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Jacques Derrida

Specters of Marx

The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and
the New International

Translated from the French by Peggy Kamuf

With an introduction by Bernd Magnus and
Stephen Cullenberg



New York and London

The time is out of joint.

—*Hamlet*

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1

INJUNCTIONS OF MARX

Hamlet: . . . Swear.

Ghost [beneath]: Swear.

[*They swear*]

Hamlet: Rest, rest perturbed Spirit! So Gentlemen,
With all my loue I doe commend me to you;
And what so poore a man as *Hamlet* is
Doe t'expresse his loue and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lacke: Let us goe in together,
And still your fingers on your lippes, I pray.
The time is out of ioynt: Oh cursed spight,
That ever I was borne to set it right.
Nay, come, let's goe together. [*Exeunt*]

—Act I, scene V

Maintaining now the specters of Marx. (But maintaining now [maintenant] without conjuncture. A disjointed or disadjusted now, “out of joint,” a disjointed now that always risks maintaining nothing together in the assured conjunction of some context whose border would still be determinable.)

The specters of Marx. Why this plural? Would there be more

than one of them? Plus d'un [More than one/No more one]: this can mean a crowd, if not masses, the horde, or society, or else some population of ghosts with or without a people, some community with or without a leader—but also the less than one of pure and simple dispersion. Without any possible gathering together. Then, if the specter is always animated by a spirit, one wonders who would dare to speak of a spirit of Marx, or more serious still, of a spirit of Marxism. Not only in order to predict a future for them today, but to appeal even to their multiplicity, or more serious still, to their heterogeneity.

More than a year ago, I had chosen to name the “specters” by their name starting with the title of this opening lecture. “Specters of Marx,” the common noun and the proper name had thus been printed, they were already on the poster when, very recently, I reread *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. I confess it to my shame: I had not done so for decades—and that must tell one something. I knew very well there was a ghost waiting there, and from the opening, from the raising of the curtain. Now, of course, I have just discovered, in truth I have just remembered what must have been haunting my memory: the first noun of the *Manifesto*, and this time in the singular, is “specter”: “A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism.”

Exordium or incipit: this first noun opens, then, the first scene of the first act: “Ein Gespenst geht um in Europa—das Gespenst des Kommunismus.” As in *Hamlet*, the Prince of a rotten State, everything begins by the apparition of a specter. More precisely by the waiting for this apparition. The anticipation is at once impatient, anxious, and fascinated: this, the thing (“this thing”) will end up coming. The *revenant* is going to come.¹ It won't be long. But how long it is taking. Still more precisely, everything begins in the imminence of a re-apparition, but a reappearance of the specter as apparition for the first time in the play. The spirit of the father is going to come back and will soon say to him “I am thy

Fathers Spirit” (I, iv), but here, at the beginning of the play, he comes back, so to speak, for the first time. It is a first, the first time on stage.

[First suggestion: haunting² is historical, to be sure, but it is not dated, it is never docilely given a date in the chain of presents, day after day, according to the instituted order of a calendar. Untimely, it does not come to, it does not happen to, it does not befall, one day, Europe, as if the latter, at a certain moment of its history, had begun to suffer from a certain evil, to let itself be inhabited in its inside, that is, haunted by a foreign guest. Not that that guest is any less a stranger for having always occupied the domesticity of Europe. But there was no inside, there was nothing inside before it. The ghostly would displace itself like the movement of this history. Haunting would mark the very existence of Europe. It would open the space and the relation to self of what is called by this name, at least since the Middle Ages. The experience of the specter, that is how Marx, along with Engels, will have also thought, described, or diagnosed a certain dramaturgy of modern Europe, notably that of its great unifying projects. One would even have to say that he represented it or staged it. In the shadow of a filial memory, Shakespeare will have often inspired this Marxian theatricalization. Later, closer to us but according to the same genealogy, in the nocturnal noise of its concatenation, the rumbling sound of ghosts chained to ghosts, another descendant would be Valéry. *Shakespeare qui genuit Marx qui genuit Valéry* (and a few others).

But what goes on between these generations? An omission, a strange lapsus. *Da*, then *fort*, exit Marx. In “La crise de l'esprit” (“The Crisis of Spirit,” 1919: “As for us, civilizations, we know now we are mortal . . .”), the name of Marx appears just once. It inscribes itself, here is the name of a skull to come into Hamlet's hands:

Now, on an immense terrace of Elsinore, which stretches from Basel to Cologne, that touches on the sands of Nieupoort, the lowlands of the Somme, the chalky earth of Champagne, the granite earth of Alsace—the European Hamlet looks at thousands of specters. But he is an intellectual Hamlet. He meditates on the life and death of truths. His ghosts are all the objects of our controversies; his remorse is all the titles of our glory. . . . If he seizes a skull, it is an illustrious skull—“Whose was it?”—This one was *Lionardo*. . . . And this other skull is that of *Leibniz* who dreamed of universal peace. And this one was *Kant qui genuit Hegel, qui genuit Marx, qui genuit*. . . . Hamlet does not know what to do with all these skulls. But if he abandons them! . . . Will he cease to be himself?³

Later, in “La politique de l’esprit,” Valéry has just defined man and politics. Man: “an attempt to create what I will venture to call the spirit of spirit.”⁴ As for politics, it always “implies some idea of man.” At this point, Valéry quotes himself. He reproduces the page of “the European Hamlet,” the one we have just cited. Curiously, with the errant but infallible assurance of a sleep-walker, he then omits from it only one sentence, just one, without even signalling the omission by an ellipsis: the one that names Marx, in the very skull of Kant (“And this one was Kant qui genuit Hegel, qui genuit Marx, qui genuit . . .”).⁵ Why this omission, the only one? The name of Marx has disappeared. Where did it go? *Exeunt Ghost and Marx*, Shakespeare might have noted. The name of the one who disappeared must have gotten inscribed someplace else.

In what he says, as well as in what he forgets to say about the skulls and generations of spirits, Valéry reminds us of at least three things. These three things concern precisely this thing that is called spirit. As soon as one no longer distinguishes spirit from specter, the former assumes a body, it incarnates itself, as spirit, in the specter. Or rather, as Marx himself spells out, and

we will get to this, the specter is a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some “thing” that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other. For it is flesh and phenomenality that give to the spirit its spectral apparition, but which disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the *revenant* or the return of the specter. There is something disappeared, departed in the apparition itself as reappearance of the departed. The spirit, the specter are not the same thing, and we will have to sharpen this difference; but as for what they have in common, one does not know what it is, what it is presently. It is something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it is, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge. One does not know if it is living or if it is dead. Here is—or rather there is, over there, an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, “this thing,” but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [*qui nous regarde*], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy (“*Marcellus*: What, ha’s this thing appear’d againe tonight? *Barnardo*: I have seene nothing”). The Thing is still invisible, it is nothing visible (“I have seene nothing”) at the moment one speaks of it and in order to ask oneself if it has reappeared. It is still nothing that can be seen when one speaks of it. It is no longer anything that can be seen when *Marcellus* speaks of it, but it has been seen twice. And it is in order to adjust speech to sight that *Horatio* the skeptic has been convoked. He will serve as third party and witness (*terstis*): “. . . if againe this Apparition come, He may approue our eyes and speake to it” (I, i).

Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears. This Thing meanwhile looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there. A spectral asymmetry interrupts here all specularity. It de-synchronizes, it recalls us to anachrony. We will call this the *visor effect*: we do not see who looks at us. Even though in his ghost the King looks like himself ("As thou art to thy self," says Horatio), that does not prevent him from looking without being seen: his apparition makes him appear still invisible beneath his armor ("Such was the very Armour he had on . . ."). We will probably not speak of this *visor effect* any more, at least not by that name, but it will be presupposed by everything we advance on the subject of the specter in general, in Marx and elsewhere. As will be spelled out later on the basis of *The German Ideology* and the argument with Stirner, what distinguishes the specter or the *revenant* from the *spirit*, including the *spirit* in the sense of the ghost in general, is doubtless a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X, that non-sensuous of which *Capital* speaks (we will come to this) with regard to a certain exchange-value; it is also, no doubt, the tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but still the body of someone as someone other. And of someone other that we will not hasten to determine as self, subject, person, consciousness, spirit, and so forth. This already suffices to distinguish the specter not only from the icon or the idol but also from the image of the image, from the Platonic *phantasma*, as well as from the simple *simulacrum* of something in general to which it is nevertheless so close and with which it shares, in other respects, more than one feature. But that is not all, and that is not the most irreducible. Another suggestion: This spectral *someone other* looks at us,⁶ we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority (which may be on the order

of generation, of more than one generation) and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion. Here anachrony makes the law. To feel ourselves seen by a look which it will always be impossible to cross, that is the *visor effect* on the basis of which we inherit from the law. Since we do not see the one who sees us, and who makes the law, who delivers the injunction (which is, moreover, a contradictory injunction), since we do not see the one who orders "swear", we cannot identify it in all certainty, we must fall back on its voice. The one who says "I am thy Fathers Spirit" can only be taken at his word. An essentially blind submission to his secret, to the secret of his origin: this is a first obedience to the injunction. It will condition all the others. It may always be a case of still someone else. Another can always lie, he can disguise himself as a ghost, another ghost may also be passing himself off for this one. It's always possible. Later we will talk about the *society* or the *commerce* of specters among themselves, for there is always more than one of them. The armor, this "costume" which no stage production will ever be able to leave out, we see it cover from head to foot, in Hamlet's eyes, the supposed body of the father. We do not know whether it is or is not part of the spectral apparition. This protection is rigorously problematic (*problema* is also a shield) for it prevents perception from deciding on the identity that it wraps so solidly in its carapace. The armor may be but the body of a real artifact, a kind of technical prosthesis, a body foreign to the spectral body that it dresses, dissimulates, and protects, masking even its identity. The armor lets one see nothing of the spectral body, but at the level of the head and beneath the visor, it permits the so-called father to see and to speak. Some slits are cut into it and adjusted so as to permit him to see without being seen, but to speak in order to be heard. The helmet, like the visor, did not merely offer protection: it topped off the coat of arms and indicated the chief's authority, like the blazon of his nobility.

For the helmet effect, it suffices that a visor be possible and that

one play with it. Even when it is raised, in fact, its possibility continues to signify that someone, beneath the armor, can safely see without being seen or without being identified. Even when it is raised, the visor remains, an available resource and structure, solid and stable as armor, the armor that covers the body from head to foot, the armor of which it is a part and to which it is attached. This is what distinguishes a visor from the mask with which, nevertheless, it shares this incomparable power, perhaps the supreme insignia of power: the power to see without being seen. The helmet effect is not suspended when the visor is raised. Its power, namely its possibility, is in that case recalled merely in a more intensely dramatic fashion. When Horatio reports to Hamlet that a figure like his father's appeared "Arm'd at all points exactly, *Cap a Pe . . .*"), the son is worried and questions. He first insists on the armor and the "Cap a Pe" ("Hamlet: Arm'd, say you? *Barnardo and Marcellus: Arm'd, my Lord. Hamlet: From top to toe? Both: My Lord, from head to foot.*"). Then Hamlet gets to the head, to the face, and especially the look beneath the visor. As if he had been hoping that, beneath an armor that hides and protects from head to foot, the ghost would have shown neither his face, nor his look, nor therefore his identity ("Hamlet: Then saw you not his face? *Horatio: Oh yes, my Lord, he wore his Beaver up*" [I, ii]).

Three things, then, would decompose in analysis this single thing, spirit, or specter—or king, for the king occupies this place, here the place of the father, whether he keeps it, takes it, or usurps it, and beyond the return of the rhyme (for example "The Play's the thing,/Wherein Ile catch the Conscience of the King"). King is a thing, Thing is the King, precisely where he separates from his body which, however, does not leave him (contract of secession, necessary pact in order to have more than one body, that is, in order to reign, and, first of all, to inherit royal dignity, whether by crime or election: "The body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King, is a thing").

What, then, are these three things of the thing?

1. First of all, mourning. We will be speaking of nothing else. It consists always in attempting to ontologize remains, to make them present, in the first place by identifying the bodily remains and by localizing the dead (all ontologization, all semanticization—philosophical, hermeneutical, or psychoanalytical—finds itself caught up in this work of mourning but, as such, it does not yet think it; we are posing here the question of the specter, to the specter, whether it be Hamlet's or Marx's, on this near side of such thinking). One has to know. *One has to know it. One has to have knowledge* [Il faut le savoir]. Now, to know is to know who and where, to know whose body it really is and what place it occupies—for it must stay in its place. In a safe place. Hamlet does not ask merely to whom the skull belonged ("Whose was it?" the question that Valéry quotes). He demands to know to whom the grave belongs ("Whose grave's this, sir?"). Nothing could be worse, for the work of mourning, than confusion or doubt: one has to know who is buried where—and it is necessary (to know—to make certain) that, in what remains of him, he remain there. Let him stay there and move no more!

2. Next, one cannot speak of generations of skulls or spirits (*Kant qui genuit Hegel qui genuit Marx*) except on the condition of language—and the voice, in any case of that which marks the name or takes its place ("Hamlet: That Skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once").

3. Finally (*Marx qui genuit Valéry . . .*), the thing works, whether it transforms or transforms itself, poses or decomposes itself: the spirit, the "spirit of the spirit" is work. But what is work? What is its concept if it supposes the spirit of the spirit? Valéry underscores it: "By 'Spirit' here I mean a certain power of transformation . . . the spirit . . . works."⁷

So "Whither Marxism?" That is the question the title of this colloquium would ask us. In what way would it be signaling toward Hamlet and Denmark and England? Why does it whisper

to us to follow a ghost? Where? Whither? What does it mean to follow a ghost? And what if this came down to being followed by it, always, persecuted perhaps by the very chase we are leading? Here again what seems to be out front, the future, comes back in advance: from the past, from the back. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark," declares Marcellus at the point at which Hamlet is preparing, precisely, to follow the ghost ("I'll follow thee" [I, iv]). And he too will soon ask him "Whither?": "Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further. Ghost: Mark me . . . I am thy Fathers Spirit."]

Repetition and first time: this is perhaps the question of the event as question of the ghost. What is a ghost? What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there there, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up? Repetition and first time, but also repetition and last time, since the singularity of any first time, makes of it also a last time. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it a hauntology. This logic of haunting would not be merely larger and more powerful than an ontology or a thinking of Being (of the "to be," assuming that it is a matter of Being in the "to be or not to be," but nothing is less certain). It would harbor within itself, but like circumscribed places or particular effects, eschatology and teleology themselves. It would comprehend them, but incomprehensibly. How to comprehend in fact the discourse of the end or the discourse about the end? Can the extremity of the extreme ever be comprehended? And the opposition between "to be" and "not to be"? Hamlet already began with the expected return of the dead King. After the end of history, the spirit comes by coming back [revenant], it figures both a dead man who comes back and a ghost whose expected return repeats itself, again and again.

Oh, Marx's love for Shakespeare! It is well known. Chris Hani

shared the same passion. I have just learned this and I like the idea. Even though Marx more often quotes *Timon of Athens*, the *Manifesto* seems to evoke or convoke, right from the start, the first coming of the silent ghost, the apparition of the spirit that does not answer, on those ramparts of Elsinore which is then the old Europe. For if this first theatrical apparition already marked a repetition, it implicated political power in the folds of this iteration ("In the same figure, like the King that's dead," says Barnardo as soon as he thinks he recognizes the "Thing," in his irrepressible desire for identification). From what could be called the other time, from the other scene, from the eve of the play, the witnesses of history fear and hope for a return, then, "again" and "again," a coming and going. (Marcellus: "What, ha's this thing appear'd againe tonight?" Then: *Enter the Ghost, Exit the Ghost, Enter the Ghost, as before*). A question of repetition: a specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back. Think as well of Macbeth, and remember the specter of Caesar. After having expired, he returns. Brutus also says "again—": "Well; then I shall see thee again?" Ghost: "Ay, at Philippi" (IV, ii).

