"A CERTAIN SPIRIT OF A CERTAIN MARX"

BLANCHOT'S REVOLUTIONARY RETURN IN *SPECTERS OF MARX*

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I promise that it will come back. It will repeat. A revolution repeats. Even "the revolution against the revolution" will come back.[1] In fact, according to the logic of repetition that disturbs the order of time, a revolution comes in returning. It is in his analysis of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in *Specters of Marx* that Derrida writes of this revolutionary repetition. Influenced by Hegel's remark about the repetition of history and "great events," Marx wrote scathingly in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* of the successive upheavals in the French society of eighteenth century and, through his analysis of the Revolution of 1848 and the first French Revolution, demonstrated that "the repetition repeats itself" (SM 184/112).

Yet it is this very repetition or return, a revolutionary return, which is often passed over or insufficiently examined in Marx's thought, and it is the return *to* and *of* a revolutionary Marx that a philosophical reading or ontological interpretation—an interpretation that Marx himself preferred—attempts to cover over. In a desire to bestow a philosophical legitimacy to Marx, to place him in the canon of great philosophers, and to downplay the "unrealistic" fervor of a writing that is also a call to arms, what gets overlooked is Marx the revolutionary. But, as Derrida's reading of Marx demonstrates in *Specters of Marx*, revolution in addition to being an affirmation of asynchrony or non-contemporaneity is also a call for justice. Rather than advocating a particular political regime or the downfall of an entire economic system (commonly associated with the upheaval that a revolution is), Derrida emphasizes revolution as a radical discontinuity, a rupture, a caesura. What has troubled committed Marxists about Derrida's reading is the perceived lack of engagement with concepts long associated with Marxian thinking, such as labor, mode of production, and social class as well as the total lack of what they consider to be concrete ideas, as if *Specters of Marx* constituted a refusal to engage with the real Marx. However, this is to mistake *Specters of Marx* as yet another interpretation of Marx's "ideas" to be added to the Marxist bibliography and to miss entirely Derrida's approach to Marx. If Derrida has decided "to give priority to the political gesture" rather than to give priority to the work of philosophical exegesis (SM 62/32), it is because *Specters of Marx* is an affirmation of "a certain spirit of Marx," affirming something in Marx without wholeheartedly endorsing any doctrine or dogma, whether called Marxism or not.

In this essay I will attend to the return of the revolutionary spirit, in particular the return of Blanchot's revolutionary reading of Marx in Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. Blanchot, whose essay, "Marx's Three Voices," Derrida quotes from in the first chapter of *Specters* and to which, Derrida tells the reader, he subscribes "without reservation," could be interpreted as a predecessor or tutelary spirit watching over Derrida's text (SM 39/16). Yet such an interpretation would not seriously engage with the problematic notions of "influence" or "intellectual predecessor." Rather I will discuss Derrida's reading of Marx, in particular regarding a thought of revolution—what in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* Marx terms "the *spirit* of the revolution [*den* Geist *der revolution*]"[2]—in light of some of Blanchot's own writings on revolution and Marx, to show in what ways Blanchot's and Derrida's interpretations or approaches—in their affirmative character and in their focus on radical discontinuity and rupture of time associated with revolution—partake of a certain spirit of Marx."[3]

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Messianicity and the Performative

Many informative texts have detailed the performative dimension of Derrida's work,[4] especially in *Specters of Marx*, as well as what he has called "messianicity without messianism." In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes of a promise that does not simply promise but "produces events" (SM 147/89). We could say that Derrida's task, in his performative texts, is "to do and to make come about, as well as to let come (about) [*à faire et à faire arriver aussi bien qu'à laisser arriver*]" (SM 162/98). This coming of what comes, the coming of an unprecedented event, is irreducibly tied to a thinking of what returns—or revolution. What would it mean to think the event in terms of revolution?

