity and the absence of coercion and repression (Marcuse, 1955, p. 162). Orpheus and Narcissus, in their turn, reject everything Prometheus stands for:

The Orphic and Narcissistic experience of the world negates that which sustains the world of the performance principle. The opposition between man and nature, subject and object, is overcome. Being is experienced as gratification, which unites man and nature so that the fulfillment of man is at the same time the fulfillment, without violence, of nature. (Marcuse, 1955, p. 166)

Orpheus and Narcissus symbolize a world governed by a reality principle which does not reject the values of the pleasure principle but validates them. In the world of Orpheus and Narcissus, subject and object, man and nature, are no longer antagonistic but reconciled. Desire of what has not been attained yet disappears. Being has become fulfilled. This state is “the ultimate unity of subject and object: the idea of 'being-in-and-for-itself', existing in its own fulfillment” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 112). Rainer Maria Rilke has depicted this state in his *Sonnets to Orpheus*, published in 1923 (Marcuse, 1955, p. 162). In Sonnet 3, Part I, Orpheus is portrayed as free of desire and as a teacher of being: “Singing, as you [Orpheus] teach it, is not desire, / not courting of a final not-yet-achieved; /

Singing is being. Easy for the god./ But when a r e we?” (Rilke, 1923, p. 6, ll. 5-8). True freedom and true being also include receptivity: Being is only possible if humankind can overcome “the endlessly projecting and productivity of being” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 116) and instead attain a “perpetual peace of self-conscious receptivity”(Marcuse, 1955, p. 116). Receptivity is the central theme in Sonnet 1, Part I, of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*. In this sonnet, the narrator describes how the song of Orpheus attracts the forest animals. When they hear Orpheus's music, they become, all of a sudden, perfectly quiet – not because they are afraid or because they want to attack the singer – but because his music makes them listen; because Orpheus has “created for them a temple in their ears” (Rilke, 1923, p. 2, l.14). Rilke has further explored the theme of receptivity in Sonnet 5, Part II, in which the narrator praises the quiet beauty and “infinite receptivity” of a flower (Rilke, 1923, p. 64, l. 6). In the last two lines of this sonnet, the narrator poses the following question: “[W] h e n, in which of all our lives,/ will we finally be open and receivers?” (Rilke, 1923, p. 64, ll.13/14). This sonnet invites the reader to imagine a beautiful, open blossom - an image which corresponds to the Hegelian notion of being as “self-externalization” and “release” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 116). Hegel's concept of freedom further includes “‘enjoyment’ of potentialities” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 116). Potentiality is the major theme in Sonnet 4, Part II, of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus*. This sonnet is about a unicorn: “this animal which does not exist” (Rilke, 1923, p. 62, l.1). The narrator recounts how this animal, which does not exist, comes into existence through the love and faith of human beings. The unicorn is, because there are people who love and feed it - not with corn, but with the possibility of its being. This makes the animal so strong that it grows a horn and is united with a virgin (Rilke, 1923, ll. 5-14). This sonnet illustrates how something potential becomes real.

Like Hegel, Marcuse has emphasized the importance of remembering the past. We must know and understand the true history of humankind to create a better future. According to Marcuse (1955, p. 171), art plays an important role in the preservation of the true history of humankind. Sonnet 19 in Part I of Rilke's *Sonnets to Orpheus* alludes to this idea: That art preserves and transmits ideas from the past, and that these ideas are the seeds for a better future: “No matter how fast the world is changing,/ like flying clouds,/ everything perfect/ is brought home to the age-old,/ above the change and tumult of the world,/ wider and freer,/ your ante-song is continuing still” (Rilke, 1923, p. 38, ll. 1-7). These lines proclaim the high value of ideas from the past and the power of art. According to Marcuse (1959, p. 170), “Orpheus is the archetype of the poet as *liberator* and *creator*”. Although Orpheus was murdered and his dead body torn to pieces, his song is still alive and anticipates utopia. It can be argued that all human beings are utopian by nature, because we continuously strive and desire. Rilke (1923, p. 22, l. 6) has described this characteristic of human existence in Sonnet 11 of



Part I. In this sonnet, the narrator refers to human existence as governed by the “longing nature of being”, as a being “driven” (Rilke, 1923, p. 22, l. 4) and “hunted” (Rilke, 1923, p. 22, l. 5). This sonnet states the fact that human desires are very powerful – so powerful that they cannot be tamed indefinitely. Human desires can be repressed, but they do not die or disappear. They eventually reappear as “the return of the repressed”.