Now, one may very well wish to take a breath. Or let out a sigh: after the expiration itself, for it is a matter of the spirit. What seems almost impossible is to speak always of the specter, to speak to the specter, to speak with it, therefore especially to make or to let a spirit speak. And the thing seems even more difficult for a reader, an expert, a professor, an interpreter, in short, for what Marcellus calls a "scholar." Perhaps for a spectator in general. Finally, the last one to whom a specter can appear, address itself, or pay attention is a spectator as such. At the theater or at school. The reasons for this are essential. As theoreticians or witnesses, spectators, observers, and intellectuals, scholars believe that looking is sufficient. Therefore, they are not always in the most competent position to do what is necessary: speak to the specter. Herein lies perhaps, among so many others, an indelible lesson

of Marxism. There is no longer, there has never been a scholar capable of speaking of anything and everything while addressing himself to everyone and anyone, and especially to ghosts. There has never been a scholar who really, and as scholar, deals with ghosts. A traditional scholar does not believe in ghosts—nor in all that could be called the virtual space of spectrality. There has never been a scholar who, as such, does not believe in the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being (“to be or not to be,” in the conventional reading), in the opposition between what is present and what is not, for example in the form of objectivity. Beyond this opposition, there is, for the scholar, only the hypothesis of a school of thought, theatrical fiction, literature, and speculation. If we were to refer uniquely to this traditional figure of the “scholar,” we would therefore have to be wary here of what we could define as the illusion, the mystification, or the complex of *Marcellus*. The latter was perhaps not in a situation to understand that a classical scholar would not be able to speak to the ghost. *Marcellus* did not know what the singularity of a position is, let’s not call it a class position as one used to say long ago, but the singularity of a place of speech, of a place of experience, and of a link of filiation, places and links from which alone one may address oneself to the ghost. “Thou art a Scholler—speake to it, Horatio,” he says naively, as if he were taking part in a colloquium. He appeals to the scholar or to the learned intellectual, to the man of culture as a spectator who better understands how to establish the necessary distance or how to find the appropriate words for observing, better yet, for apostrophizing the ghost, which is to say also for speaking the language of kings or of the dead. For *Barnardo* has just spied the face of the dead king, he thinks he has identified it through its likeness (“*Barnardo*: In the same figure, like the King that’s dead. *Marcellus*: Thou art a Scholler—speake to it, Horatio”). He does not ask him merely to speak to the ghost, but to call it,

interpellate it, interrogate it, more precisely, to question the Thing that it still is: “Question it Horatio.” And *Horatio* enjoins the Thing to speak, he orders it to do so twice in a gesture that is at once imperious and accusing. He orders, he summons at the same time as he conjures (“By heaven I Charge thee speake! . . . speake, speake! I Charge thee, speake!”). And in French, in fact, “I charge thee” is often translated by “je t’en conjure,” which indicates a path where later we will see injunction crossing with conjuration. By charging or conjuring him to speak, *Horatio* wants to inspect, stabilize, arrest the specter in its speech: “(For which, they say, you Spirits oft walke in death)—Speake of it. Stay and speake.—Stop it *Marcellus*.”

Inversely, *Marcellus* was perhaps anticipating the coming, one day, one night, several centuries later, of another “scholar.” The latter would finally be capable, beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility. Better (or worse) he would know how to address himself to spirits. He would know that such an address is not only already possible, but that it will have at all times conditioned, as such, address in general. In any case, here is someone mad enough to hope to unlock the possibility of such an address.

It was thus a fault on my part to have put so far out of memory what was the most manifest thing about the *Manifesto*. What manifests itself in the first place is a specter, this first paternal character, as powerful as it is unreal, a hallucination or simulacrum that is virtually more actual than what is so blithely called a living presence. Upon rereading the *Manifesto* and a few other great works of Marx, I said to myself that I know of few texts in the philosophical tradition, perhaps none, whose lesson seemed more urgent today, provided that one take into account what Marx and Engels themselves say (for example, in Engels’ “Preface” to the 1888 re-edition) about their own possible “aging” and their

intrinsically irreducible historicity. What other thinker has ever issued a similar warning in such an explicit fashion? Who has ever called for the *transformation* to come of his own theses? Not only in view of some progressive enrichment of knowledge, which would change nothing in the order of a system, but so as to take into account there, another account, the effects of rupture and restructuration? And so as to incorporate in advance, beyond any possible programming, the unpredictability of new knowledge, new techniques, and new political givens? No text in the tradition seems as lucid concerning the way in which the political is becoming worldwide, concerning the irreducibility of the technical and the media in the current of the most thinking thought—and this goes beyond the railroad and the newspapers of the time whose powers were analyzed in such an incomparable way in the *Manifesto*. And few texts have shed so much light on law, international law, and nationalism.

It will always be a fault not to read and reread and discuss Marx—which is to say also a few others—and to go beyond scholarly “reading” or “discussion.” It will be more and more a fault, a failing of theoretical, philosophical, political responsibility. When the dogma machine and the “Marxist” ideological apparatuses (States, parties, cells, unions, and other places of doctrinal production) are in the process of disappearing, we no longer have any excuse, only alibis, for turning away from this responsibility. 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. For this will be our hypothesis or rather our bias: *there is more than one of them, there must be more than one of them.*

Nevertheless, among all the temptations I will have to resist today, there would be the temptation of memory: to recount what was for me, and for those of my generation who shared it during a whole lifetime, the experience of Marxism, the quasi-paternal

figure of Marx, the way it fought in us with other filiations, the reading of texts and the interpretation of a world in which the Marxist inheritance was—and still remains, and so it will remain—absolutely and thoroughly determinate. One need not be a Marxist or a communist in order to accept this obvious fact. We all live in a world, some would say a culture, that still bears, at an incalculable depth, the mark of this inheritance, whether in a directly visible fashion or not.

Among the traits that characterize a certain experience that belongs to my generation, that is, an experience that will have lasted at least forty years, and which is not over, I will isolate first of all a troubling paradox. I am speaking of a troubling effect of “*déjà vu*,” and even of a certain “*toujours déjà vu*.” I recall this malaise of perception, hallucination, and time because of the theme that brings us together this evening: “whither Marxism?” For many of us the question has the same age as we do. In particular for those who, and this was also my case, opposed, to be sure, *de facto* “Marxism” or “communism” (the Soviet Union, the International of Communist Parties, and everything that resulted from them, which is to say so very many things . . .), but intended at least never to do so out of conservative or reactionary motivations or even moderate right-wing or republican positions. For many of us, a certain (and I emphasize certain) end of communist Marxism did not await the recent collapse of the USSR and everything that depends on it throughout the world. All that started—all that was even *déjà vu*, indubitably—at the beginning of the '50s. Therefore, the question that brings us together this evening—“whither Marxism?”—resonates like an old repetition. It was already, but in an altogether different way, the question that imposed itself on the many young people who we were at the time. The same question had already sounded. The same, to be sure, but in an altogether different way. And the difference in the sound, that is what is echoing this evening. It is still evening, it is always nightfall along the “ramparts,” on the

battlements of an old Europe at war. With the other and with itself.

Why? It was the same question, already, as final question. Many young people today (of the type "readers-consumers of Fukuyama" or of the type "Fukuyama" himself) probably no longer sufficiently realize it: the eschatological themes of the "end of history," of the "end of Marxism," of the "end of philosophy," of the "ends of man," of the "last man" and so forth were, in the '50s, that is, forty years ago, our daily bread. We had this bread of apocalypse in our mouths naturally, already, just as naturally as that which I nicknamed after the fact, in 1980, the "apocalyptic tone in philosophy."

What was its consistency? What did it taste like? It was, on the one hand, the reading or analysis of those whom we could nickname the *classics of the end*. They formed the canon of the modern apocalypse (end of History, end of Man, end of Philosophy, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, with their Kojevian codical and the codicils of Kojève himself). It was, on the other hand and indissociably, what we had known or what some of us for quite some time no longer hid from concerning totalitarian terror in all the Eastern countries, all the socio-economic disasters of Soviet bureaucracy, the Stalinism of the past and the neo-Stalinism in process (roughly speaking, from the Moscow trials to the repression in Hungary, to take only these minimal indices). Such was no doubt the element in which what is called deconstruction developed—and one can understand nothing of this period of deconstruction, notably in France, unless one takes this historical entanglement into account. Thus, for those with whom I shared this singular period, this double and unique experience (both philosophical and political), for us, I venture to say, the media parade of current discourse on the end of history and the last man looks most often like a tiresome anachronism. At least up to a certain point that will have to be specified later on. Something of this tiresomeness, moreover,

comes across in the body of today's most phenomenal culture: what one hears, reads, and sees, what is most mediatized in Western capitals. As for those who abandon themselves to that discourse with the jubilation of youthful enthusiasm, they look like latecomers, a little as if it were possible to take still the last train after the last train—and yet be late to an end of history.

