

Detours and Deviations of Letter and Spirit: A Forum on Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx* after 25 Years, Part VI

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Abstract: Jacques Derrida delivered the basis of *The Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International* as a plenary address at the conference 'Whither Marxism?' hosted by the University of California, Riverside, in 1993. The longer book version was published in French the same year and appeared in English and Portuguese the following year. In the decade after the publication of *Specters*, Derrida's analyses provoked a large critical literature and invited both consternation and celebration by figures such as Antonio Negri, Wendy Brown and Frederic Jameson. This forum seeks to stimulate new reflections on Derrida, deconstruction and *Specters of Marx* by considering how the futures past announced by the book have fared after an eventful quarter century. In this sixth group of contributions, Jean Tible sketches how spectrality and phantasmagoria continue to animate recent inheritances of both Derrida's and Marx's texts so as to inspire novel thought-struggles; Dirce Eleonora Nigro Solis considers Derrida's engagement with the question 'Whither Marxism?' as a politico-philosophical model of deviation that provokes the displacement of Marxian axioms and a renovation of Marxist and deconstructive thinking for the period of neoliberalism; finally, Michael Shapiro traces a different detour in Derrida's thought and shows that Derrida's deviant reading of Freud's construction of repression opens up the past and the archive to non-official constructions of collective history.

Keywords: Derrida, Jacques; Marx, Karl; revolution; political struggle; deconstruction; democracy; Freud, Sigmund; repression; archive.

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Our Contemporary Spectres – Thought–Struggle in Marx and Derrida

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translated by Nicolas Allen

State of the world

Jacques Derrida surprised many readers in the early 1990s with the publication of *Spectres de Marx: l'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale*. In fact, with that work, he took the entire historical conjuncture unawares. Derrida's book was contemporary with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the decline of official Marxism. The end of a cycle that began with the 1917 Russian Revolution had ushered in a seemingly newfound obsession with announcing the end of Marx (and Marxism). That gesture has a storied history: the liberal Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce had already in 1907 declared that Marx was dead to all humanity (Löwy 2002: 16). And thirty years after Marx's death, the dominant classes (and their thinkers) were scrambling to exorcise the spectre heralded by him and Friedrich Engels almost 170 years ago: the spectre of revolution.

There were five principal actors in 19th century international (European) relations: Prussia, England, France, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As Marx pointed out, all five of them were obsessed with a 'sixth power' threatening Europe: the movement, the spectre, revolution, communism (Halliday 1994). We can now say that this idea, the momentum and faith in the profound transformation of existing social relations, spread to and permeated a considerable part of humanity while giving way to important conquests: social, political, cultural, and economic rights, the defeat of Nazi-fascism, and so on. However, those victories brought their own tragedies, and the three main left-wing political strategies on offer (social democracy, so-called 'real socialism,' national liberation) could not fulfill the dreams on which they were premised. Thus, three entangled elements – defeat, mourning and struggle – will be the point of departure for Derrida's reflection in *Specters*. We shall return later to this point.

The early 1990s were also marked by the narrative of American victory in the Cold War. History itself had supposedly come to an end – the entire world was now liberal and democratic, according to the organic intellectuals (Fukuyama 1992) and representatives of power (George H. Bush and his new world order). Derrida would in fact criticise both figures in *Specters* and in other works, taking them as the new evangelists of the order. But the last 25 years has proven that ideology to be entirely mistaken: in the wake of triumphal liberalism, Seattle's anti-globalisation movement and the emergence of a new global demos; 9/11, the war on terror and the security turn in global politics; the massive climate crisis, which only promises to grow more serious; the 2008 economic crisis, followed by democratic insurrections and the return of the far right. Derrida poses in *Specters* a similar dilemma to that of his colleague Jacques Rancière in *La mésentente* (1999 [1995]): to

the extent that we are all democrats, has democracy been emptied of its *potentia*? What is democracy in this new context? How can we think-create a new democracy? What are its material foundations?

Curiously, the Berlin Wall was not the only political-ideological edifice (along with state socialism) that would collapse in the period. The end of times is not exclusively a problem for the Left. We are living through a period where the diverse 'ends of the world' tend to overlap and our hopes have failed to materialise. Few still believe that capitalism can coexist with representative democracy, the welfare state and equal opportunities: one need only observe the numerous (countless, even) revolts and upheavals taking place across the globe in this still-early millennium. Today, the eclipse of *capitalism with a human face* is related to another fundamental issue: 'from 1750 to the present, modern rights and freedoms were expanded through the use of fossil fuels. Our freedoms are thus concentrated around energy' (Chakrabarty 2009). For centuries there was a powerful consensus that Earth's natural processes were so strong that no human action could truly transform them. But we have managed it (Danovski and Viveiros de Castro 2014). We did so by destroying forests and burning fossil fuels, turning ourselves into geological agents: our era is the *Anthropocene*. Or better still, our mode of production has become a geological agent: our era is the *Capitalocene*. As Marx (and Engels 1969 [1848]) said in the *Communist Manifesto* – albeit in a different context –, our present situation recalls the image of a sorcerer who has lost control of his own spell.

Struggle, inheritance, spirit

Derrida's decision, to reread and rethink Marx, merits a closer look. What Derrida maintained then was the necessity of (re)working the classic revolutionary. Considered *démodé*, and with more rigid, orthodox Marxist readings in decline, a space had opened to revisit Marx with more freedom of imagination and escape the weight of immutable truths. Another philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, had around the same time planned on writing *Grandeur de Marx*, but unfortunately that work never materialised. Should we be baffled that the 'post-modern' author of deconstruction turned his attention to Marx at that moment in history? Yes and no. As Derrida himself stated, there are various points of contact between deconstruction and Marxism – deconstruction would be, in his words, faithful in some ways to Marxism. This same idea is developed later in Derrida's *Specters*, where he asserts that 'deconstruction has never had any sense or interest, in my view at least, except as a radicalisation, which is to say also *in the tradition* of a certain Marxism, in a certain *spirit of Marxism*.' That is to say, a fundamental connection is established and created between the two, considering 'a radicalisation is always indebted to the very thing it radicalises' (1993: 95, 115-116).

In discussion with the intellectual and militant Daniel Bensaïd, Derrida (2005: 118) says that, 'like all people of my generation, without being Marxist, I have naturally been nurtured by the Marxist heritage and I have tried to say this when it was untimely to do so.' Dedicating his attention to Marx at that precise moment meant a *prise de parti* (taking

sides) – thinking with Marx, without being a political intervention is a senseless undertaking. When he received the invitation from Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg to speak at the Colloquium at the University of California, Derrida (2006 [1993]: 63-65) says that he initially hesitated, and that he only accepted despite how limited were his competencies in the area – accepting an invitation not to give a philosophical and erudite speech, but rather so as not to flee a responsibility and to take advantage of an opportunity to reflect on and share his thoughts about the linked responsibility of spectres.