Typically the type of speech or discourse employed to speak of revolution is the messianic. *Specters of Marx* in issuing an urgent, overarching call for justice has the form of a messianic manifesto, if "manifesto" were the appropriate term to be attributed to Derrida's writings.[5] For example, the "New International" referred to in the subtitle of the book is not only the name of "the friendship of an alliance without institution" (SM 142/86), a discreet "link of affinity" (SM 141/85) without common belonging to a national community, country or class, but also a call for a profound transformation of international law and its concepts and the diversification of its reach beyond the sovereignty of States. It is a call to combat ten specific "plagues of the 'new world order'" (SM 134/81). This profound transformation—in an uncanny anticipation of work to come typical of Derrida's writing—

> would consist of the economic analysis of the market, the laws of capital, of types of capital (financial or symbolic, therefore spectral), liberal parliamentary democracy, modes of representation and suffrage, the determining content of human rights, women's and children's rights, the current concepts of equality, liberty, especially fraternity (the most problematic of all), dignity, the relations between man and citizen. It would also extend, in the quasi-totality of these concepts, to the concept of the human (therefore of the divine and the animal) and to a *determined* concept of the democratic that supposes it (let us not say of *all* democracy or precisely [*justement*], of democracy to come). (SM 143/87)

The *excessive* messianic demand (*exigence*) or urgency does not merely call for concrete changes but it is, at the same time, an affirmation, an affirmation of Marx's thinking during a time that his demise and burial have been proclaimed and celebrated, and when the ideal of liberal democracy has been held as *the* ideal of human history (SM 62/33).[6] This jubilant estimation of Marx's irrelevance is bound up with a view of time, time as presence, and an over-reliance on the present in order to assess and to determine political events. It is only when the present is understood as the concatenation of *nows* that it is possible to prepare a tally sheet to assess "winners and losers in world history" and write off the "success" of Marx's thought. Those who have reproached Marx have judged him according to a notion of time founded on the time of presence-to-self, the time of consciousness. This ontological approach, based on present-being [*on*], being-present, and a reliance on what *is*, covers over a spectrality or "a void" in Marx's writings that is emphasized by Derrida's and Blanchot's readings.

Derrida writes in *Specters of Marx* that the time of the revolution "never takes place in the present" (SM 182/111). What Marx's thinking calls for no longer bears a relation to being or the present, but has to do with the invention, discovery, arrival of what is not, what is not yet. This is why Derrida's emphasis in *Specters* is on an *other* time—it is to think an other temporality. What is still revolutionary about Marx's writing is that it is an attempt to *make* something come, to come about. Derrida's stress on the out-of-jointness of time, asynchrony, non-contemporaneity also suggests that we do not live in the same time, that different peoples and different cultures are not contemporaneous to each other. The time of the revolution then intertwines several heterogeneous times in the same dis-jointed, dislocated, out-of-joint time.

"The Spirit of the Revolution is Fantastic"

The "certain spirit" of Marx is bound up with,

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what Derrida calls a general and irreducible "fantastics [*une fantastique*]," a fantastics in which spirit (*Geist*) and specter (*Gespenst*) cannot be distinguished from each other. Without any rigorous conceptual frontiers, spirit and specter pass into each other: "spirit of revolution, actual reality, (productive or reproductive) imagination, specter (*Geist der Revolution, Wirklichkeit, Phantasie, Gespenst*)" (SM 184/112). Rather than being rigorously distinguishable from each other as Marx would wish, one calls for the other, everything passing "by way of differences *within* [*par des différences* à l'intérieur], *a fantastics as general as it is irreducible*" (SM 184/112). This general and irreducible fantastics, "this other transcendental imagination," Derrida explains, far from "organizing the schemata of the constitution of time," "gives its law [*donne sa loi à*] to an invincible *anachrony*" (SM 184/112). While this is not the place to devote detailed attention to this fantastics, it should be noted that unlike the transecendental power of imagination, which Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* equated with "primordial time," this other transcendental imagination—where spirit, imagination (active or reproductive), specter, and actual reality cannot be easily demarcated from each other—gives rise to anachrony or makes anachrony possible: "The spirit of the revolution is *fantastic* [*fantastique*] *and anachronistic through and through* [*de part en part*]" (SM 184/112).