How can one be late to the end of history? A question for today. It is serious because it obliges one to reflect again, as we have been doing since Hegel, on what happens and deserves the name of *event*, after history; it obliges one to wonder if the end of history is but the end of a certain concept of history. Here is perhaps one of the questions that should be asked of those who are not content just to arrive late to the apocalypse and to the last train of the end, if I can put it like that, without being out of breath, but who find the means to puff out their chests with the good conscience of capitalism, liberalism, and the virtues of parliamentary democracy—a term with which we designate not parliamentarism and political representation in general, but the present, which is to say in fact, past forms of the electoral and parliamentary apparatus.

We are going to have to complicate this outline in a moment. We will have to put forward another reading of the media's anachronism and of good conscience. But so that one might better appreciate the discouraging impression of *déjà vu*, which risks causing us to drop all this literature on the end of history and other similar diagnoses, I will quote only (from among so many other possible examples) an essay from 1959 whose author also published a fiction already entitled, in 1957, *The Last Man*. About thirty-five years ago, then, Maurice Blanchot devoted an article, "The End of Philosophy," to a good half-dozen books from the '50s.⁸ They were all testimonies from former Marxists or communists, and just in France. Blanchot would later write "On an Approach to Communism" and "Marx's Three Voices."⁹

[I would have liked to quote here, so as to subscribe to them without reservation, the three admirable pages that bear the title "Marx's Three Voices" ["Les trois paroles de Marx"]. With the sober brilliance of an incomparable density, in a manner that is at once discreet and dazzling, their utterances are less the full response to a question than the measure of that to which we must respond today, inheritors that we are of more than one form of speech, as well as of an injunction that is itself disjointed.]

Let us consider first of all, the radical and necessary heterogeneity of an inheritance, the difference without opposition that has to mark it, a "disparate" and a quasi-juxtaposition without dialectic (the very plural of what we will later call Marx's spirits). An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing. "One must" means one must filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibilities that inhabit the same injunction. And inhabit it in a contradictory fashion around a secret. If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. We would be affected by it as by a cause—natural or genetic. One always inherits from a secret—which says "read me, will you ever be able to do so?" The critical choice called for by any reaffirmation of the inheritance is also, like memory itself, the condition of finitude. The infinite does not inherit, it does not inherit (from) itself. The injunction itself (it always says "choose and decide from among what you inherit") can only be one by dividing itself, tearing itself apart, differing/deferring itself, by speaking at the same time several times—and in several voices. For example:

In Marx, and always coming from Marx, we see three kinds of voices gathering force and taking form, all three of which are necessary, but separated and more than opposed, as if

they were juxtaposed. The disparate that holds them together designates a plurality of demands to which, *since Marx*, everyone who speaks or writes can not fail to feel himself subjected, *unless he is to feel himself failing in everything*. (P. 18; my emphasis)

"Unless he is to feel himself failing in everything": What does that mean? And "since Marx"?

To fail in everything, it is true, will always remain possible. Nothing will ever give us any insurance against this risk, still less against this feeling. And a "since Marx" continues to designate the place of assignment from which we are pledged. But if there is a pledge or assignment, injunction or promise, if there has been this appeal beginning with a word that resounds before us, the "since" marks a place and a time that doubtless precedes us, but so as to be as much in front of us as before us. Since the future, then, since the past as absolute future, since the non-knowledge and the non-advent of an event, of what remains to be: to do and to decide (which is first of all, no doubt, the sense of the "to be or not to be" of Hamlet—and of any inheritor who, let us say, comes to swear before a ghost). If "since Marx" names a future-to-come as much as a past, the past of a proper name, it is because the proper of a proper name will always remain to come. And secret. It will remain to come not like the future now [maintenance] of that which "holds together" the "disparate" (and Blanchot says the impossible of a "disparate" that itself "holds together"; it remains to be thought how a disparate could still, itself, hold together, and if one can ever speak of the disparate itself, selfsame, of a sameness without property). What has been uttered "since Marx" can only promise or remind one to maintain together, in a speech that defers, deferring not what it affirms but deferring just so as to affirm, to affirm justly, so as to have the power (a power without power) to affirm the coming of the event, its future-to-come itself.

Blanchot does not name Shakespeare here, but I cannot hear “since Marx,” since Marx, without hearing, like Marx, “since Shakespeare.” To maintain together that which does not hold together, and the disparate itself, the same disparate, all of this can be thought (we will come back to this incessantly as well as to the spectrality of the specter) only in a dis-located time of the present, at the joining of a radically dis-jointed time, without certain conjunction. Not a time whose joinings are negated, broken, mistreated, dysfunctional, disadjusted, according to a *dys-* of negative opposition and dialectical disjunction, but a time without *certain* joining or determinable conjunction. What is said here about time is also valid, consequently and by the same token, for history, even if the latter can consist in repairing, with effects of conjuncture (and that is the world), the temporal disjoining. “The time is out of joint”: time is *disarticulated*, dis-located, dislodged, time is run down, on the run and run down [*traqué et détraqué*], *deranged*, both out of order and mad. Time is off its hinges, time is off course, beside itself, disadjusted. Says Hamlet. Who thereby opened one of those breaches, often they are poetic and thinking peepholes [*meurtrières*], through which Shakespeare will have kept watch over the English language; at the same time he signed its body, with the same unprecedented stroke of some arrow. Now, when does Hamlet name in this way the dis-joining of time, but also of history and of the world, the disjoining of things as they are nowadays, the disadjustment of our time, each time ours? And how is one to translate “The time is out of joint”? A striking diversity disperses across the centuries the translation of a masterpiece, a work of genius, a thing of the spirit which precisely seems to *engineer itself* [*s’ingénier*]. Whether evil or not, a genius *operates*, it always resists and defies after the fashion of a spectral thing. The animated work becomes that thing, the Thing that, like an elusive specter, *engineers* [*s’ingénie*] a habitation without proper inhabiting, call it a *haunting*, of both memory and translation. A masterpiece always moves, by

definition, in the manner of a ghost. The Thing [*Chose*] haunts, for example, it causes, it inhabits without residing, without ever confining itself to the numerous versions of this passage, “The time is out of joint.” In their plurality, the words of translation organize themselves, they are not dispersed at random. They disorganize themselves as well through the very effect of the specter, because of the Cause that is called the original and that, like all ghosts, addresses same-ly disparate demands, which are more than contradictory. In the French translations, the demands are distributed here, it seems, around several major possibilities. These are types. In “The time is out of joint,” time is either *le temps* itself, the temporality of time, or else what temporality makes possible (time as *histoire*, the way things are at a certain time, the time that we are living, nowadays, the period), or else, consequently, the *monde*, the world as it turns, our world today, our today, currentness itself, current affairs: there where it’s going okay (whither) and there where it’s not going so well, where it is rotting or withering, there where it’s working [*ça marche*] or not working well, there where it’s going okay without running as it should nowadays [*par les temps qui courent*].¹⁰ Time: it is *le temps*, but also *l’histoire*, and it is *le monde*, time, history, world.

“The time is out of joint”: the translations themselves are put “out of joint.” However correct and legitimate they may be, and whatever right one may acknowledge them to have, they are all disadjusted, as it were unjust in the gap that affects them. This gap is within them, to be sure, because their meanings remain necessarily equivocal; next it is in the relation among them and thus in their multiplicity, and finally or first of all in the irreducible inadequation to the other language and to the stroke of genius of the event that makes the law, to all the virtualities of the original. The excellence of the translation can do nothing about it. Worse yet, and this is the whole drama, it can only aggravate or seal the inaccessibility of the other language. A few French

examples from among the most remarkable, irreproachable, and interesting:

1. "Le temps est hors de ses gonds," time is off its hinges.¹¹ Yves Bonnefoy's translation appears to be the safest. It keeps open and suspended, it seems, as in the *epokhē* of this time itself, the greatest economic potentiality of the formula. More technical than organic, ethical, or political (which remains a gap), the figure of the hinge seems to be closest to prevailing usage and to the multiplicity of uses of the idiom that it translates.

2. "Le temps est détraqué," time is broken down, unhinged, out of sorts.¹² This is a rather risky translation: a certain usage of this French expression suggests *le temps* in the sense of the weather, rather than time.

3. "Le monde est à l'envers," the world is upside down.¹³ This "à l'envers" is very close to a "de travers," askew, that seems to be closer to the original.