Derrida's position is connected to a particular reading of Marxism. There are few texts from the philosophic tradition, writes Derrida, that are more in need of reading in the contemporary age than Marx and Engels, especially since those authors themselves exhorted to bear witness to the historicity and aging of their own theses. Derrida contemplates Marx –Marxism – as a duty rather than something already given. He thus asks 'what other thinker has ever issued a similar warning in such an explicit fashion,' and 'who has ever called for the *transformation* to come of his own theses? [...] And so as to incorporate in advance, beyond any possible programming, the unpredictability of new knowledge, new techniques, and new political gives?' (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 14).

As per the classic formulation of Jean-Paul Sartre, this is Marxism as the insuperable horizon of our age; but only if that horizon involves the multiplicity of Marxisms, their constant renewal and confrontation with realities, struggles and new capitalist-state developments. 'There will be no future without this. Not without Marx, no future without Marx, without the memory and the inheritance of Marx: in any case of a certain Marx, of his genius, of at least one of his spirits' (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 14), so says Derrida, again insisting on a return to Marx – the multiple and heterogeneous Marx and Marxisms. That same actuality forces us to confront a living Marx/ism, which in turn means evading the bureaucratic machinery that prospers when that liveliness grows weak. Paradoxically, some of the movements and their Marxist formulations placed their faith in the bourgeoisie, in its science and knowledge, to which they added a conception of an external nature and the corresponding idea of a pristine universal subject.

The struggle necessarily passes through the recognition of these mistaken and sterile pathways, to develop new (political) inventions. This is Marx's paradox: inescapable yet always gathering dust. Derrida formulates this problem by noting that Marxism remains both indispensable and insufficient, the key being to allow for its transformation according to new conditions and the analysis of new economic and political causalities. Constant openings and transformations, radically critical and auto-critical, revaluations and self-interpretations, therein lies the power of Marxism. There too is the site where 'the spirit of the Marxist critique situates itself, not the spirit that one would oppose to its letter, but the one which supposes the very movement of its letter' (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 216). The conference (that occasioned Derrida's book) posed the question *Whither Marxism?* For Derrida, Marx is always part of the conjuncture, where the question is to think the present with Marxism, in other words, the paths of transformation and understanding of reality – Marx grasped the new age (proletariat, capitalism) and even better, the embodied, monstrous spectre, that always sowed fear.

Spectres and struggles

Derrida places strong emphasis on the idea of a legacy, connecting that idea to the reading of *Hamlet* with which he opens his book and that serves as one of its through lines. To summon and invoke the vitality of Marx: assuming the legacy means issuing an appeal, a call. It is a legacy that is transformed so as to 'assume its most "living" part, which is to say, paradoxically, that which continues to put back on the drawing board the question of life, spirit, or the spectral, of life-death beyond the opposition between life and death.' This enterprise concerns more than the so-called Marxists since, for Derrida (2006 [1993: 67, 113]), 'whether they wish it or know it or not, all men and women, all over the earth, are today to a certain extent the heirs of Marx and Marxism.'

The originality of the Derridian reading of Marx is that there the capitalist world is grasped as an enchanted one, in clear contrast with the 'objectivist' or 'rationalist' readings. On first glance, Marx (1987 [1867]: 47) says in volume I of *Capital*, the commodity appears to be an obvious enough thing, trivial even, but analysing it more closely we see that it is 'a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.' Taken as use-value, the mystery goes unnoticed, and the only thing one perceives is its nature as the fruit of labour, or something to satisfy human needs. However, Marx continues, hardly does the commodity character come into focus and the thing becomes 'sensible super-sensible.' That mystery is based on the fact that the commodity reveals to human beings the social character of their labour 'as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things,' providing them with an image of the social relation mediating between producers and labour as a social relation between objects, separate from producers ('Through this quid pro quo the products of labour become commodities and natural supernatural or social things') (Marx 1987 [1867]: 47).

Marx relates this back to the 'mist-enveloped regions of the religious world,' where human products also appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own. He proposes the name *fetishism* for the phenomenon in which human products enter the world market, a fetishism of the products of labour, i.e. commodities. Value converts 'every product into a social hieroglyphic.' This is a social relation of production, no matter if it presents itself in the guise of 'natural objects with strange social properties.' Marx (1867: 48-49, 52-53) tries to adopt the commodity's point of view: 'Could commodities themselves speak, they would say: Our use value may be a thing that interests men. It is no part of us as objects. What, however, does belong to us as objects, is our value. Our natural intercourse as commodities proves it.'

Exchange is decisive, since it is there the value of the products of labour are consummated. Marx appeals to the language of theatre to describe the appearance of commodities as a stage entrance. As Derrida (2006 [1993]: 197) would say: 'The autonomy lent to commodities corresponds to an anthropomorphic projection. The latter *inspires* the commodities, it breathes the spirit into them, a human spirit, the spirit of a *speech* and the spirit of a *will*.'

Capitalism is the production of phantasms, illusions, simulacra, apparitions. Marx (quoted in Löwy 1996: 16) grasped capitalism as a 'a religion of the everyday,' describing capital with the image of 'a Moloch demanding the whole world as a sacrifice' and progress in the form of a 'monstrous pagan god that only wanted to drink nectar in the skulls of the dead.' His critique of political economy invokes forms of idolatry such as Baal or Mammon. Marx appeals to a whole spectral vocabulary – the word *spectre* already appeared three times in the first paragraphs of the *Manifesto* – and he describes money 'in the figure of appearance or simulacrum, more exactly of the ghost' (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 55). In *Capital*, the printing of money by the state is seen as 'magic of money' (Marx 1987 [1867]: 64), the state appears as an apparition and exchange-value as 'a hallucination, a *properly* spectral apparition' (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 56). For Derrida, *The German Ideology* constitutes the greatest phantasmagoria in the history of philosophy.

According to Philippe Pignarre and Isabelle Stengers (2011 [2005]: 34), modern concepts fail to capture the true nature of capitalism, since 'modernity has imprisoned us in categories that are much too poor, oriented as they are around knowledge, error and illusion.' How then can subjection be combined with liberty? For Pignarre and Stengers, the capacity to do so 'is something whose frightening power and the need to cultivate appropriate means of protection against is known by the most diverse of peoples, except us moderns. Its name is sorcery.' Capitalism is configured to be a magical system without sorcerers, operating 'in a world which judges that sorcery is only a simple "belief," a superstition that therefore doesn't necessitate any adequate means of protection'; a world with a careful division between those who believe (barbarians, savages) and those who know (moderns). However, to think that protection is unnecessary is 'the most frightening naivety' (Pignarre and Stengers 2011 [2005]: 35, 40). Classic colonialism may no longer exist, but coloniality is just as present as ever.