Blanchot's Revolution

I will now focus my attention on a selected sample of Blanchot's "political writings," from the uncollected and untranslated journalism of the 1930s published in right-leaning journals to his writings on the movement of May 1968 in order to provide glimpses of a thinking of revolution and absolute caesura or rupture in Blanchot's work.[7] While discussing Blanchot's notions of "revolution"[8] and "refusal," in his 1968 writings, I will show that despite Blanchot's own initial political tendencies, one can find a non-reactionary and affirmative thinking of revolution at work in his writings.[9]

In "Le marxisme contre la révolution," originally published in *Revue française* in 1933, Blanchot summarizes the arguments of "certain people [*quelques esprits*]," among them R. Garric. whose article appeared in *Revue des Jeunes*, who have expressed themselves as being against any form of refusal or revolution and in favor of "consent" and "acceptance."[10] It is their belief that "the world of today" is not too profoundly in trouble or distress. Therefore, it would be, they suggest, best to continue with currently existing approaches. What interests Blanchot in Garric's article is the use of the term "revolution." When one believes that revolt is less capable of changing the world than consent, Blanchot claims, one has a particular view of rebellion and the world. Garric, who believes in action, does not find in revolutionary action what would satisfy his taste (54). The rebel who wants to change the world appears to him as strangely removed from the way things are. Garric goes on to remind the reader of some simple "truths": the world resists change; things are the way they are; and they are not what we would like them to be. Thus, one's only option is to accept the present state of affairs.

Blanchot points out that there are further consequences in Garric's thinking for the very notion of revolution that are not explicitly spelled out in the article: (1) revolution is contrary to facts; (2) it is opposed to all action, because it has as its goal to reject a certain state of things; (3) revolution is contrary to life, because life is a compromise and revolution is essentially an absolute position; and (4) revolution is an intellectual longing [*aspiration*] by those who are little capable of acting, the dream of idealists incapable of dealing with reality. For all these reasons, Garric deems revolution impossible (54). He brands all revolutionaries not only as "idealists" or "intellectuals" who never succeed, but also depicts them as angry, dangerous, and weak (55). The revolutionary has little knowledge of the state of things and events. Thus, he is always somehow a foreigner to his country, even if he is revolutionary for patriotic reasons.

What is worse is that the revolutionary never succeeds. If he fails or other revolutionaries do

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not succeed, he is only capable of skepticism or despair, announcing his misery to the world. This, after all, is what Garric believes an "intellectual" to be—a prophet without power (55). As long as a revolutionary produces revolutionary criticism and is not out in the streets, he is an intellectual who has nothing to do with the revolution. Thus if a revolution does not succeed, if it does not create an effect or produce a result, it is "impossible" (56). For a revolution to be a revolution it ought to be able to abolish a world [*abolir un monde*]; and if the world persists it would be difficult to consider such a revolution as real (57).

Noting the inferior place given in Marxism to the very conception of refusal, Blanchot states that the Marxist ideal is also far removed from the revolutionary ideal (58). Refusal is such that it cannot be subordinated to any conditions: "refusal is absolutely foreign to every veritable negation, every absence, all nothingness [*rien*]" (59–60). In addition, the act of rebelling against or opposing also represents "some despairing affirmation [*affirmation désesperée*]" (60). Refusal conceives of itself as burdened with a marvelous power (*un pouvoir merveilleux*), in relation to which the world is nothing.[11]

In Blanchot's judgment Garric, in a knee-jerk reaction, deems every revolution as dangerous, for he has difficulty distinguishing all revolutions from the regime of Soviet Russia. Garric determines even a "spiritual revolution" as utopian and impossible because he considers the communist revolution as the only true revolution. For him the revolutionary ideal and the Marxist ideal are one. According to this perspective, any other approach toward revolution would be a hazy dream. For Garric, "refusal" would only be a feeling of "contempt without force" (61). Yet this conviction, Blanchot claims, is also shared by the Communists. For Blanchot this is "proof" that Marxism ill serves a thought of revolution, which does not belong either to the left or the right.

In "La Révolution necessaire," one of a number of articles published in 1933 in *Le Rempart*, invoking a national revolution as an alternative to a parliamentary system, Blanchot writes of "the spiritual revolution, the national revolution," which will be "hard, bloody, unjust," "our last chance of salvation."[12] In "La vraie menace du troisième Reich" Blanchot refers to "a deeper revolution" that France wants. In hopes of breaking with the mediocrity of republican governments, Blanchot argues for the necessity of revolution.[13] In a later brief article from 1937, "De la révolution à la littérature," published in the journal *L'Insurgé*, Blanchot writes again of revolution, this time making an appeal to the unlimited revolutionary potential of literature as such and refers to the oppositional force (*la force d'opposition*) expressed in works of art.[14] In the *Combat* articles of 1937, like "La France, nation à venir," dissidence is proposed as a precursor to revolution.