4. "Cette époque est déshonorée," this age is dishonored.¹⁴ However surprising it may seem at first glance, Gide's reading nevertheless agrees with the tradition of an idiom that, from More to Tennyson, gives an apparently more *ethical* or *political* meaning to this expression. "Out of joint" would qualify the moral decadence or corruption of the city, the dissolution or perversion of customs. It is easy to go from disadjusted to unjust. That is our problem: how to justify this passage from disadjusted (with its rather more technico-ontological value affecting a presence) to an injustice that would no longer be ontological? And what if disadjustment were on the contrary the condition of justice? And what if this double register condensed its enigma, precisely [justement], and potentialized its superpower in that which gives its unheard-of force to Hamlet's words: "The time is out of joint"? Let us not be surprised when we read that the OED gives Hamlet's phrase as example of the *ethico-political* inflection. With this example one grasps the necessity of what Austin used to say: a dictionary of words can never give a

definition, it only gives examples. The perversion of that which, out of joint, does not work well, does not walk straight, or goes askew (*de travers*, then, rather than *à l'envers*) can easily be seen to oppose itself as does the oblique, twisted, wrong, and crooked to the good direction of that which goes right, straight, to the spirit of that which orients or founds the law [*le droit*]¹⁵—and sets off directly, without detour, toward the right address, and so forth.¹⁵ Hamlet moreover clearly opposes the being "out of joint" of time to its *being-right*, in the right or the straight path of that which walks upright. He even curses the fate that would have caused him to be born to set right a time that walks crooked. He curses the destiny that would precisely have destined him, Hamlet, to do justice, to put things back in order, to put history, the world, the age, the time upright, on the right path, so that, in conformity with the rule of its correct functioning, it advances straight ahead [*tout droit*]¹⁶—and following the law [*le droit*]. This plaintive malediction itself appears to be affected by the torsion or the tort that it denounces. According to a paradox that poses itself and gets carried away by itself, Hamlet does not curse so much the corruption of the age. He curses first of all and instead this unjust effect of the disorder, namely, the fate that would have destined him, Hamlet, to put a dislocated time back on its hinges—and to put it back right, to turn it back over to the law. He curses his mission: to do justice to a de-mission of time. He swears against a destiny that leads him to do justice for a fault, a fault of time and of the times, by rectifying an *address*, by making of rectitude and right ("to set it right") a movement of correction, reparation, restitution, vengeance, revenge, punishment. He swears against this misfortune, and this misfortune is unending because it is nothing other than himself, Hamlet. Hamlet is "out of joint" because he curses his own mission, the punishment that consists in having to punish, avenge, exercise justice and right in the form of reprisals; and what he curses in his mission is this expiation of expiation itself;

it is first of all that it is *inborn* in him, given by his birth as much as at his birth. Thus, it is assigned by who (what) came before him. Like Job (3, 1), he curses the day that saw him born: "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!" ("to set it right" is translated as "rejoiner" [Bonney], "rentrer dans l'ordre" [Gide], "remettre droit" [Derocquigny], "remettre en place" [Malaplate]).¹⁶ The fatal blow, the *tragic* wrong that would have been done at his very birth, the hypothesis of an intolerable perversion in the very order of his destination, is to have made him, Hamlet, *to be and to be born*, for the right, in view of the right, calling him thus to put time on the right path, to do right, to render justice, and to redress history, the *wrong* [tort] of history. There is tragedy, there is essence of the tragic only on the condition of this originality, more precisely of this *pre-originary* and properly spectral anteriority of the crime—the crime of the other, a misdeed whose event and reality, whose truth can never present themselves in flesh and blood, but can only allow themselves to be presumed, reconstructed, fantasized. One does not, for all that, bear any less of a responsibility, beginning at birth, even if it is only the responsibility to repair an evil at the very moment in which no one can admit it except in a self-confession that confesses the other, as if that amounted to the same. Hamlet curses the destiny that would have destined him to be the man of right, precisely [justement], as if he were cursing the right or the law itself that has made of him a righter of wrongs, the one who, like the right, can only come after the crime, or simply after: that is, in a necessarily second generation, originally late and therefore destined to inherit. One never inherits without coming to terms with [s'expliquer avec] some specter, and therefore with more than one specter. With the fault but also the injunction of more than one. That is the original wrong, the birth wound from which he suffers, a bottomless wound, an irreparable tragedy, the indefinite malediction that marks the history of the law or history as law: that time is "out of joint" is what is

also attested by birth itself when it dooms someone to be the man of right and law only by becoming an inheritor, redresser of wrongs, that is, only by castigating, punishing, killing. The malediction would be inscribed in the law itself: in its murderous, bruising origin.

If right or law stems from vengeance, as Hamlet seems to complain that it does—before Nietzsche, before Heidegger, before Benjamin—can one not yearn for a justice that one day, a day belonging no longer to history, a quasi-messianic day, would finally be removed from the fatality of vengeance? Better than removed: infinitely foreign, heterogeneous at its source? And is this day before us, to come, or more ancient than memory itself? If it is difficult, in truth impossible, *today*, to decide between these two hypotheses, it is precisely because "The time is out of joint": such would be the original corruption of the day of today, or such would be, as well, the malediction of the dispenser of justice, of the day I saw the light of day. Is it impossible to gather under a single roof the apparently disordered plurivocity (which is itself "out of joint") of these interpretations? Is it possible to find a rule of cohabitation under such a roof, it being understood that this house will always be haunted rather than inhabited by the meaning of the original? This is the stroke of genius, the insignia trait of spirit, the signature of the Thing "Shakespeare": to authorize each one of the translations, to make them possible and intelligible without ever being reducible to them. Their adjoining would lead back to what—in honor, dignity, good aspect, high renown, title or name, titling legitimacy, the estimable in general, even the just, if not the right—is always supposed by adjoining, by the articulated gathering up of oneself, coherence, responsibility.¹⁷ But if adjoining in general, if the joining of the "joint" supposes first of all the adjoining, the correctness [justesse], or the justice of time, the being-with-oneself or the concord of time, what happens when time itself gets "out of joint," dis-jointed, disadjusted, disharmonic, discorded, or unjust? *Ana-chronique*?

What does not happen in this anachrony! Perhaps “the time,” time itself, precisely, always “our time,” the epoch and the world shared among us, ours every day, nowadays, the present as our present. Especially when “things are not going well” among us, precisely [justice]: when “things are going badly,” when it’s not working, when things are bad. But with the other, is not this disjuncture, this dis-adjustment of the “it’s going badly” necessary for the good, or at least the just, to be announced? Is not disjuncture the very possibility of the other? How to distinguish between two disadjustments, between the disjuncture of the unjust and the one that opens up the infinite asymmetry of the relation to the other, that is to say, the place for justice? Not for calculable and distributive justice. Not for law, for the calculation of restitution, the economy of vengeance or punishment (for if *Hamlet* is a tragedy of vengeance and punishment in the triangle or circle of an Oedipus who would have taken an additional step into repression—Freud, Jones, and so forth—one must still think the possibility of a step beyond repression: there is a beyond the economy of repression whose law implies it to exceed itself, of itself in the course of a history, be it the history of theater or of politics between *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*). Not for calculable equality, therefore, not for the symmetrizing and synchronic accountability or imputability of subjects or objects, not for a rendering justice that would be limited to sanctioning, to restituting, and to doing right, but for justice as incalculability of the gift and singularity of the an-economic ex-position to others. “The relation to others—that is to say, justice,” writes Lévinas.¹⁸ Whether he knows it or not, *Hamlet* is speaking in the space opened up by this question—the appeal of the gift, singularity, the coming of the event, the excessive or exceeded relation to the other—when he declares “The time is out of joint.” And this question is no longer dissociated from all those that *Hamlet* apprehends as such, that of the specter-Thing and of the King, that of the event, of present-being, and of what there is to

be, or not, what there is to do, which means to think, to make do or to let do, to make or to let come, or to give, even if it be death. How does the concern with what there is to be intersect, in order perhaps to exceed it, with the logic of vengeance or right?