In Marx's approach to capitalism, the world is 'bewitched' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 17). The 'sorcerer hypothesis' may seem less strange if we consider that Marx's objective was to demonstrate the falsity of bourgeois categories, veiled as they were by abstractions, consensus, free opinion, a world supposedly without slavery where workers are free sell their labour power, which is remunerated according to a (fair) market price. A system that in actual fact involves the opposite: less 'a pseudo-contract – that of your time at work against your salary – but of a capture "body and soul."' Marx's critique questions the categories that are taken for normal and rational, like his repudiation of capitalist abstractions, all of them fictions that 'bewitch thought.' A critique and practice inspired by Marx's example will thus lead to a 'diagnosis of what paralyzes and poisons thinking and renders us vulnerable to capture' (Pignarre and Stengers 2011 [2005]: 135, 43).

Capitalism turns out to be a master illusionist, and Marx's objective becomes then to make explicit its processes and to show us how to combat it. If capitalism is a bewitched system, the struggle against it can be seen as a counter-spell, a fight to break the spell. That being said, how to imagine such a process of '*spell-unbinding*' (a process of both struggle and thought)? By taking critique as the movement towards thinking and feeling differently, by refusing normality as a weapon against the sorcerer's advances. If such spirits, ghosts and others are present in the analysis of political-economic powers, they also

arise in struggle-creations. Evidently, Marx did not believe in spells, but the categories he proposed proved decisive in the disenchantment of the capitalist armoury and its production of consensus – his categories remain ‘a protection against the operation of capitalist capture’ (Pignarre and Stengers 2011 [2005]: 54). As the key instrument, struggle – ‘the subject of historical cognition is the battling, oppressed class itself,’ wrote Walter Benjamin (1999 [1940]: 251) in his ‘On the Concept of History’ – creates new relations, new dimensions, opens spaces, tackles new issues (some of which were hitherto prohibited), forges instruments, bodies and angles from which they may be applied.

Following Derrida, Marx’s thinking was like a conjuring, capable of being grasped as a conspiracy, mutual commitment, or secret oath, to struggle against all higher powers, but also as ‘the magical incantation destined to *evoke*, to bring forth with the voice, to *convoke* a charm or a spirit’ (Derrida 2006 [1993]: 50). This particular understanding also raises the importance of indigenous science and struggles, as evidenced by *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman* by Davi Kopenawa (in collaboration with Bruce Albert 2013): learning from those that have resisted and re-existed for more than five centuries all the plagues described by Derrida. There, revolution becomes a spell-unbinding. And in order to implement it, to ritualise it, to resist and protect it, the first step is to learn from cosmopolitical struggle (where the modern distinction between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ was never operative). Kopenawa offers a powerful cosmopolitical critique of what he calls ‘the people of merchandise’: after consuming *yākoāna* and entering into a visionary trance, the shamans are capable of making the acquired *xapiripë* (image-spirits) descend and dance, to maintain the flow of life alongside the spirits of the forest (images of the trees, the leaves, the bejuco, but also the fish, the bees, the turtles, in sum, the population of that space). (This argument, and its tensions, are further developed in my book *Marx selvagem* (2019).)

War and revolutions

In the 25 years since the publication of *Specters*, we have seen a sharp decline in democratic possibilities and a strengthening of the ten plagues cited in the book (rampant inequality, rocketing number of refugees and deportees, indebtedness and social insecurity, weapons of mass destruction and graft). These plagues, at the time of Derrida’s writing, already belied the apostles of the new world order. Several decades earlier, in the context of the 1968 global revolution, followed by the oil crisis and the subsequent economic crisis, the dominant classes decided to put a halt to any type of imaginary movement or democratic practice, opting instead for warfare. This gave way to an era of authoritarian liberalism, a response to the crisis of governability (Chamayou 2018). A strong state for a ‘free economy,’ a state of war with its citizens that, in the North, applies the type of measures once reserved for the colonies (Harcourt 2018).

That the entire world is facing these dilemmas (granted, with different intensities) only serves to reinforce the actuality of internationalism – the bonds of solidarity and collective political creations among the different peoples of the world. Today’s insurrections, erupting in every corner of the globe, communicated and mutually influenced (Graeber

2013; Butler 2015), are these possibly an expression of the democracy-to-come of which Derrida speaks (a clear contrast with democracy celebrated by the existing powers)? A democracy inseparable from justice, as the Franco-Algerian philosopher is at pains to emphasise. Would this be a spectral democracy? *Spectres de Marx* pays homage to South African communist militant Chris Hani, assassinated for his political activity. As the testimony of Débora Maria da Silva, founder of Mães de Maio (an organisation of mothers of youths murdered by the Brazilian state), indicates: they want to kill us, but they don't know that our dead are also fighting by our side. Débora was stricken by the murder of her son Rogério, a victim of Brazil's Military Police, that she nearly died of grief. One night, while lying meekly in a hospital bed, her son appeared to her and heaved her out of bed and towards life. Débora thought that she may have been hallucinating, but the following day while she was bathing, she felt a pain. Looking at her arms, she saw the marks where her son had clutched her and raised her out of bed (Caramante 2016). Today, Débora and her comrades remind us and invoke: they have the power, but we have the *potentia*.

Derrida's *Spectre* would also become the inspiration for a play, *Karl Marx Théâtre Inédit*, which premiered in Paris in March 1997. On the occasion, Derrida (1997) made a political statement protesting against the disgraceful law codifying 'délict d'hospitalité' (crime of hospitality), which allowed for authorities to investigate, convict and even incarcerate those who give shelter to foreigners whose status was deemed illegal. Derrida's response and appeal: unconditional hospitality in the face of the police state (Derrida 2003: 127). This issue would have been familiar to Marx – a wretch, immigrant, living underground the better part of his life: a *Marrano* Marx (Derrida 1999). The refugee, from a family of rabbis (on his mother's and father's sides), living at the borders of nations and religions, seeking to grasp the new fluxes of a dynamic reality while calling on the collective messiah of communism, driven by an active knowledge that followed in a long lineage of non-Jewish Jews Spinoza/Heine/Rosa Luxemburg/Trotsky/Freud (Deutscher 2017 [1958]). This too is a decisive dimension that Derrida (2006 [1993]: 211) considers essential in Marx, an indelible mark of his legacy: the 'always revolutionary' messianic dimension. Conjuring as a plea issued by the voices and actions of those no longer present, but still latent –the spectral communism and democracy-to-come. The long promised creative rebellion, the smile of the spectre (Negri 1999), the joy of a creative, ethical and aesthetic *potentia*.

Specters of Marx in the Deviation from Deconstruction, or How Not to Do Justice to Marx?

Dirce Eleonora Nigro Solis

More than two decades have passed since the publication of *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, effectively 27 years in 2020, the expanded fruit of two conferences Derrida gave at the University of Riverside, California, in 1993, on the subject. ‘Whither Marxism?’, ‘Where does Marxism go?’