For Marcuse (1955, p. 144), the most visible form of “the return of the repressed” is art: “The artistic imagination shapes the 'unconscious memory' of the liberation that failed, of the promise that was betrayed” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 144). Art is closely connected to fantasy and links the Unconscious with the Conscious: “The truths of imagination are first realized when phantasy itself takes form, when it creates a universe of perception and comprehension – a subjective and at the same time objective universe” (Marcuse, 1955, p. 143/144). Marcuse (1955, p. 144) has claimed that all works of art are utopian: “Since the awakening of the consciousness of freedom, there is no genuine work of art that does not reveal the archetypal content: the negation of unfreedom”. According to Marcuse, art has a critical and a utopian function: It criticizes what is (the status quo) and reminds us of what can be (utopia). Works of art from the past represent and refute reality. They depict reality as “the order of business” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 61) and create another order. This other order is irreconcilably antagonistic to the order of business. Significantly, this other order is often not represented by the religious, spiritual and moral heroes, but by disruptive figures such as the artist, the prostitute and the devil (Marcuse, 1964, pp. 58/59). Works of art from the past contain “the appearance of the realm of freedom: the refusal to behave” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 71). Art opposes and denounces repression. It also announces man as a free subject. Marcuse has argued that art is a powerful critique of oppression. But he has also raised the question whether art can contribute to utopian change in the real world. In fact, Marcuse has expressed grave doubts about the efficacy of art with regard to utopian change. His skepticism stems from the fact that art has traditionally been regarded as an aesthetic phenomenon. Art is not only committed to content but also to form. This endows works of art with the quality of enjoyment (Marcuse, 1955, pp. 144/145). Marcuse (1955, p. 145) has further argued that the critical and incendiary function of art is undermined by catharsis. According to Marcuse (1955, p. 145), a work of art first recalls repressed material and then represses it again. Thus, the recipient of a work of art can live through a broad range of emotions and then forget about them again. What remains is a feeling of enjoyment and purification (catharsis). Usually, the recipient of a work of art does not feel inclined to spend his time and energy on a course of action which contributes to utopian change in the world (Marcuse, 1955, p. 145). Marcuse (1964, pp. 60/61) has further argued that the reception of works of art has changed as a result of the mass production and mass consumption of art

characteristic of late capitalist society. Art used to be opposition, because it was perceived as expressing and upholding images of liberation: “What [works of art] recall and preserve in memory pertains to the future: images of gratification that would dissolve the society which suppresses it” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 60). However, in late capitalist society, the critical function of art has been considerably weakened (Marcuse, 1964, p. 56). Marcuse has referred to the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a “period of total mobilization” (1955, p. 145) - against the critical function of art and against the freedom and happiness it recalls and demands. This total mobilization was acted out in the intermittent outbursts of hatred and brutality characteristic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

The image of liberation, which has become increasingly realistic, is persecuted the world over. Concentration and labor camps, the trials and tribulations of non-conformists release a hatred and fury which indicate the total mobilization against the return of the repressed (Marcuse, 1955, p. 71).

According to Marcuse (1955, p. 84), art “seems to grow out of a non-repressive instinctual constellation and to envisage non-repressive aims”. It is valuable in the struggle against oppression and dehumanization because it preserves the archaic unconscious memory of human freedom. But the human memory is not merely a receptacle of past events and ideas. It is moreover an active, exploratory and cognitive force:

Memory searches in the real history of man for the criteria of truth and falsehood, progress and regression. The mediation of the past with the present discovers the factors which made the facts, which determined the way of life, which established the masters and the servants; it projects the limits and the alternatives (Marcuse, 1964, pp. 99/100).