Christophe Bident in his magnificent "intellectual biography" of Blanchot has detailed his extensive involvement in the activities and *événements* of May 1968, in particular as a member of the anti-authoritarian Comité d'Action Etudiants-Ecrivains (The Student-Writers Action Committee), among whose members were writers such as Dionys Mascolo, Marguerite Duras, Maurice Nadeau, Jean Schuster, Robert Antelme, Louis-René des Forets, and Nathalie Sarraute.[15] As is well-known now, Blanchot had a great hand in writing the tracts, posters, public notices, and bulletins in favor of the movement of May 68 issued by the Committee and anonymously published in *Comité,* the journal of the Committee. These documents, which constitute a distinctive, thoughtful, anti-authoritarian challenge to authority in general and the French establishment in particular, have been available since the publication of Blanchot's *Ecrits politiques* in 2003.

In "Affirmer la rupture," Blanchot proclaims the ultimate goal, that is the most immediate, "direct-indirect" goal, is to affirm rupture.[16] To affirm rupture would mean to organize it in making it still more real and more radical (EP 104). But, what rupture? The rupture with authority [*le pouvoir*], hence with the notion of power (EP104). To radically affirm would entail bearing the rupture such that refusal would not be a merely negative moment (EP 105). Radical refusal, which is politically and philosophically

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one of the strongest traits of the movement, goes far beyond simple negativity if it can even be considered a negation (EP 105). To clarify the singular trait of this refusal is one of the theoretical tasks of the new political thought. The goal is

> not to elaborate a program, a platform, but on the contrary, outside of every programmatic project and even of every project, to maintain a *refusal that affirms*, to free and maintain an affirmation that does not come to an arrangement [*ne s'arrange pas*], but disturbs and moves [*dérange et se dérange*], having a relation to dis-arrangement [*désarrangement*] or disarray [*désarroi*] or still the non-structurable. This decision of refusal that is not a power, or the power to deny, or negation . . . we call, when we intervene in the "revolutionary" process, spontaneity. (EP 105–06)

However, this notion of "spontaneity" should be used with some reservation, since spontaneity, as it is used by Blanchot, is not bound to any vitalism or natural self–creativity (EP 106).

Writing of revolution in terms of "possibility" in "Rupture du temps: Révolution," Blanchot states: "As soon as, by the movement of forces tending toward rupture, revolution manifests itself as possible, a possibility that is not abstract, but historically and concretely determined, in these moments revolution has taken place [*a eu lieu*]" (EP 127). Further, he associates revolution with an "arrest [*arrêt*]" or a "suspension [*suspens*]" (EP127). This arrest, which signals the collapse of the law, is an interruption: "Transgression is accomplished: it is for an instant innocence; history interrupted" (EP 127). The very short text ends with a quote from Walter Benjamin, the first sentence of which reads: "The conscious desire to break the continuity of history belongs to revolutionary classes in the moment of action" (EP 127).

Many years later in a discussion of Sade's writings in *L'entretien infini*, Blanchot writes of revolution as a moment of excess, of dissolution, and of energy. He observes that Sade calls a revolutionary regime "the pure time [*le temps pur*] of suspended history marking an epoch; this time of the between-times [*l'entre-temps*] where, between the old laws and the new, there reigns the silence of the absence of laws, an interval that corresponds precisely to the suspension of speech [*l'entre-dire*] when everything ceases and everything is arrested [*s'arrête*]" (EI 336/226). It is this "instant of prodigious suspense [*prodigieux suspens*]" or suspension, for which Sade reserves the title revolutionary (EI 337/226).

"Sur le movement" (dated December 1968) reflects on the entire movement and looks ahead. Blanchot cautions that the activities of May 68 risk becoming "a pure ideal and an imaginary event" unless they lead to "a radical critical interrogation" (EP 142). Answering critics who had portrayed the movement as "weak" and a "failure," Blanchot writes: "The weakness of the movement was also its force, and its force is in having succeeded prodigiously" without the backing of any institutional power (EP 143). In Blanchot's estimation the movement had not failed: "It was important and it was supremely achieved [*souverainement realisé*]" (EP 143). He underscores that indeed "there was a revolution, the revolution took place. The movement of May was the REVOLUTION, in the blaze and brilliance of a movement that was accomplished" and whose accomplishment "changed everything" (EP 143). Yet this was not a revolution that could easily be assimilated into previous models: "More philosophical than political, more social than institutional, more exemplary than real," it is "as if the time that it sought to open was already beyond these usual determinations" (EP 143).