Derrida’s speech was devoted to South African Chris Hanu, indefatigable at that time in the fight against apartheid and murdered as a ‘communist’ ten days earlier. The Franco-Algerian thinker, as is customary to him, by the posture of deconstruction, considering the Colloquium theme, that is, discussing the meaning and fate of Marx and Marxism in the present world, he accepts the provocation contained in the theme ‘Whither Marxism?’, considering the possible game between whither and wither (to extinguish, to die) of the same sound but of different spelling, which produces a new meaning for the expression ‘Wither marxism?’: i.e., Does Marxism perish?

However, I will not deal here with the critique of the themes that Derrida develops in *Specters*. For Marxist specialists, perhaps, this question posed to Derrida, who has always been said to be non-Marxist, has never been effective in the sense of thinking about the destination of Marxian proposals and Marxism itself in its practice. But then, at that moment after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Derrida already has the full perception of it. Hence the pertinence of his observations at the time of *Specters of Marx* conferences. And even more: To read Derrida and his *Specters*, one must understand that he is not offering a reading method for Marxian writings or Marxism, he is rather highlighting where and how in Marxian and Marxist texts, there may be a deconstruction, an unsuspected, unexpected or not previously defined displacement. Deconstruction is an event that moves in the displacement of the logocentric pairs, in the deviation from the privilege of logos, of the totalizing notions, of the epistemological, scientific or philosophical postures that have as their objective a predicted or estimated purpose. Derrida speaks another language than that of logocentrism. So, to get into the Derridean spirit one must keep in mind that he does not board on the posture of totalizing or finalizing criticism.

As he himself once said in an interview for the newspaper *Nouvel Observateur*, *Specters* is an ‘insurrection’: look, for example, at some terms or expressions he has already used in the chapter titles: ‘Injunctions of Marx’; ‘Conjuring—Marxism’; ‘...Double Barricade (Impure ‘impure impure history of ghosts’)’ (parodying St. Max of *The German Ideology*); ‘Apparition of the Inapparent,’ etc., where he parades spectrality from phenomenological incursions into the texts of Marx and Max Stirner. There is a whole spectrology to be considered there.

*Specter*¹ is for Derrida a notion perfectly in tune with the ambivalence and aporetic dimension of discourses and texts, so dear to deconstruction. In short, it is neither intelligible nor sensitive, neither dead nor alive, and like the quasi-concepts² explored by

the author, the specter is capable of resisting the hierarchical conceptual oppositions of philosophy.

The specter appears in many Marxian lines, but we all know it is not the primary concern of Marx and Engels, nor in *The Communist Manifesto* (where it is present at its very beginning, in the exhortation for the transformation of the bourgeois world: *Ein Gespenst geht um Europa- das Gespenst des Kommunismus* – A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism (see Marx and Engels 1969 [1848])).³ In *Capital*, the specters are used not as rhetorical figures, not simply to speak of phantasmagorical ideas, but as political or political-economic denunciation of bourgeois society and capitalist material production (commodity fetishism, commodity circulation, etc.). The phantasmagoria of the resurrection of the dead and the history of repetition appears in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels evoke ghosts and specters in criticism of German ideologues (Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner etc), in order to free philosophical-political analysis from the ghosts. In *The German Ideology*, the denunciation of the specters arises in Marx's discussion in 'St. Max' about the phantasmagoria of human productions, of the human essence, of the unique and its own, concerning *The Ego and Its Own* of Max Stirner. For Marx, the discard of specters, ghosts, or ghostly situations is necessary for the effective modification of reality, of concrete, of material production, and is secondary to the main Marxian arguments against bourgeois society and capitalism.

Derrida, however, will be rightly interested in this situation of deviation from the Marxian text, making the question of spectrality the main thread of his *Specters of Marx* and arguing that perhaps Marx cannot get rid of ghosts as easily as he thinks is possible. This deviant posture, always being in the deviation allowing that which is simply supplementary, or even secondary, to have a prominent place in the discussion, is one of the characteristics of deconstructive thinking. A thought that is not, therefore, tied to hierarchies.⁴

More specifically Derrida will insist on the spectrality present in the Western world, in addition to *specters* to which Marx refers in *The Communist Manifesto*, *The German Ideology*, *Capital* or *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. It is in this scenario of 'phantasmality' that the discussion of the *specters* appears in Marx, in his relation to Max Stirner, and as a deconstructive concern in Derrida. Derrida's sharp eye will highlight them, putting Western society as heiress to some extent from these *specters* or from spectrality. Marx's speech, therefore, is full of *specters*, which Marx tries all the time to get rid of. Deconstruction itself is heiress, according to Derrida, to some of Marx's *specters*, as will be made clear in the development of his work.

Derrida criticizes the current attempt to neutralize Marx, making him merely a character in the academic-philosophical debate: 'It is not just a philosopher's reading that I do, it is a reading that protests against a certain philosophical reappropriation of Marx' (Derrida cited in Milan 2004: 55).

Nothing is more current than the relationship with Marxism today in societies impregnated with neoliberalism.⁵ The *specters* are returners (*les revenants*), Marx's specters

return, but to a place from which they might never have actually left. In this sense, Marx's ideas continue to obsess. However, one must be aware that the *specters* on return are never the same; they are not exactly the same, but take on new forms and new challenges; they are Difference; more specifically they appear as *différance* (with *a*), the quasi-concept that displaces from *différence* (with *e*) in French, this last as apanage of logocentrism that always refers to the One, to identity. *Différance* would be the game of differences without referral to unity and wholeness.

In the traditional sense, however, a *specter* haunts, obsesses, attracts and drives away at the same time, terrifies. Thus, traditional ontology gives way to *hauntology* triggering a game with the English expression from to haunt, a verb that designates to startle, to scare, to appear, to visit, this unexpected visit that frightens, terrifies and which has its French correspondent in the verb *hânter* (obsess). *Hauntology* would be produced, then, as Derrida wants, from the reading of the specters; it would be what as an ontology would realize the being that, however, is no longer captured by it (tradition speaks all the time of the specters, but does not think them, according to Derrida).

Hauntology will then evoke the specters, the ghosts, the spirits that besiege Marx's work and will be worked on as such by the German author and could be understood, albeit improperly speaking, as a kind of 'science of what returns,' or rather, of what returns in the form of inheritance.

In bringing up the specters regarding Marx and Marxism, Derrida exhorts in his Derridean way to learn to live with the specters, to get along with them, so that no one will forget them or expel them, nor exorcise them, which would result in an ethical-political dimension of memory, generation and, we insist, of inheritance. Derrida draws attention to the fact that today we increasingly see spectral logic in the present, although the returning *specter* is not just one more like us, like Hamlet's father, but displacement, for example, for the media environment or even for work (through the virtualization of private/public space, television news, telecommunication, internet). Then, it is no longer surprising or amazing to talk about or live with specters.

Specters of Marx was the way Derrida found to say that by following the 'spirit of Marx' and the specters that return with it, it is possible to combat the anti-Communist saga – already beginning to spread throughout the world when he was still alive (he died in 2004) – of a people increasingly fooled by the immediacy of the media and nowadays by the dissemination of fake news.