Memory is a valuable weapon in the armory of critical thought. But critical thought has been in decline since the rise of mass culture. This decline has led to the tendency “to avoid serious rational, critical discussions of political and social issues” (Bernstein, 1971 in J. Bernstein, ed., 1994, p. 163). Late capitalist society needs docile employees and consumers. Therefore, any kind of memory which could incite people to think and reject the norms and demands of capitalist society is considered undesirable and dangerous for the status quo. Accordingly, capitalist ideology has been waging a brutal fight against history and “against a dimension of the mind in which centrifugal faculties and forces may develop – faculties and forces that might hinder the total coordination of the individual with the society” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 98).



In *The Principle of Hope*, Ernst Bloch has engaged in a critical dialogue with Freud's most important and influential concepts: libido, the Unconscious, repression and sublimation (Bloch, 1959, pp. 49-203). As is well known, Freud has claimed that the sexual instinct (libido) is the primary and most powerful drive in human beings. By contrast, Bloch (1959, p. 74) has argued that human life is primarily determined by hunger. According to Bloch (1959, p. 73), what mainly threatens the health and happiness of human beings is not the Oedipus complex or the fear of castration but the fear of unemployment and the “money complex”: the constant pressure of having to earn enough money in order to survive in a capitalist world which is characterized by competition, inequality and injustice. According to Bloch (1959, pp. 72/73), economic problems weigh more heavily on the minds of human beings than sexual problems. Economic problems can even inhibit or stifle sexuality. Economic problems are also more often the cause of suicide than sexual problems. Psychoanalysis ignores the economic reality of its patients and of people who cannot even afford psychoanalysis. In the waiting room of the public psychoanalytical consulting center in Vienna there was a sign which read: “Social and economic problems cannot be discussed here” (Bloch, 1959, p. 72).

Freud has defined the Unconscious as an area in the human mind where forgotten and repressed desires are stored. Bloch (1959, pp. 59/60) has compared Freud's Unconscious rather unfavorably to a dark and stifling cellar, in which forgotten and repressed desires rot and fester, creating neurotic tensions and complexes. Psychoanalysis is the attempt to lead neurotic patients into the cellar of their Unconscious in order to make them see what has caused their neurotic symptoms (Bloch, 1959, p. 60). Bloch (1959, p. 94) has argued that neurotic patients cannot be healed by giving them access to remembering repressed desires, because when they leave the doctor's office they are back in the world which has caused their suffering – the capitalist world of competition, anxiety, exploitation and alienation. Bloch (1959, p. 61) has argued that psychoanalysis only engages with an “isolated, subterranean” kind of memory. According to Bloch (1959, p. 61), psychoanalysis is regressive because it is exclusively concerned with the past – even with an archaic past. Bloch (1959, p. 61) has rejected Freud's claim that the id contains accumulated experiences from the archaic past. Bloch (1959, pp. 61/62) has also rejected C.G. Jung's claim that the Unconscious primarily contains archaic memories and fantasies, which Jung, according to Bloch, erroneously called archetypes.

As mentioned earlier, Bloch has argued that the primary instinct in human life is not libido but hunger. According to Bloch, hunger is an explosive force. A hungry person must try to satisfy his/her hunger. When hunger is perpetual, this situation can lead to revolutionary thoughts and plans: The hungry person directs his/her energies toward altering or abolishing the conditions which have caused the

situation of hunger. According to Bloch (1959, p. 84), “hunger is dynamite which can destroy the prison of hunger”. Thus, the human survival instinct can turn into the wish for transgression. For Bloch (1959, p. 85), transgression has a positive meaning: It means to venture beyond and to create change. According to Bloch (1959, p. 85), this starts with fantasy: A hungry person will always *imagine* a better life. As is well known, Freud has emphasized the value of the interpretation of night dreams for psychoanalysis. By contrast, Bloch has emphasized the importance of daydreams. According to Bloch, daydreams deserve more attention than night dreams. Bloch (1959, p. 111) has argued that daydreams are not just castles in the air or empty soap bubbles but anticipations of a better life and a better future. According to Bloch (1959, p. 96), the daydreamer is a “Hans-guck-in-die-Luft”(“a John-look-into-the-air”): He is not asleep with closed eyes like the night dreamer; the self of the daydreamer is lively and striving (Bloch, 1959, p. 101). Daydreams often give rise to political, scientific and artistic ideas. Therefore, daydreams are associated with the muses and Minerva (Bloch, 1959, p. 96). Whereas night dreams belong to the realm of Morpheus, daydreams belong to the realm of Phantasia (Bloch, 1959, p. 101). The daydream is like a bridge between fantasy and reality. Although Freud has considered night dreams as more important than daydreams, he has nevertheless admitted that daydreams provide artists with raw material for their works (Bloch, 1959, p. 105). However, as is well known, Freud has claimed that every work of art is the product of sublimation – the sublimation of the artist's repressed sexual desires. Freud has also claimed that the joy experienced by the recipients of works of art is the product of sublimation – the sublimation of the repressed sexual desires of the recipients. Works of art provide their recipients with the opportunity to live out their fantasies without losing face or having to make life-changing decisions (Bloch, 1959, p. 62). Unlike Freud, Bloch has argued that works of art are not products of sublimation. Like Marcuse, Bloch has claimed that every work of art is utopian. The utopian nature of art becomes visible in artistic works as “Vor-Schein”(“anticipatory illumination”). Bloch (1959, p. 179) has characterized anticipatory illumination as a power with an open space, which works toward the realization of utopia.