This revolution, then, was "a radical DISCONTINUITY," not a discontinuity "separating two historical periods, but history and a possibility that does not already belong to it more directly" (EP 143). Blanchot goes on to show that, contrary to popular opinion, this revolution without precedent was successful simultaneously from the point of view of ideas and politics. All the "force of originality" of this revolution is that "it made itself impossible as such, only leaving a trace that, like a flash of lightning, sunders everything, earth and sky. NOTHING WILL BE AS BEFORE" (EP 145). Blanchot urges that "the majority of inherited notions, beginning with those of the revolutionary tradition," be reexam-

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ined and, as such, "challenged" (EP 147). The document ends with the almost apocalyptic declaration: "There is an absolute void [*vide*] behind us and before us—and we must think . . . the radicality of this void" (EP 147). What is more, "what is before us, and which will be terrible, does not yet have a name" (EP 147).

Blanchot's Reading of Marx

"La fin de la philosophie" begins as a review of Henri Lefebvre's *La somme et le reste*.[17] According to Blanchot, this non-Hegelian philosopher, close to Nietzsche, who almost officially represented Marx and Marxism in France for decades, is attracted by the revolutionary romanticism of Marx which he recognizes as his own, but also by Marx's effort to overcome such romanticism. Lefebvre's perpetual confrontation between philosophy and communism, his pursuit of the task of thinking and the adherence to the Party or its official organization was only possible, Blanchot explains, because he was able "to maintain the interpretation [of Marxist thought] that he believed most open to the future [*la plus ouverte sur l'avenir*]" (A 100/85). Elsewhere Lefebvre, himself a denizen of the kingdom of shades according to the subtitle of one of his works, writes of the "immense optimism"[18] that "animates Marxist thought" (HMN 24) and refers to Marx's faith in "the *possible*" (HMN 56) describing the German thinker's work as trumpeting "the eternal dawn, the immortal youth of the Revolution" (HMN 56). In contrast to the doctrinal thinking of the Party, Lefebvre's interpretation of Marx is broad-minded and generous, stressing that "Marx's thinking does not have the form of a system" (HMN 104) and that "the works called philosophical do not contain a philosophy" (HMN 105).

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida notes the "crepuscular, spectral, and therefore resurrectional" tone of Blanchot's essay on Lefebvre, calling it "a funerary note" (SM 67/36). Broaching the relation between communism and the end of philosophy, Blanchot admits that the death of philosophy is a topic that belongs to our philosophical time. It has been "in the name" of Marx, as well as that of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, Blanchot notes, referring to the authors treated by Lefebvre in his work, that philosophy has been affirming or realizing its own end (A 103/88). But "the advancement [*promotion*]" of philosophy "coincides with its disappearance" (A 103/88).[19] The end of philosophy is not a pure or simple end, for "what ends, continues" (A 106/90). "The enterprise of overcoming [*dépassement*]" engages in "philosophical suicide" that leaves it in "the state of living death [*l'état de mort-vivant*]" (A 106/90). Philosophy thus becomes, Derrida writes, its "own *revenant*" (SM 67/36). In this overcoming, "philosophy comes to an end, but by overcoming itself [*se dépasser*]" (A 107/91). This "interment [*mise en terre*]" (SM 67/36)[20] of philosophy is also its "resurrection": "We do not want to lose anything. We want to surpass [*dépasser*], go beyond, and, all the same, remain [*demeurer*]. We want to dismiss and preserve, reject and recover, refuse and obtain everything in this refusal" (A 107/91).