But surely this does not characterize a return to Marx in an orthodox way, for *specters* when they return are not identical, they are never the same thing. See the proposition immortalized by *The Eighteenth Brumaire*: what occurs the first time arises as tragedy, the second time returns as farce: 'Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce' (Marx 1969: 25).

One of Derrida's objectives with *Specters of Marx* is to take account of the 'political duel' that emerges from today's anti-Marxist discourse. With a well-explored disagreement with free market capitalism in line with parliamentary democracy, Derrida resorts

to specters to denounce among others the hegemony of the neoliberal and neocapitalist perspective as a solution to the serious world problems at the economic and political-social level.

Derrida thinks it is possible to combat the 'new world order' of the market that is leading populations of most places to an unsustainable situation of poverty, misery and hunger. A sustained 'new order' – note the paradox – under the auspices of economic warfare, interethnic warfare, foreign debt, under the exclusion and deportation of exiles, stateless persons and immigrants. He calls them 'pests,' an increasingly evident identification.

In this sense we are all heirs of Marx. In addition to the *specters* already pointed out, Derrida shows that so many others refract and can be deployed from the work of Marx.

Among them we highlight, first, the specters of communism and Marxism. The first sentence of the Manifesto – quoted above – historically has known developments that are reflected in the various types of Marxism. We can't deepen this theme here, but we would like to point out, however, that some of the Marxists of classical positions – Stalinism, Leninism, Trotskyism, and so on – have already made various criticisms of the Derridean reading, but from a logocentric point of view that it not that of the Franco-Algerian. Derrida always works at the deviation from these placements, so he speaks another language, always in opening, never complete, the language *to come* (*à venir*).

According to Derrida, *The Manifesto* will urge to transform into living reality what at that moment is spectral: the world dimension of an association of workers (Derrida 1994a: 139, 1994b: 126) and the founding of a universal communist party, the Communist International which will be 'the final incarnation, the real presence of the specter, thus the end of the spectral' (Derrida 1994a: 140, 1994b: 128).

The issue here, again, is quite complex. We would have to investigate the whole proposal of the Communist Internationals, which is not the objective of this work. Nor can we get into the discussion of anti-Stalinism, for example, which seems to be Derrida's subtle position (recalling his situation during his arbitrary arrest in Prague in 1981, accused of drug trafficking, when in fact he attended a colloquium not authorized by the government). All of this deserves a thorough study apart and is not exhaustively contemplated in the work in question. The deconstructive deviations that appear in *Specters of Marx* point us to a very rich work of possibilities of unfolding. So we can only point out these aspects quite incompletely here.

We clarify, however, Derrida's understanding of his proposition of a *New International* in *Specters of Marx*. We remind that *New International* is part of the subtitle of the work in question. In Chapter 3, 'Wears and Tears (Tableau of an ageless world)' the New International is justified by Derrida as having to enable 'profound transformation, projected over a long term, of international law, of its concepts, and its field of intervention [...] international law should extend and diversify its field to include in it [...] the worldwide economic and social field, beyond the sovereignty of States and of the phantom-States' (Derrida 1994a: 116, 1994b: 105).

It is the suffering men and women who will constitute the New International, a body without organization, without doctrine or ideology, bound by 'affinities' among those who do not even know what a Socialist International really means. Even so, the union of these

differences could be compatible with a new state of international law that would oppose the 'new world order' so that it can fight and overcome it. Derrida names this as a *democracy to come*.

The New International is for Derrida (1994a: 117, 1994b: 106), a reality to come⁶, just as

[A] link of affinity, suffering, and hope, a still discreet, almost secret link [...] an untimely link, without status, without title, and without name, barely public even if it is not clandestine, without contract, 'out of joint,' without coordination, without party, without country, without national community [...] without co-citizenship, without common belonging to a class.

And continues Derrida (1994a: 117-118, 1994b: 106-107):

The name of New International is given here to what calls to the friendship of an alliance without institution among those who, even if they no longer believe or never believed in the Socialist-Marxist International, in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the messianic-eschatological role of the universal union of the proletarians of all lands, continue to be inspired by at least one of the spirits of Marx or of Marxism [...] and in order to ally themselves, in a new, concrete, and real way.

We also highlight Marx's specters themselves, treated from a thorough and deep reading by Derrida, not only of the *Manifesto*, but of other works (*Capital*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, *The German Ideology*).

Derrida (2011: n.p.) identifies, at that moment, in Marx's thinking and according to his own Derridean words collected in an interview with Daniel Bensaïd from 1999, 'a movement of regression or fear in the face of the spectral itself. Especially in his controversy with Stirner. Fear from which reintroduces a desire that I call ontological and appeals to the real effectiveness and the conspiracy of the specter.' From Marx's point of view, is it really fear?

It is, above all, in the chapter on The phenomenological 'conjuring trick' (Skamotage) or 'Apparition of the Inapparent' in *Specters of Marx*, that Jacques Derrida presents the controversy aroused by Marx in 'St. Max' of *The German Ideology* regarding Max Stirner's treatment of human and social. Issues such as individuality, themes such as desire and body, the problem of the foundation of political ideals and moral obligation are underprivileged because of the main interest of Marx's thought, but they feature prominently in Stirner's conception. Derrida will bring this dimension of the Marx/Stirner discussion, considering Marx's statements in *The German Ideology* regarding St. Max's *The Ego and Its Own* (2009). It is a question of investigating this issue from the point of view of deconstruction considering the critique of the phantasmatic in both authors, since it is a discussion about specters.

Finally, we cannot overlook Derrida's concern about doing justice to Marx. This comes in the wake of a justification against liberalism and non-Marxist postures of the whole order.

The author says in an interview with the *Nouvel Observateur*, 'Any reference to Marx has become, as it were, cursed. I concluded that this showed a desire to exorcise it, to spirit it away, that deserved to be analysed and that also deserved to provoke insurrection' (Derrida in Peeters 2013: 466).

Derrida understands that his writing in *Specters* goes in the direction of doing justice against everything that the mainly non-Marxian and non-Marxist attitudes of that time tried to minimize or dampen Marx's contribution to contemporary socio-political thought and practices. What Derrida means, ultimately, recalling, for example, his criticisms in *Specters* directed at Fukuyama and others, is that you cannot treat Marx as a kind of 'dead dog.'⁷

And although Marx's ideas about society and politics, political economy, seem to be placed in parentheses for some others, phenomenologically these ideas return, they are *returnees* and as spectrality and specters they are evidently real.

So, here is a challenge for the reader and Derrida (1994a: 46-47) is taxative there: Everyone has a debt to Marx. But what is the extent of this debt? And how not to do justice to Marx ?