A trajectory that is necessarily without heading and without assurance. The trajectory of a precipitation toward which trembles, vibrates, at once orients and disorients itself the question that is here addressed to us under the name or in the name of justice, surely a problematic translation of *Dikē*. One of the most sensitive, though certainly not the only, places today for this singular topology would be perhaps *Der Spruch des Anaximander*. Heidegger there interprets *Dikē* as joining, adjoining, adjustment, articulation of accord or harmony, *Fug*, *Fuge* (*Die Fuge ist der Fug*). Insofar as it is thought on the basis of presence (*als Anwesen gedacht*), *Dikē* harmoniously conjoins, in some way, the joining and the accord. *Adikia* to the contrary: it is at once what is disjointed, undone, twisted and out of line, in the wrong of the unjust, or even in the error of stupidity.¹⁹

Let us note in passing that mit *Fug und Recht* commonly means “within rights,” “rightfully,” “rightly” versus “wrongly.” The German equivalent of “out of joint,” in the sense of disarticulated, dislocated, undone, beside itself, deranged, off its hinges, disjointed, disadjusted, is *aus den Fugen*, *aus den Fugen gehen*. Now, when Heidegger insists on the necessity of thinking *Dikē* on this side of, before, or at a distance from the juridical-moral determinations of justice, he finds in his language, with the expression “aus den Fugen,” the multiple, collected, and suspended virtualities of “The time is out of joint”: something in the present is not going well, it is not going as it ought to go.

The word *a-dikia* immediately suggests that *dikē* is absent [*wegbleibt*]. We are accustomed to translate *dikē* as right [*Recht*]. The translations of the fragment [*des Spruches*, i.e. of *Anaximander*] even use “penalties” to translate “right.” If we

resist our own juridical-moral notions, *juristisch-moralischen Vorstellungen*], if we restrict ourselves to what comes to language, then we hear that wherever *adikia* rules all is not right with things [*dass es, wo sie waltet, nicht mit rechten Dingen zugeht*]. That means something is out of joint [*etwas ist aus den Fugen*]. But of what are we speaking? Of what is present, lingering awhile [*Vom je-weilig Anwesenden*].²⁰

It is important to recall here, regarding the translation of “je-weilig” (“lingering awhile”) that Heidegger’s meditative writing no doubt passes through this determination of the present (*Anwesend*) as je-weilig (of the moment, of the epoch, each time, and so forth), as well as through this indispensable attribution as *Weile* (moment, passing moment, lapse of time) or *weilen* (to stay, linger, remain). But still more important here appears to be the interpretation of *weilen*: a passage, to be sure, and thus by definition a transitory moment, but whose transition comes, if one can say that, from the future. It has its provenance in what, by essence, has not yet come—from [*provenu*], still less come about, and which therefore remains to come. The passage of this time of the present comes from the future to go toward the past, toward the going of the gone [*l’en allé*] (*Das Weilen ist der Übergang aus Künft zu Gang. Das Anwesende ist das Je-weilige*).²¹ Heidegger continues: “But where are there jointures in what is present? Or where is there even one jointure [*nur eine Fuge*]?” How can what is present [*das Anwesende*] without jointure be *adikion*, out of joint [*aus der Fuge*]”? One may, as the translator did here, translate Heidegger, the reader of Anaximander, into the language of Hamlet: how is it possible, that which is? Namely, how is it possible that the present, and therefore time, be out of joint? The rest of the interpretation cannot be reconstituted here. It would deserve long and minute approaches. Let us indicate merely a reading hypothesis and the principle of a question. Would the Spruch of Anaximander signify that to the presence of the present,

to the *eon* of the *onta* belongs the *adikia*, the dis-jointure, which is most often translated, as Nietzsche did in this case, by injustice (*Ungerechtigkeit*)? Can one conclude from this that there was a “pessimism” or “nihilism” in the Greek experience of Being? Heidegger doubts it. To nihilistic pessimism, as well as to optimism, he opposes the “trace” of the “tragic,” of an essence of the tragic (we are never far from Oedipus and Hamlet) that cannot be explained in an “esthetic” or “psychological” fashion,²² which also means, for Heidegger, in a psychoanalytic fashion. Beyond the esthetico-psychoanalytic, this trace of the tragic calls us to thinking, on the basis of the interpretation of the Being of being, the *didonai diken . . . tes adikias*.²³ What is this gift of the *Dikē*? What is this justice beyond right? Does it come along simply to compensate a wrong, restitute something due, to do right or do justice? Does it come along simply to render justice or, on the contrary, to give beyond the due, the debt, the crime, or the fault? Does it come simply to repair injustice (*adikia*) or more precisely to rearticulate as must be the dis-jointure of the present time (“to set it right” as Hamlet said)?

The dis-jointure in the very presence of the present, this sort of non-contemporaneity of present time with itself (this radical untimeliness or this anachrony on the basis of which we are trying here to think the ghost) is, according to Heidegger, “said and not said” by the fragment of Anaximander.²⁴

A. To be sure, it says “without equivocation” (*eindeutig*) that the present (*das Anwesende*), as present, is in *adikia*, that is, as Heidegger translates,²⁵ deranged, off its hinges, out of joint (*aus der Fuge*). The present is what passes, the present comes to pass [*se passe*], it lingers in this transitory passage (*Weile*), in the coming-and-going, between what goes and what comes, in the middle of what leaves and what arrives, at the articulation between what absents itself and what presents itself. This in-between articulates conjointly the double articulation (*die Fuge*) according to which the two movements are adjoined (*gefügt*). Presence (*Anwesen*) is

enjoined (*verfugt*), ordered, distributed in the two directions of absence, at the articulation of what is no longer and what is not yet. To join and enjoin. This thinking of the jointure is also a thinking of injunction.

B. And yet, declaring this “without equivocation,” the *Spruch* also says something else—or it only says this on condition. It would name the disjointure (*adikia*) or the “injustice” of the present only in order to say that it is necessary *didonai diken*. (The duty or the debt of the “it is necessary” is perhaps excessive, even if Nietzsche translates: *Sie müssen Busse zahlen*, they must pay penalty.) In any case, it is clearly a matter of giving. Of giving *Dikē*. Not of rendering justice, to render it in return by means of punishment, payment, or expiation, as one most often translates (Nietzsche and Diels). There is first of all a gift without restitution, without calculation, without accountability. Heidegger thus removes such a gift from any horizon of culpability, of debt, of right, and even, perhaps, of duty. He would especially like to wrest it away from that experience of vengeance whose idea, he says, remains “the opinion of those who equate the Just (*das Gerechte*) with the Avenged (*das Gerächte*).” (Which, let us say in passing, would surely not in the least disqualify, in this case or in others, a reading, for example in Hamlet, of the logic of vengeance, whether psychoanalytic or not, and wherever it remains so powerful. All the same, without depriving it of its pertinence, this other reading causes to appear precisely its economic closure, even its circular fatality, the very limit that makes possible the pertinence or correctness of this interpretation; this latter limit prevents one in fact from understanding the very things which it wants to explain: tragedy, precisely [justement], the hesitation to take revenge, the deliberation, the non-naturality or the non-automaticity of the calculation: neurosis, if you like.) The question of justice, the one that always carries beyond the law, is no longer separated, in its necessity or in its aporias, from that of the gift. Heidegger interrogates the paradox

of this gift without debt and without guilt in a movement that I have evoked elsewhere.²⁶ He then wonders in fact, following the traces of Plotinus whom he does not name here, or hardly ever: is it possible to give what one does not have? “What does ‘give’ mean here? How should whatever lingers awhile, whatever comes to presence in disjunction, be able to give jointure [Wie soll *das Je-weilige, das in der Un-Fuge west, Fuge geben können*]? Can it give what it doesn’t have? [Kann es geben, was es nicht hat?]. If it gives anything at all, doesn’t it give jointure away?”²⁷ Heidegger’s answer: giving rests here only in presence (*Anwesen*), it does not signify simply to give away (*weggeben*) but, more originally, to accord, that is here, *zugehen* which most often indicates addition, even excess, in any case that which is offered in supplement, over and above the market, off trade, without exchange, and it is said sometimes of a musical or poetic work. This offering is supplementary, but without raising the stakes, although it is necessarily excessive with regard to the giving away or a privation that would separate one from what one might have. The offering consists in leaving: in leaving to the other what properly belongs to him or her (*Solches Geben lässt einem anderen das gehören, was als Gehöriges ihm eignet*). Now, Heidegger then specifies, what properly (*eignet*) belongs to a present, be it to the present of the other, to the present as the other, is the jointure of its lingering awhile, of its time, of its moment (*die Fuge seiner Weile*). What the one does not have, what the one therefore does not have to give away, but what the one gives to the other, over and above the market, above market, bargaining, thanking, commerce, and commodity, is to leave to the other this accord with himself that is proper to him (*ihm eignet*) and gives him presence. If one still translates *Dikē* with this word “justice,” and if, as Heidegger does, *Dikē* is thought on the basis of Being as presence, then it would turn out that “justice” is first of all, and finally, and especially properly, the jointure of the accord: the proper jointure to the other given by one who does not have it. Injustice would be the disjointure or

disjoining (let us quote again: "Dikē, aus dem Sein als Anwesen gedacht, ist der fugend-fügende Fug. Adikia, die Un-Fuge, ist der Un-Fug").