In the only issue of *Comité* produced under the auspices of the collection of writers and students gathered together to support the political activities of 1968, Blanchot presented a thinking of Marx under the title of "Lire Marx," a text that was later republished as "Marx's Three Voices" in his volume of essays entitled *Friendship*. Describing *Capital* as "an essentially subversive work" since it contains "a mode of theoretical thinking" that challenges scientific thinking, Blanchot writes of "three kinds of voices" in Marx's texts, all three of which are "necessary, but separated and more than opposed" (A 115/98). The disparity (*le disparate*) that holds them together refers to "a plurality of demands" (A 115/98). In *Specters of Marx* Derrida notes this disjunction of Marx's voices, a disjunction that allows heterogeneity to be maintained. We are called to think the "holding together [*maintenir ensemble*]" of the *disparate* itself (SM 57–58/29), "where the disparate itself *holds together* [*maintient ensemble*], without wounding the disjointure, the dispersion, or the difference, without effacing the heterogeneity of the other" (SM 58/29).

Blanchot writes that these voices (a "plurality of languages" that Marx is uncomfortable with),

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cannot easily be translated into each other and "their heterogeneity, the divergence or the gap [*l'écart*], the distance that decenters them, renders them non-contemporaneous" (A 117/100). The first voice, in which Marx appears as a "writer of thought," is "direct, but lengthy" (A 115/98). This is the reflective Marx in full command of the philosophical *logos* (A116/99). The second, Blanchot calls the "political" voice. Brief and direct, it is a voice that short-circuits every voice, for it bears "a call [*un appel*], a violence, a decision of rupture. It says nothing strictly speaking; it is the urgency of what it announces, bound to an impatient and always excessive demand [*exigence*]" (A 116/99). It recommends "permanent revolution," designating revolution as "*imminence*, because it is the trait of revolution, if it opens and traverses time, to offer no delay, giving itself to be lived as ever-present demand" (A 116/99). The third voice, the lengthiest, is the indirect one, that of scientific discourse. This is Marx as a man of science, even though he puts forth a thinking that "overturns the very idea of science. Actually, neither science nor thought emerges intact from Marx's work" (A 116/99).

What "resonates" most for Derrida in Blanchot's essay on the three voices of Marx is the call, "the *appeal* [*l'appel*] or the political injunction, the pledge [*l'engagement*] or the promise (the oath [*le serment*], if one prefers "swear!"), this originary performativity that does not conform to preexisting conventions . . . whose force of *rupture* produces the institution or the constitution, the law itself" (SM 59–60/30–31). This performativity, whose violence "interrupts time," is "the precipitation of an absolute singularity" (SM 60/31). This "*pledge* [*gage*] (promise, engagement, injunction and response to the injunction, and so forth)" is urgent, it is "given here and now" responding "without delay to the demand of justice" (SM 60/31). In the very urgency of what it announces, the coming of the messianic is not simply a call or an appeal for justice, for as well as "analyzing, affirming, [and] promising," this "certain spirit of Marx," as Derrida explains in an interview following the publication of *Specters of Marx* titled "Quelqu'un s'avance et dit," is also "a certain manner" of "disobeying," "criticizing," "denouncing," and "refusing." [21]

Thus messianicity would not be conceivable without reference to revolution and *revolutionary* moments. Rather than the idealistic mania associated with prophets and soothsayers or a naïve wide-eyed "optimism," messianicity is what Derrida calls "the strange alloy [*alliance*] of 'pessimism' and 'optimism' that one finds . . . at the heart [*au fond*] of all serious revolutionary approaches to the political realm [*la chose politique*]"(MS 62/245).[22]

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 175; *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1993), 108. All further references, abbreviated as SM, are cited in the text, with page references first to the French version, then to the English version. I have occasionally slightly modified the translation to reflect my reading.
2. Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Later Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Terrell Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 33; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *Werke* (Berlin: Dietz).
3. Both Martin Crowley and Michael Syrotinski have touched on Blanchot's role in *Specters of Marx*. See Martin Crowley, *Robert Antelme: Humanity, Community, Testimony* (Oxford: Legenda, 2003), and Michael Syrotinski, *Deconstruction and the Postcolonial: At the Limits of Theory* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007).
4. On the performative in Derrida's work see, in particular, Michael Naas, *Taking on the Tradition: Jacques Derrida and the Legacies of Deconstruction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), and J. Hillis Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford: Stanford Univer-

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sity Press, 2001), and Miller, *Literature as Conduct: Speech Acts in Henry James* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