The Political Re-inflection of Psychic Repression

Michael J. Shapiro

Derrida's Specters: a reprise

I have been engaged and challenged by Derrida's texts throughout my scholarly career, and have been especially edified by the way his approach to writing articulates contingency, resists closure, and encourages reflection on the ambiguities and aporias of intelligibility. With respect to the latter, he makes it evident that those who aspire to forge momentary communities of sense can do so only by conjuring away ambiguities and repressing incoherence. For purposes of this brief (re)encounter, I begin by recalling some details of my first engagement with his *Specters of Marx* (in which I apply his concept of hauntology). I then move on to some recent work in which I engage some of Derrida's other texts – *The Post Card*, 'White Mythology,' and *Archive Fever*.

In an essay analyzing the ideational stresses experienced by Christian ecumenicalists, certified public accounts, and security theorists in late twentieth century (all of whom had been involved in adjusting their discourses to ‘globalization’), I wrote, ‘as they turn their focus on the changing worlds around them, they are haunted by what is within [and added] [...] in the process of coping with what they construe as a new world (dis)order, these [assemblages] must repress anew – or in Derrida’s preferred, Marx-inspired imagery, “conjure away” – the aspects of inner disorder and disjuncture that their consolidating languages of order deny’ (Shapiro 1999: 95).⁸ Explicating Derrida’s concept of hauntology, I suggested,

[T]he specters central to Derrida’s notion of hauntology undermine the stability of various forms of collective being, which are always already afflicted by their repressions of the arbitrary events by which they have been produced and consolidated...In seeking separation from what is foreign or outside, they repress the foreign territories within, as they efface the ambiguities involved in ascribing a stable territory to themselves (Shapiro 1999: 95-96).

Derrida’s contribution in *Specters*, as in other critical interventions, is to extract the instabilities afflicting the media genres that shape subjects of enunciation and the uncertainties of reception of the addressees that are targeted by their enunciations. Heeding that contribution, I endeavored to specify the conjuring acts of Christian ecumenicalists, who since St. Paul’s contribution to the creation of their ecumene, have generated a variety of discursive practices (dogmatics, apologetics, kerigmatics, among others) to preserve their authority and ideational coherence. Having referred to ‘the challenge of a new world of uncertainty’ facing Christian ecumenicalists (as ‘believers’ in a wide variety of ideational formations proliferate), I addressed the adjustments to one of their primary discursive practices, kerigmatics, the issuing of proclamations.

Derrida and the letter

Little did I know at the time that I would subsequently be analyzing Paul’s epistles (as part of a current project on the contribution of media genres to zealous belief disseminations), especially from the point of view of the discursive practice that shaped them, the proclamation. As I have pursued what Martin Heidegger refers to as the ‘Situation,’ within which Paul’s epistles met their addressees (more elaborately put as the ‘factual life experience’ in which Paul was situated) (see Heidegger 2010), I was reminded that here as well, Derrida’s thinking deserves special attention. As one attuned to textual mediation, he had a nuanced grasp of the vagaries of epistolarity, i.e., the uncertainties surrounding the situation within which the letter as a media genre operates.

To apply Derridean insights to the Pauline project, I have begun by asking what it is that Paul proclaimed? Alain Badiou’s summary, which evokes Paul’s proposition – ‘while the Jews are looking for signs and the Greeks are looking for wisdom, Christians *declare*

Christ crucified' (see Badiou 2003: 58) – offers useful concision: Paul 'requires only the event' (Badiou 2003: 59) The word 'declare' is especially significant for an understanding of Paul's discursive intervention. His style is proclamatory (kerygmatic), which is the discursive genre Heidegger emphasizes in his lectures on Paul's letters: 'In analyzing the character of the letter, one must take as the only point of departure [...] content proclaimed, and the material and conceptual character [which is] [...] to be analyzed from out of the basic phenomenon of proclamation' (Heidegger 2010: 55). If we heed Berel Lang's review of modes of philosophical writing – 'expository,' 'performative,' and 'reflexive' (Lang 1975: 266) – we can identify Paul's approach as performative (in the sense that J. L. Austin famously explicated performative discourse, especially its persuasive or 'perlocutionary' force) (see Austin 1962). However as Austin insisted, the performative force of an utterance is tied to its context, which in Paul's case relates to the situation of his interlocutory encounters. Alert to that necessity, Heidegger observed the way Paul's proclamations unfold in specific encounters. He notes for example, 'The proclamation is for Paul characterized formally by an intervention in the knowledge of the Thessalonians at a particular moment' (Heidegger 2010: 70). Nevertheless, what one must add to Heidegger's interpretive foray into Paul's encounters is that his intervention is mediated by the letter as a medium. As a result, we have to ask about the technological conditions of possibility for Paul's letters to be constructed and delivered.

Two stand out: the road system within which he moved and the media technologies he had available. Turning first to the road system:

The first two centuries of the Christian era were great days for a traveler, writes historian Lionel Casson: 'He could make his way from the shores of the Euphrates to the border between England and Scotland without crossing a foreign frontier' [and] New Testament archaeologist W. M. Ramsay concludes, 'The Roman roads were probably at their best during the first century after Augustus had put an end to war and disorder... Thus St. Paul traveled in the best and safest period' (Yamauchi n.d.).

As for the relevant media: alphabetization is the key contributor. In an analysis of language technology in the 1800s, which applies to Paul's epoch as well, Friedrich Kittler writes, 'A simple precondition had to be met before authors could become 'spiritual economists': there had to be a general equivalent for the texts they would spin out' (Kittler 1990: 70). That 'general equivalent,' he notes, was supplied by alphabetization. Paul wrote in Greek. However the Greek alphabet had been adapted from the work of Paul's ethnic group: 'The initial formation of an alphabetic script [was by] Semitic language speakers' (Drucker 2013: 75). As Johanna Drucker points out, 'All known alphabets spring from the same common root, which tracks to the lands of Canaan, Accad, Moab, Byblos, Sinai, and other realms whose names haunt the biblical history of the region of the Middle East' (Drucker 2013: 76).

As for the role of the letter in the emergence of Christianity, it is one of two literary genres. One, the gospel, which 'belongs to the origin of the Christian community. The letter, by contrast, [...] was essentially derivative in function [...] whereas the window of the gospel looks out on Jesus of Nazareth [...] the letter looks out on the conversation between

apostle and community' (White 1983: 434). In the process of formatting his epistles Paul had at his disposal the 'Greek letter,' which was already a well-established communication medium. He also had other genre exemplars ready-to-hand, for example the diatribe characteristic of Epictetus (White 1983: 436), the 'synagogue homily' (White 1983: 439), and Pythagorean terminology, which arguably inspired his 'set of analogical ratios' ('flesh and spirit,' 'body and soul,' and so on).⁹ What then can we add to Paul's situation by turning to Derrida?