For Bloch, utopia is Marx's “realm of freedom”. Marx has described the realm of freedom in terms of the absence of the characteristics of capitalist class society (as the absence of misery, exploitation, fear and alienation) and as the naturalization of man and the humanization of nature (Bloch, 1959, p. 327). Bloch has described the realm of freedom as “the abolition of alienation in man and nature, between man and nature or the harmony of the unreified object with the manifested subject, of the unreified subject with the manifested object” (1959, p. 277). Bloch has further described the realm of freedom as a state “in which human beings can become human and in which the world can become a home to them” (1959, p. 390).

Anticipatory illumination can be found in contemporary works of art and in works of art from the past. Bloch (1959, p. 178) has argued that every great work of art contains a utopian surplus which cannot be destroyed. This utopian surplus can become visible a long time after a work of art is composed. Bloch (1959, p. 110) has claimed that great works of art from the past have something to tell us today, because they contain something which has not been noticed before. Goethe (in Bloch, 1959, p. 111) has called this quality of great works of art from the past “weitstrahlsinnig”, which can be translated as “containing meaning which spreads its light far into the distance”.

In Bloch's works, light is an important metaphor. It stands for illumination, cognition and hope. Bloch's philosophy is a philosophy of hope. Interestingly, Bloch (1959, p. 126) has defined hope as the opposite of memory. As has been pointed out above, Bloch has criticized psychoanalysis as regressive, comparing the Freudian Unconscious to a dark, stifling cellar. As both a contrast and a supplement to Freud's concept of the Unconscious, Bloch has developed his concept of the “Not-Yet-Conscious”. According to Bloch (1959, pp. 129/130), the human consciousness has dark fringes, where something conscious fades and where something forgotten sinks beneath the threshold of consciousness – into the Unconscious -, and where a not-yet-conscious is dawning and struggling to overcome an upper threshold which separates the Conscious from the Unconscious. Bloch's concept of the “Not-Yet-Conscious” is based on his notion of lack as the fundamental condition of human life. According to Bloch (1959, p. 356), human life is determined by this lack, which he has termed “the Not”. This “Not” is the lack of something and at the same time escape from this lack: a driving toward what is lacking or missing. According to Bloch (1959, p. 357), “the Not” is both a critique of what exists, and the wish and will to achieve what is lacking or missing. Therefore, “the Not” is more precisely a “Not-Yet”. In Bloch's philosophy, “the Not-Yet” appears as “the Not-Yet-Conscious” and “the Not-Yet-Become”. As these concepts indicate, Bloch's philosophy is essentially concerned with the future – the utopian future – of humankind. According to Bloch (1959, p. 186), utopia is always projected into the future. Even myths and fairy tales are utopianly oriented toward the future. Many images of hope are derived from an archaic memory ground, such as the archetypes of the Golden Age and of Paradise, but nevertheless are projections of a desired utopia realized in the future. Bloch (1959, pp. 160/161) has claimed that a progressive consciousness works in memory and the forgotten not as if in a sunken and closed space, but as in an open space - a space of process and of a horizon. Bloch (1923, p. 238) has argued that memories of the past contain something essential, forward-looking and utopian. Utopian consciousness discovers what is coming or dawning in the old, for example, in works of art from the past (Bloch, 1959, p. 161). The past is full of undischarged future,

full of possibilities which have not been realized yet (Bloch, 1959, p. 160). The following statement by Marx, quoted by Bloch (1959, p. 177), illustrates Bloch's notion of the past as full of undischarged future:

Our motto must be: Reform of consciousness not through dogmas but through analysis of the mystical consciousness that has not become clear to itself. Then it will become evident that the world has long since possessed the dream of a thing whose consciousness it must possess in order to really possess the world. It will become apparent that it is not a matter of separating the past from the future but of realizing the ideas of the past.'

Bloch's appreciation of the past is also indicated by the high value he has accorded to the “cultural heritage” of humankind: According to Bloch (1959, p. 178), great works of art from the past contain the ideology of the age and society in which they were produced and a utopian surplus which goes beyond and leaves behind the ideology of their time and place of origin. They form the essence of humankind's cultural heritage (Bloch, 1959, pp. 178-179). This cultural heritage is worth remembering. For Bloch, remembering is not passive contemplation but active comprehension. To engage with the cultural heritage of humankind means the following:

[T]hat we become detective-critics in our appreciation and evaluation of [...] works [of art and literature]. It is up to us to determine what the anticipatory illumination of a work is, and in doing this we make a contribution to the cultural heritage. That is, the quality of our cultural heritage and its meaning are determined by our ability to estimate what is valuable and utopian in works of art from all periods (Zipes, 1988, p. xxxvi).

The works of art which constitute humankind's cultural heritage are eternally open to new interpretations. A work of art is never finished and closed, no matter how old it is, because the past is never finished and closed (Blumentritt, 2006, p.122). Bloch has claimed that capitalist ideology has promoted the view of the past as finished and closed. He has derogatorily referred to 20<sup>th</sup>-century Europe and America as a “finished and closed anamnesis world” (Bloch, 1959, p. 159). The term anamnesis goes back to Plato. It defines knowledge as remembering something which one once already knew (Bloch, 1959, p. 158). Bloch (1959, p. 17) has accused all philosophers before Marx of having “covered the dialectical open Eros with the anamnesis blanket” and of having treated the past in a contemplative and antiquarian manner. Thus, memory could not lead to hope, because the future in the past was overlooked (Bloch, 1959, p. 17).

For Bloch, reality is a process which involves the past, the present and the future. Bloch has argued

that reality includes what has already become and what has not become yet. He has claimed that there is not only the empirical world but also an “open, unfinished, dreaming world” (Bloch, 1923, p. 217). For Bloch, reality is constituted of the real and the potential, which is a part of reality. Bloch (1959, p. 1167) has referred to Goethe's works as realistic in the sense of showing the reader what can be, not in the sense of showing the reader what already is. Bloch (1923, p. 282) has argued that the great characters of literary works move in and beyond history: in a world which the poet has created, a world which is utopian and real, because it demands a better world. This better world is already inherent in the real world as potentiality.

As mentioned above, Bloch (1959, p. 1166) has claimed that the world consists of processes. The past is not excluded from the innumerable processes which create reality and history but influences them. Bloch (1959, p. 160) has argued that it is possible and desirable to remember, interpret and open everything that has become with the aim to discover unrealized future in the past. According to Bloch (1959, p. 160), one can discover in a work of art what has not become visible or audible yet and thus create new interpretations. In order to stress the idea that works of art are eternally open to new interpretations, Bloch (1958, p. 1156) has drawn attention to Goethe's remark that a work of art should be “round but never closed”. Bloch (1959, p. 1167) has referred to Goethe's works as “full of constantly changing figures and a free-floating symbol star that can never be fixed but glows and shines eternally”.