5. For remarks on the manifesto, see Jacques Derrida, *Marx & Sons* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France/Galilée, 2002), 17–18; "Marx & Sons," trans. G. M. Goshgarian, in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida's Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London/New York: Verso, 1999), 218. All further references, abbreviated as MS, are cited in the text, with page references first to the French version, then to the English version.
6. As an example of manic celebrations of the death of Marxian ideas, see Jean-Marie Benoist, *Marx est mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
7. On Blanchot's involvement in right-wing journals in the 1930s, see Jeffrey Mehlman, "Blanchot at *Combat*: Of Literature and Terror," *Modern Language Notes* 95 (May 1980): 808–29; and Mehlman, *Genealogies of the Text: Literature, Psychoanalysis, and Politics in Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Steven Ungar, *Scandal and Aftereffect: Blanchot and France since 1930* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), Leslie Hill, *Maurice Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), and Christophe Bident, *Maurice Blanchot: Partenaire invisible* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1998).
8. For the notion of revolution in Blanchot's writings, see James Swenson, "Revolutionary Sentences," *Yale French Studies* 93 (1998):11–29, and Laurent Jenny, "La révolution selon Blanchot" *Furor* 29 (September 1999), 113–30, reprinted in Laurent Jenny, *Je suis la révolution: Histoire d'une métaphore* (Paris: Belin, 2008), 109–36.
9. For a historical analysis of right-wing thought in France, see Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Left Nor Right: Fascist Ideology in France,* trans. David Maisel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: Norton, 1994), David Carroll, *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
10. Maurice Blanchot, "Le marxisme contre la revolution," *Revue française*, 28ème année, 4, (25 April 1933): 506–17, 53, republished in *Gramma* 5 "Lire Blanchot II" (1976): 53–61. Page references, cited in the body of the text, are to the latter publication. All translations are my own.
11. Attention should be paid to Blanchot's usage of the term or notion *le merveilleux*, the marvelous, in many of his writings.
12. Maurice Blanchot, "La Révolution necessaire," *Le Rempart* 62 (June 22, 1933): 2.
13. Maurice Blanchot, "La vraie menace du troisième Reich, " *Le Rempart* 69 (June 29, 1933)" 3.
14. Maurice Blanchot, "De la révolution à la littérature," *L'Insurgé* 1 (January 13, 1937): 3.
15. See Bident, *Maurice Blanchot: Partenaire invisible*, 469–83.
16. Maurice Blanchot, "Affirmer la rupture," "Rupture du temps: Révolution," and "Lire Marx," *Comité* 1 (October 1968). These documents also appeared in 1998 in a special issue of the journal *Lignes* 33 (March 1998) devoted to Dionys Mascolo before being collected in Maurice Blanchot, *Ecrits politiques: Guerre d'Algérie, Mai 68, etc.* (Paris: Editions Lignes & Manifestes/Editions Léo Scheer, 2003). All further references, abbreviated as EP, are cited in the text. All translations are my own. Michael Holland provides translations of selections from the pieces published in *Comité* in *The Blanchot Reader*, edited by Michael Holland (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), 200–05. The selections in the *Reader*, under the general rubric of "Disorderly Words," are a translation of "Mots de désordre" which appeared in *Libération* 28–29 (January, 1984): 23. "Lire Marx" appeared as "Les trois paroles de Marx" in Maurice Blanchot, *L'amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg as "Marx's Three Voices" in *Friendship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). All further references to this text, abbreviated as A, are cited in the text, with page references first to the French version, then to the English version.
17. Maurice Blanchot, "La fin de la philosophie," *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 80 (July 1959): 286–98, appeared as "Lentes funerailles" in Maurice Blanchot, *L'amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971); translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg as "Slow Obsequies" in *Friendship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
18. Henri Lefebvre, *Hegel-Marx-Nietzsche ou le royaume des ombres* (Paris: Casterman, 1975), 24. All further references, abbreviated as HMN, are cited in the text.

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19. It is interesting to note that Peggy Kamuf has rendered this word as "promotion" in her translation of Blanchot's quotation in *Specters of Marx*.
20. Peggy Kamuf's phrase is "putting in the ground." It appears in (*Friendship*, 103/88).
21. Jacques Derrida, Marc Guillaume, Jean-Pierre Vincent, *Marx en jeu* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1997), 64.
22. I would like to thank Pleshette DeArmitt profusely for her incisive comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

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