The letter: a conceptual detour (about a detour)

The alphabet and letter genre were key enabling resources for Paul's access to the grid of intelligibility within which he communicated the 'event,' – the letter as a narrative-containing assemblage of alphabetic marks connecting the writer with the addressee. Grammatically and narratively, then, it shaped subject positions that locate Paul *vis à vis* his collaborators and addressees (whom he united 'religiously' and 'communally' by referring to them as 'brethren') (White 1983: 437). However, as Derrida points out, there are complex identity issues involved in those relationships. Derrida's allegorical reflection on letters was (like Paul's conversion) prompted by a revelatory event, which Derrida relates in a theological idiom; he refers to the moment as 'my library apocalypse' (Derrida 1987: 11). The event took place in Oxford's Bodleian Library. In one of his 'post cards' to an unnamed addressee, Derrida (1987: 9) writes, 'Have you seen this card, the image on the back of this card? I stumbled on it yesterday in the Bodleian [...] an apocalyptic revelation [...] Socrates writing, writing in front of Plato.' The revelation, prompted by a 'scene of writing' (a scene pervasively treated in Derrida's oeuvre, for example, Derrida 1972), is that 'Socrates comes before Plato – the order between them is the irreversible sequence of heritage' (Ulmer 1981: 47). The reverse of the historical narrative about philosophical patrimony that the image shows accords with Derrida's elaboration of the way philosophy emerges through a variety of popular texts and at the same time confirms his anti-Hege-
lian, anti-teleological view of history.

Derrida's post card about his revelation is sent both to himself and to the philosophical field in which he works. Like Paul's letters, which (as Heidegger points out) express grammatically his, Paul's, situation, his 'having-become' (*Gewordensein*)¹⁰ an apostle as a result of a revelation, Derrida's letter is a revelation-induced, grammatically shaped affirmation of a vocation, a philosophical one in his case. It expresses one of the many pedagogical encounters with the history of philosophy through which he *became* Jacques Derrida, a thinker for whom the task of philosophy is to undermine ideational repression in behalf of a better future to come. Also (and crucially), as Derrida goes on to engage Freud's treatise *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (in a later section of his *The Post Card*), the complex temporal entanglement between life and the anticipation of death is shown to impose detours in Freud's attempt to anchor the pleasure principle (i.e., to establish a truth that Derrida endeavors to question). It's also an entanglement operating in the midst of Paul's letters, which seek to publicize, in a series of epistolary encounters, what life/death

must mean, once and for all, after the Christ event. Of course among what sets Derrida in opposition to Paul is his conceptual resistance to all 'once and for alls.' Moreover, Derrida's reflections on the tensions between what is visibly available on the card's image on the back versus what is written on the front of the discovered post card resonate with but differ from the implications of 'Paul's metaphysical doctrine. Paul explicitly distinguishes an empirical and finite visible from a transcendental and eternal invisible – 'The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal' (2 Corinthians 4: 18) – where the 'target' of belief like the addressee of the letter, as Derrida would have it, is 'beyond reach, out of sight' (Phillips n.d.). Involved in marketing what is 'not seen,' Paul undertakes his self-described apostolic vocation ('Paul always wrote in his capacity as an apostle' (White 1983: 437)), to which he refers at the outset of most of his letters. In contrast, for Derrida, what have been beyond reach and out of sight are specters, ghosts, whose hiding places in things (e.g., commodities among other things) are historically sedimented repressions. They are ghosts that must be allowed back on stage.

While as I noted at the outset, elsewhere I have focused on Derrida's creative encounters with Marx, here, my emphasis is on his encounters with Freud, doubtless also a part of the inspiration for his concept of hauntology, which is a re-inflection the Freudian concept of repression. While for Freud (cited in Derrida 1972: 90), repression 'functions in an *entirely individual way*,'¹¹ for Derrida it operates within contemporary ideational formations and thus involves a *collective* function (for example attempts to dismiss the continuing relevance of Marx's contributions to a critique of the present). Rather than repeating Derrida's rescue of Marx's continuing relevance, however, I want to elaborate the way he extracts himself from Freud's psychoanalytic idiom by displacing a preoccupation with psychic repression with a historical version that enables an ethico-political focus.

In his critical reading of Freud's attempt to save the death instinct. Derrida shows how Freud's theoretical edifice is effectively kerigmatic, i.e., that its truth is merely proclaimed, which allows its mechanisms thereafter to presume the already established truth value of the Freudian schema. As I have noted elsewhere, among Freud's strategies for ascribing truth value to psychoanalysis is his grammar:

A major linguistic strategy with which Freud founds [the psychoanalytic] narrative, in order to use it to validate his interpretive claims, is grammatical. He uses 'the schema' and 'psychoanalysis' as subject/actor in many of his sentences [...] His grammar therefore delivers a kind of objectivity that would be compromised if both 'the schema' and 'psychoanalysis' were [instead] presented as interpretations. (Shapiro 2012: 19)

In *The Post Card* Derrida (1987: 413) make that point epigrammatically: 'Psychoanalysis, supposedly, is found. When one believes one finds it, it is psychoanalysis itself, supposedly, that finds itself.' In another text in which he responded to Freud's polemically-oriented attempts at hermeneutic mastery, Derrida (1984a: 25) refers to Freud's 'hermeneutic compulsion,' his attempt to 'circumscribe a solid context [...] the unity of a field of coherent and determinist interpretation' (Derrida 1984a: 25).

Textuality and the archive

In the process of engaging Freud and re-inflecting the concept of repression, Derrida has turned Freud's texts into what Roland Barthes calls a 'methodological field,' effectively rewriting them in order to enjoin a different, politically inflected temporality (see Barthes 1977). In an early engagement with the 'scene' of Freud's writing (where Freud treats the psyche as a form of writing), Derrida (1972: 91) refers to Freud's immobilizing of the psychic text, treating as if it has 'the serene presence of a statue, of written stone or archive whose signified content might be transported without harm into the element of a different language.'

As Derrida has made himself a student of Freud, reading the texts assiduously and borrowing the binary of what is manifest versus latent, he has re-inflected it to develop a different intellectual practice, one with political/polemical intent aimed at disclosing the history of violence sequestered in seemingly innocent yet solidified institutions and structures. Where Freud aimed his interpretive practice at restoring psychological health to patients, Derrida's 'patient' has been collective history. And his disclosures, like Marx's, locate temporalities hidden in solidities.

Derrida reading Freud

In his reading of Freud in 'Freud and the Scene of Writing,' the process that Derrida recovers is one in which the neurological origin of the psyche gives way to an overall governing metaphor within which 'the whole psychic apparatus is projected,' the *Wunderblock* (magic writing pad). He notes that to account for pathology Freud employs another metaphor, the fraying of the neurological path and incessantly repeats that 'neurological fable' (Derrida 1972: 76). Ultimately then, the model of the truth of psychoanalysis under Derrida's analysis gives way to the version that Nietzsche (1977: 46) famously evoked:

Truth is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation and decoration [...]; truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions, metaphors which have become worn by frequent use and have lost all sensuous vigor.