This is where our question would come in. Has not Heidegger, as he always does, skewed the asymmetry in favor of what he in effect interprets as the possibility of favor itself, of the accorded favor, namely, of the accord that gathers or collects while harmonizing (*Versammlung*, Fug), be it in the sameness of differents or of disagreements [*différends*], and before the synthesis of a system? Once one has recognized the force and the necessity of thinking justice on the basis of the gift, that is, beyond right, calculation, and commerce, once one has recognized therefore the necessity (without force, precisely [justement], without necessity, perhaps, and without law) of thinking the gift to the other as gift of that which one does not have and which thus, paradoxically, can only come back or belong to the other, is there not a risk of inscribing this whole movement of justice under the sign of presence, be it of the presence to meaning of the *Anwesen*, of the event as coming into presence, of Being as presence joined to itself, of the proper of the other as presence? As the presence of the received present, yes, but appropriable as the same and therefore gathered together? Beyond right, and still more beyond juridicism, beyond morality, and still more beyond moralism, does not justice as relation to the other suppose on the contrary the irreducible excess of a disjuncture or an anachrony, some Un-Fuge, some "out of joint" dislocation in Being and in time itself, a disjuncture that, in always risking the evil, expropriation, and injustice (*adikia*) against which there is no calculable insurance, would alone be able to do justice or to render justice to the other as other? A doing that would not amount only to action and a rendering that would not come down just to restitution? To put it too quickly and to formalize in the extreme the stakes: here, in this interpretation of the Un-Fug (whether or not it is on the basis of Being as presence and the property of the proper), would be played out the relation of deconstruction to the possibility of

justice, the relation of deconstruction (insofar as it proceeds from the irreducible possibility of the Un-Fug and the anachronic disjuncture, insofar as it draws from there the very resource and injunction of its reaffirmed affirmation) to what must (without debt and without duty) be rendered to the singularity of the other, to his or her absolute precedence or to his or her absolute previousness,²⁸ to the heterogeneity of a *pre-*, which, to be sure, means what comes before me, before any present, thus before any past present, but also what, for that very reason, comes from the future or as future: as the very coming of the event. The necessary disjuncture, the de-totalizing condition of justice, is indeed here that of the present—and by the same token the very condition of the present and of the presence of the present. This is where deconstruction would always begin to take shape as the thinking of the gift and of undeconstructible justice, the undeconstructible condition of any deconstruction, to be sure, but a condition that is itself in deconstruction and remains, and must remain (that is the injunction) in the disjuncture of the Un-Fug. Otherwise it rests on the good conscience of having done one's duty, it loses the chance of the future, of the promise or the appeal, of the desire also (that is its "own" possibility), of this desert-like messianism (without content and without identifiable messiah), of this also abyssal desert, "desert in the desert," that we will talk about later (p. 209), one desert signaling toward the other, abyssal and chaotic desert, if chaos describes first of all the immensity, excessiveness, disproportion in the gaping hole of the open mouth—in the waiting or calling for what we have nicknamed here without knowing the messianic: the coming of the other, the absolute and unpredictable singularity of the *arrivant as justice*. We believe that this messianic remains an ineffaceable mark—a mark one neither can nor should efface—of Marx's legacy, and doubtless of inheriting, of the experience of inheritance in general. Otherwise, one would reduce the event-ness of the event, the singularity and the alterity of the other.

Otherwise justice risks being reduced once again to juridical-moral rules, norms, or representations, within an inevitable totalizing horizon (movement of adequate restitution, expiation, or reappropriation). Heidegger runs this risk, despite so many necessary precautions, when he gives priority, as he always does, to gathering and to the same (*Versammlung, Fuge, legen*, and so forth) over the disjunction implied by my address to the other, over the interruption commanded by respect which commands it in turn, over a difference whose uniqueness, disseminated in the innumerable charred fragments of the absolute mixed in with the cinders, will never be assured in the One. Which, moreover, never fails to happen also, but it happens only in the trace of what would happen otherwise and thus also happens, like a specter, in that which does not happen. Hamlet could never know the peace of a "good ending": in any case in the theater and in history. To be "out of joint," whether it be present Being or present time, can do harm and do evil, it is no doubt the very possibility of evil. But without the opening of this possibility, there remains, perhaps, beyond good and evil, only the necessity of the worst. A necessity that would not (even) be a fated one.

Injunctions and sworn faith: that is what we are trying to think here. We ought to try to understand together, to adjoin, if one prefers, two signs in one, a double sign. Hamlet declares "The time is out of joint" precisely at the moment of the oath, of the injunction to swear, to *swear together* [conjurér], at the moment in which the specter, who is always a sworn conspirator [conjuré], one more time, from beneath, from beneath the earth or beneath the stage, has just ordered: "Swear." And the sworn conspirators swear together ("They swear").

We are still in the process of reading, in a certain way, "Marx's Three Voices." Let us not forget them. Blanchot reminds us that we are asked by them, in the first place, to think the "holding

together" of the *disparate* itself. Not to maintain together the disparate, but to put ourselves there where the disparate itself holds together, without wounding the dis-jointure, the dispersion, or the difference, without effacing the heterogeneity of the other. We are asked (enjoined, perhaps) to turn ourselves over to the future, to join ourselves in this *we*, there where the disparate is turned over to this singular joining, without concept or certainty of determination, without knowledge, without or before the synthetic junction of the conjunction and the disjunction. The alliance of a *rejoining* without conjoined mate, without organization, without party, without nation, without State, without property (the "communism" that we will later nickname the new International).

One question is not yet posed. Not as such. It is hidden rather by the *philosophical*, we will say more precisely *ontological response* of Marx himself. It responds to what we are naming here—Blanchot does not do so—the spirit or the specter. Hidden question, we said, for a time and to a certain degree, to be sure. But all these words are treacherous: perhaps it is no longer at all a matter of a question and we are aiming instead at another structure of "presentation," in a gesture of thinking or writing, not the measure of a certain time. The thing happens, it ought to happen there where Blanchot speaks of an "absence of question," the full measure that dispenses with the void, the too-full made to avoid the void:

Giving a response—alienation, the primacy of need, history as process of material practice, the total man—it nevertheless leaves undetermined or undecided the questions to which it responds: depending on how today's or yesterday's readers formulate differently that which, according to them, should take place in such an absence of the question—thus filling in a void that ought rather to be increasingly emptied out—this form of Marx's speech is interpreted here as humanism, or

even historicism, there as atheism, antihumanism, or even nihilism. (Pp. 18–19)

Let us translate into this language of Blanchot the hypothesis we are venturing to put forward here: opened with Marx's signature as a question, but also as a promise or an appeal, the spectrality whose "logic" we are going to analyze will have been covered over ("filling in a void," as Blanchot says, there where the void "ought rather to be increasingly emptied out") by Marx's ontological response. The response of Marx himself for whom the ghost must be nothing, nothing period (non-being, non-effectivity, non-life) or nothing imaginary, even if this nothing takes on a body, a certain body, that we will approach later. But also the response of his "Marxist" successors wherever they have drawn, practically, concretely, in a terribly effective, massive, and immediate fashion, its political consequences (at the cost of millions and millions of supplementary ghosts who will keep on protesting in us; Marx had his ghosts, we have ours, but memories no longer recognize such borders; by definition, they pass through walls, these remnants, day and night, they trick consciousness and skip generations).

Needless to spell it out here, therefore, still less to insist on it too heavily: it is not a taste for the void or for destruction that leads anyone to recognize the right of this necessity to "empty out" increasingly and to deconstruct the philosophical responses that consist in totalizing, in filling in the space of the question or in denying its possibility, in fleeing from the very thing it will have allowed one to glimpse. On the contrary, it is a matter there of an ethical and political imperative, an appeal as unconditional as the appeal of thinking from which it is not separated. It is a matter of the injunction itself—if there is one.