Bloch was a great admirer of the works of Goethe, especially his *Faust*. Bloch recognized in Goethe a kindred spirit. Bloch (1959, pp. 1090/1091) detested the way in which his society discouraged young people's hopes and dreams and tried to mold them into docile citizens and employees. Similarly, Goethe felt a strong dislike of his society, in which the paths to love, becoming a person, to power, authenticity, freedom, beauty and cognition were blocked (Bloch, 1959, p. 1145). Both Goethe and Bloch felt a special affection for the ancient Greek mythological figure of the Titan Prometheus (Bloch, 1959, pp. 1149/1150). Bloch has argued that Prometheus represents utopian man. Prometheus wants everything and dreams of everything. He is the rebel who has brought humankind fire and who is himself fire (Bloch, 1959, p. 1150). Bloch (1959, p. 1150) has described Prometheus as “burning, planning for the future, angry resignation on the rock and immortal hope. He is the victim that is tortured by the vulture of Zeus, the age-old symbol of oppression”. Bloch has argued that Goethe's Faust strongly resembles Prometheus. Faust dreams of attaining knowledge, love and fulfillment. He tries to imagine what it would be like to be able to say to one moment in his life “Stay! You are so beautiful!” (Goethe, 1808, ll. 1699-1702, my translation). Bloch has termed this moment

“the lived moment”. Bloch's concept of “the lived moment” is very important in Bloch's philosophy. Bloch has argued that so far no human being has lived yet, because no human being has ever experienced the “Now”. Bloch's concept of “the lived moment” is contrary to the concept of *carpe diem* (“seize the day”). According to Bloch, (1959, pp. 341/342), to seize the day does not mean to chase after every sensual pleasure which offers itself. It is not a distraction or dissipation, not a fleeting banality without real presence. For Bloch (1959, p. 341), to seize the day means to really live. To really live means to be there, to experience the Now. According to Bloch (1959, p. 341), no human being has really lived yet, because nobody has yet experienced the Now. We cannot experience fulfillment because the Now lies in darkness. There is a blind spot in the human soul, which can be compared to the blind spot in the human eye where the optical nerve enters the retina (Bloch, 1959, p. 338). For Bloch (1959, p. 336), this blind spot contains the Alpha and the Omega of utopia. If it were possible to extract the content of the Now, utopia could be realized (Bloch, 1959, p. 338). It is important to note that, because nobody has experienced the Now yet, nobody can remember it (Bloch, 1959, p. 338). Thus, Bloch's theory of “the lived moment” is fundamentally opposed to psychoanalysis and anamnesis. However, Bloch (1975, p. 259) has also argued that human beings can experience true being in very special moments. In order to explain the nature of such special moments, Bloch (1975, p. 259) has quoted the following passage from Georg Lukàcs' *Theory of the Novel* (1916):

Only in very rare moments a reality opens itself to human beings, in which they see and comprehend the force working above them and in them, the meaning of life, with an abruptness which shines through everything. The life of the past sinks into a Nothing in the face of this experience, all its conflicts, its suffering, torments and errors appear colorless and unimportant. The meaning has appeared and the ways into the living life are open to the soul'.

Besides, Bloch (1959, p. 352) has argued that great works of art have described such special moments of true being. According to Bloch, Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869) contains a description of such a moment. It is a passage which depicts the fatally injured Andrej Bolkonskij lying on the battlefield of Austerlitz. He is looking up at the night sky, which, in this moment, looks to him more beautiful than ever before.

Goethe's Faust experiences a similar moment shortly before he dies. But before he can experience true being (in fact, only an anticipation of it), he must undertake a long and eventful journey. As a young man, Faust seeks to attain fulfillment through knowledge: He wants to “reveal/ The things of Nature's secret seal” (Goethe, 1808, in Wayne, 1949, p. 44). He also seeks fulfillment in sensual pleasure. At the beginning of the play, Mephistopheles describes Faust as follows: “From the sky he



demands the most beautiful stars/ And from the earth the highest pleasure,/ And all nearness and all distance/ do not satisfy his deeply moved breast” (Goethe, 1808, ll. 304-307, my translation). Faust cannot attain fulfillment through knowledge or sensual pleasure. When he realizes that “we cannot know anything!” (Goethe, 1808, l. 364, my translation), he feels devastated: All joy has gone from his life (Goethe, 1808, l. 370). Faust enters his pact with the devil even though and because he is sure that no matter what Mephistopheles offers him (knowledge, youth, sensual pleasure), nothing will induce Faust to say to one of these moments “Stay! You are so beautiful!” (Goethe, 1808, ll. 1699-1702, my translation).