However Derrida is not content with merely revealing the metaphoric substrate of Freud's epistemological conceits. He shows how the metaphors driving Freud's interpretations interrupt processes with false arrests. For example, for Freud translation is simply a process of transcription of an original text, which is a metaphor that creates a stasis (Nietzsche 1977: 94). For Derrida in contrast metaphors are productive rather than descriptive, an insight he develops elaborately in his essay, 'White Mythology,' where he shows that metaphors are value assertions rather than faithful representations. Because they create rather than merely recognize equivalences, a field of alternative possible figurations remains open (Derrida 1984b).

Ultimately, Derrida resists Freud's attempt at imposing a timelessness on the psyche, suggesting that such an arrest requires 'a certain vulgar conception of time' (Derrida 1972: 97). It's a critique that Derrida repeats in *Specters*. In his response to Francis Fukuyama's simplistic anti-Marx, end-of-history argument, he renders Fukuyama's perspective as a 'dogmatics (that is) attempting to install its worldwide hegemony in paradoxical and suspect conditions' (Derrida 1994b: 68). It fails to distinguish the end of communism from the contribution of Marx's thinking. For Derrida (contra Fukuyama), the 'spirit of Marx's critique' is now more cogent than ever. However, to conclude, I want to emphasize yet again that my concern in this brief engagement is mainly concerned with Derrida's response to Freud, in which – in the spirit of Marx's critique – he temporalizes what Freud makes static and shifts the focus from individual psychic repression to the repressions in official versions of collective history. That shift is especially evident in Derrida's treatment of the 'archive,' in which rather than seeking to unlock past moments of personal history that generate current individual traumas, he is concerned with challenging insitutionalized archivizations in order to resist forms of 'state power' (Steedman 2001: 1162). His approach reopens pasts that have been over-coded in an official archives and have thus been repressed. With attention to the emendations by which archives are assembled and to the media through which they are formed, Derrida shows that they emerge, not as Freud would have it, as mere 'auxiliary representation' but through the conjuring away of pasts. In the last analysis, Derrida does not suggest that we resist mediation. Rather, his ethico-political concern is with resisting those metaphors and other modes of figuration that presume absolute beginnings and thereby allow questions to be closed. In particular, his critique is of a simplistic representational view of the figuration sequestered in narratives of either individual or collective being, which convey assurances that the horrors of the past have been left behind. The representational view of figuration he opposes promotes a will to truth, or what Derrida (1995: 59) (borrowing from Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi) calls a 'deferred obedience,' which is delivered in Freud's writing. Crucially, as Derrida's reading of Freud re-inflects the issue of repression from psychic to collective history, he recovers the implicit acts of valuation in Freud's metaphors in order to resist a scripted obedience that closes off investigation and leaves hegemonic power intact.

Notes

- 1 [Note by Solis] To keep the term used in *Specters of Marx* we will use in English "specter" and "specters" rather than spectre, spectrum or spectra.
- 2 [Note by Solis] Deconstruction does not work with concepts, for they are appanage of metaphysics of presence or Western metaphysics. Instead of them, prefers to bring to the discussion *notions* or *quasi-concepts* that work as operators of deconstruction and which have ambivalent characteristics, have largely aporetic dimensions, always indicate a milieu, never an approximation to the beginning, to an origin or an end. Without dwelling on them, because they are not the central focus of our discussion, among them are *differance* (with *a*), writing (*écriture*), hymen, pharmakón, trail (*trace*) that is distinct from trace (*trait*) and obviously, specters (plural).
- 3 [Note by Solis] *Surrounds, haunts, terrifies* are the various translations we know for this proposition.
- 4 [Note by Solis] At this point Derrida has already taken on the term deconstruction to characterize, not

only the inversion of conceptual pairs (binaries) present in Western metaphysics and the displacement to a new reality or situation free from traditional hierarchies, but also to express the possibility that in *Specters of Marx* it is possible to denote the deconstruction of numerous philosophical axioms.

- 5 [Note by Solis] Although it is not the subject of the discussion proposed for this short article, the Derridean stance is clearly directed at a critique of neoliberalism. In this regard, he proposes a fight against the 'new world order' that has led the world from the logic of the neoliberal market to an unsustainable and excluding position, especially among the poorest. This position is disseminated both in *Specters of Marx* and in several interviews and conferences.
- 6 [Note by Solis] 'To come' is understood in the sense of deconstruction; not a near or far future, but something whose im-possibility arises suddenly and as such legitimates itself and sets itself as a starting point for realization.
- 7 [Note by Solis] This parodies Marx's famous statement about Hegel in the Afterword of the 2nd edition of *Capital* when talking about the Hegelian dialectic: Marx, just like Hegel, cannot be treated like a dead dog.
- 8 [Note by Shapiro] The Derrida reference is to his *Specters of Marx* (Derrida 1994b).
- 9 [Note by Shapiro] The observation belongs to Boyarin (1994, ebook loc. 478).
- 10 [Note by Shapiro] German expressions cited throughout the text are from Martin Heidegger (2011).
- 11 [Note by Shapiro] Derrida is quoting Freud here.

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Desvios e Divergências da Letra e do Espírito: Um Fórum sobre os *Espectros de Marx* de Jacques Derrida depois de 25 anos, Parte VI

Resumo: Jacques Derrida entregou a base de os *Espectros de Marx: O Estado da Dívida, a Obra do Luto e a Nova Internacional* como discurso plenário na conferência ‘Whither Marxism?’ na Universidade da Califórnia, em Riverside, em 1993. A versão mais longa do livro foi publicada em francês no mesmo ano e em inglês e português no ano seguinte. Uma década após a publicação dos *Espectros*, as análises de Derrida provocaram uma grande literatura crítica e convidaram tanto a consternação quanto a celebração de figuras como Antonio Negri, Wendy Brown e Frederic Jameson. Este fórum procura estimular novas reflexões sobre Derrida, desconstrução e *Espectros de Marx*, considerando como futuro do passado anunciado pelo livro se saiu depois de um movimentado quarto de século. Neste sexto grupo de contribuições, Jean Tible esboça como a espectralidade e a fantasmagoria continuam a animar as recentes heranças dos textos de Derrida e de Marx, a fim de inspirar novas lutas de pensamento; Dirce Eleonora Nigro Solis considera o envolvimento de Derrida com a pergunta ‘Para onde vai o marxismo?’ como um modelo político-filosófico de desvio que provoca o deslocamento de axiomas marxistas e uma renovação do pensamento marxista e desconstrutivo durante o período do neoliberalismo; finalmente, Michael Shapiro traça um desvio diferente no pensamento de Derrida e mostra que a leitura desviante de Derrida sobre a construção da repressão de Freud abre o passado e o arquivo para construções não oficiais da história coletiva.

Palavras-chave: Derrida, Jacques; Marx, Karl; revolução; luta política; desconstrução; democracia; Freud, Sigmund; repressão; arquivo.

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