



# Marcuse's milieu

Or, two poems, a film clip, and a movie review

# “The Unknown Citizen” by W.H. Auden

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*(To JS/07 M 378*

*This Marble Monument  
Is Erected by the State)*

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
One against whom there was no official complaint,  
And all the reports on his conduct agree  
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a  
saint,

For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.

# “The Unknown Citizen” by W.H. Auden

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Except for the War till the day he retired  
He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.  
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,  
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,  
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)  
And our Social Psychology workers found  
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.

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The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day  
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.  
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,  
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.  
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare  
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan  
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,  
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.

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Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;  
When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.  
He was married and added five children to the population,  
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his  
generation.  
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their  
education.  
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:  
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

# “Waiting for the Barbarians” by C.P. Cavafy

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What are we waiting for, assembled in the forum?

The barbarians are due here today.

Why isn't anything going on in the senate?

Why are the senators sitting there without legislating?

Because the barbarians are coming today.

What's the point of senators making laws now?

Once the barbarians are here, they'll do the legislating.

Why did our emperor get up so early,  
and why is he sitting enthroned at the city's main gate,  
in state, wearing the crown?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and the emperor's waiting to receive their leader.

He's even got a scroll to give him,  
loaded with titles, with imposing names.

# “Waiting for the Barbarians” by C.P. Cavafy

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Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today  
wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas?

Why have they put on bracelets with so many amethysts,  
rings sparkling with magnificent emeralds?

Why are they carrying elegant canes  
beautifully worked in silver and gold?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and things like that dazzle the barbarians.

Why don't our distinguished orators turn up as usual  
to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

Because the barbarians are coming today  
and they're bored by rhetoric and public speaking.

# “Waiting for the Barbarians” by C.P. Cavafy

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Why this sudden bewilderment, this confusion?

(How serious people's faces have become.)

Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly,  
everyone going home lost in thought?

Because night has fallen and the barbarians haven't come.

And some of our men just in from the border say  
there are no barbarians any longer.

Now what's going to happen to us without barbarians?

Those people were a kind of solution.

# Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*



- “Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.”

# The End (for now)