Bloch (1977, p. 59) has claimed that Goethe's *Faust* shows a strong parallel to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The plot of *Faust* resembles a dialectical journey in which every achieved pleasure or every fulfilled desire is canceled by a new wish, in which every arrival is contradicted by an opposite motion because something is missing: the beautiful moment has not arrived yet (Bloch, 1959, p. 1192). Faust changes along with a changing world; his journey is an experiment; its aim is to become what one is; to achieve the condition in which self and other are in harmony, to achieve a dialectical relationship between subject and object: an ascending motion toward the unity of subject and object, which is attained when subject and object are no longer alien to each other (Bloch, 1959, p. 1192). But Faust cannot achieve this condition during his lifetime. Throughout his life, he is dominated by desire. He is “driven by desire to pleasure and from pleasure to desire” (Goethe, 1808, ll. 3249/3250, my translation). He is a refugee, he is homeless (Goethe, 1808, l. 3348). Faust starts his search for fulfillment among human beings, but he is always disappointed: In Auerbach's cellar, Faust realizes that physical pleasure is vulgar. His love for Gretchen brings pain, death and guilt. Helena's world is threatened by war. Faust's attainment of land is tainted by robbery and murder (Bloch, 1959, p. 1192). Only at the end of the second part of Goethe's tragedy, Faust finds a way to, at least, anticipate fulfillment - “the highest joy”, “the highest moment” (Goethe, 1833, ll. 11585/11586, my translation) - imagining and hoping that the land which he has given to the people will give them the chance to live active and free lives: “Such busy, teeming throngs I long to see, /Standing on freedom's soil, a people free. Then to the moment could I say:/ Linger you now, you are so fair” (Goethe, 1833, translated by Wayne, 1959, pp. 269/270). Goethe's *Faust* depicts a man's journey toward fulfillment, toward the experience of the Now and true being, toward a world that is for itself (Bloch, 1959, p. 1200). Faust's wish to say to one moment in his life “Stay! You are so beautiful!” is a symbol of utopia. But it is only a symbol. Art and philosophy can only show the intention toward utopia, not the content of utopia (Bloch, 1959, p. 1201).

## REFERENCES

- Bernstein, Richard T., (1971) Herbert Marcuse: An Immanent Critique. In: J. Bernstein, ed. 1994. *The Frankfurt School: Critical Assessments*, Volume IV. London and New York: Routledge, 150-165.
- Bloch, Ernst (1959) *Das Prinzip Hoffnung I*. Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag.
- Bloch, Ernst 1959) *Das Prinzip Hoffnung III*. Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag.
- Bloch, Ernst (1975) *Experimentum Mundi: Frage, Kategorien des Herausbringens, Praxis*. Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag.

- Bloch, Ernst (1923) *Geist der Utopie*. Reprint 1964. Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag.
- Bloch, Ernst (1977) *Subjekt – Objekt: Erläuterungen zu Hegel*. Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag.
- Blumentritt, Martin, 2006. Zeit- Gleichzeitigkeit/ Ungleichzeitigkeit – Utopie: Warum der Angelus Novus rückwärtsfliegt. In: D. Zeilinger, ed. 2006. *VorSchein* Nr. 27/28 (Jahrbuch 2006 der Ernst-Bloch-Assoziation). Nürnberg: AntogoVerlag, 133-142.
- Freud, Sigmund (1930) *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Reprint 1961. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Freud, Sigmund (1913) *Totem and Taboo*. Reprint 2001. London and New York: Routledge.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 1808, 1833, *Faust I und II*. Reprint 1997. Köln: KönnemannVerlagsgesellschaft.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1808) *Faust I*. Translated by Philip Wayne, 1949. London: Penguin Books.
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (1833) *Faust II*. Translated by Philip Wayne, 1959. London: Penguin Books.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1955) *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. Reprint 1998. London: Routledge.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1964) *One-Dimensional Man*. Reprint 1991. Boston/ Massachusetts: Beacon Press.
- Marcuse, Herbert (1941) *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*. Reprint 2000. London: Routledge.
- Rilke, Rainer Maria (1923) *Sonnets to Orpheus*. Translated by C.F. MacIntyre, 1964. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Zipes, J., ed. (1988) Introduction. In: Ernst Bloch, 1988, *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.