What also resonates in "Marx's three voices" is the *appeal* or the political injunction, the pledge or the promise (the oath, if one prefers: "swear!"), the originary performativity that does not

conform to preexisting conventions, unlike all the performatives analyzed by the theoreticians of speech acts, but whose force of rupture produces the institution or the constitution, the law itself, which is to say also the meaning that appears to, that ought to, or that appears to have to guarantee it in return. *Violence* of the law before the law and before meaning, violence that interrupts time, disarticulates it, dislodges it, displaces it out of its natural lodging: "out of joint." It is there that difference, if it remains irreducible, irreducibly required by the spacing of any promise and by the future-to-come that comes to open it, does not mean only (as some people have too often believed and so naively) deferral, lateness, delay, postponement. In the incoercible difference the here-now unfurls. Without lateness, without delay, but without presence, it is the precipitation of an absolute singularity, singular because differing, precisely [justement], and always other, binding itself necessarily to the form of the instant, in *imminence* and in *urgency*: even if it moves toward what remains to come, there is the *pledge* [gage] (promise, engagement, injunction and response to the injunction, and so forth). The pledge is given here and now, even before, perhaps, a decision confirms it. It thus responds without delay to the demand of justice. The latter by definition is impatient, uncompromising, and unconditional.

No difference without alterity, no alterity without singularity, no singularity without here-now.

(Why insist on imminence, on urgency and injunction, on all that which in them does not wait? In order to try to remove what we are going to say from what risks happening, if we judge by the many signs, to Marx's work today, which is to say also to his injunction. What risks happening is that one will try to play Marx off against Marxism so as to neutralize, or at any rate muffle the political imperative in the untroubled exegesis of a classified work. One can sense a coming fashion or stylishness in

this regard in the culture and more precisely in the university. And what is there to worry about here? Why fear what may also become a cushioning operation? This recent stereotype would be destined, whether one wishes it or not, to depoliticize profoundly the Marxist reference, to do its best, by putting on a tolerant face, to neutralize a potential force, first of all by enervating a corpus, by silencing in it the revolt [the return is acceptable provided that the revolt, which initially inspired uprising, indignation, insurrection, revolutionary momentum, does not come back]. People would be ready to accept the return of Marx or the return to Marx, on the condition that a silence is maintained about Marx's injunction not just to decipher but to act and to make the deciphering [the interpretation] into a transformation that "changes the world." In the name of an old concept of reading, such an ongoing neutralization would attempt to conjure away a danger: now that Marx is dead, and especially now that Marxism seems to be in rapid decomposition, some people seem to say, we are going to be able to concern ourselves with Marx without being bothered—by the Marxists and, why not, by Marx himself, that is, by a ghost that goes on speaking. We'll treat him calmly, objectively, without bias: according to the academic rules, in the University, in the library, in colloquia! We'll do it systematically, by respecting the norms of hermeneutical, philological, philosophical exegesis. If one listens closely, one already hears whispered: "Marx, you see, was despite everything a philosopher like any other; what is more [and one can say this now that so many Marxists have fallen silent], he was a great-philosopher who deserves to figure on the list of those works we assign for study and from which he has been banned for too long.²⁹ He doesn't belong to the communists, to the Marxists, to the parties, he ought to figure within our great canon of Western political philosophy. Return to Marx, let's finally read him as a great philosopher." We have heard this and we will hear it again. It is something altogether other that I wish to attempt here as I

turn or return to Marx. It is "something other" to the point that I will have occasion instead, and this will not be only for lack of time and space, to insist even more on what commands us today, without delay, to do everything we can so as to avoid the neutralizing anesthesia of a new theoreticism, and to prevent a philosophico-philological return to Marx from prevailing. Let us spell things out, let us insist: to do everything we can so that it does not *prevail*, but not to avoid its taking place, because it remains just as necessary. This will cause me, for the moment, to give priority to the political gesture I am making here, at the opening of a colloquium, and to leave more or less in the state of a program and of schematic indications the work of philosophical exegesis, and all the "scholarship" that this "position-taking," today, still requires.)

But the here-now does not fold back into immediacy, or into the reappropriable identity of the present, even less that of self-presence. Although "appeal," "violence," "rupture," "imminence," and "urgency" are Blanchot's words in the following paragraph, the demand that he says is "always present" must implicitly, it seems to us, find itself affected by the same rupture or the same dislocation, the same "short circuit." It can never be always present, it can be, *only*, if there is *any*, it can be only possible, it must even remain a *can-be* or *maybe* in order to remain a demand. Otherwise it would become presence again, that is, substance, existence, essence, *permanence*, and not at all the *excessive* demand or urgency that Blanchot speaks of so correctly [just-ment]. The "permanent revolution" supposes the rupture of that which links permanence to substantial presence, and more generally to all onto-logy:

The second voice is political: it is brief and direct, more than brief and more than direct, because it short-circuits every voice. It no longer carries a meaning, but a call, 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, since excess is its only measure: thus calling to the struggle and even (which is what we hasten to forget) postulating “revolutionary terror,” recommending “permanent revolution,” and always designating the revolution not as a final necessity, but as *imminence*, since it is the characteristic of the revolution, if it opens and traverses time, to offer no delay, giving itself to be lived as ever-present demand.*

* This was manifest, and in a striking manner, during May 68. (P. 19) [Blanchot's note]

Blanchot names finally the necessary disjunction of Marx's languages, their non-contemporaneity with themselves. That they are “disjoined,” and first of all in Marx himself, must neither be denied, reduced, nor even deplored. What one must constantly come back to, here as elsewhere, concerning this text as well as any other (and we still assign here an unlimited scope to this value of text) is an irreducible heterogeneity, an internal untranslatability in some way. It does not necessarily signify theoretical weakness or inconsistency. The lack of a system is not a fault there. On the contrary, heterogeneity opens things up, it lets itself be opened up by the very effraction of that which unfurls, comes, and remains to come—singularly from the other. There would be neither injunction nor promise without this disjunction. Blanchot insisted upon this at the time (between 1968 and 1971, therefore) in order to issue a warning not against knowledge but against scientific ideology that often, in the name of Science or Theory as Science, had attempted to unify or to purify the “good” text of Marx. If Blanchot seems to agree here with certain Althusserian motifs, he is already warning against the risk that, according to him, was inherent in them:

The third voice is the indirect one (thus the lengthiest), that of

scientific discourse. On this account, Marx is honored and recognized by other representatives of knowledge. He is thus a man of science, responds to the ethics of the scholar, agrees to submit himself to any and all critical revision. . . . Still, *Capital* is an essentially subversive work. Not so much because it would lead, by means of scientific objectivity, to the necessary consequence of revolution; rather it is because it includes, without formulating it too much, a mode of theoretical thinking that overturns the very idea of science. Actually, neither science nor thinking emerges from Marx's work intact. This must be taken in the strongest sense, inasmuch as science is designated there as radical transformation of itself, as theory of a mutation always in play within practice, just as, in this practice, the mutation is always theoretical. (P. 19).

This other thinking of knowledge, if I can put it that way, does not exclude science. But it overturns and overflows its received idea. Blanchot recognizes in this “the example of Marx.” Why example? We will ask even before knowing why “the example of Marx.” Before quoting again, let us insist on this point. An example always carries beyond itself: it thereby opens up a tamentary dimension. The example is first of all for others, and beyond the self. Sometimes, perhaps always, whoever gives the example is not equal to the example he gives, even if he does everything to follow it in advance, “to learn how to live,” as we were saying, imperfect example of the example he gives—which he gives by giving then what he has not and even what he is not. For this reason, the example thus disjoined separates enough from itself or from whoever gives it so as to be no longer or not yet example for itself. We do not have to solicit the agreement of Marx—who died to this even before being dead—in order to inherit it: to inherit this or that, this rather than that which comes to us nevertheless by him, through him if not from him. And we do not have to suppose that Marx was in agreement with

himself. ("What is certain is that I am not a Marxist," he is supposed to have confided to Engels. Must we still cite Marx as authority in order to say likewise?) For Blanchot does not hesitate to suggest that Marx had difficulty living with this disjunction of the injunctions within him and with the fact that they were untranslatable into each other. How is one to receive, how is one to understand a speech, how is one to inherit it when it does not let itself be translated from itself into itself? This may appear impossible. And, we have to acknowledge, it is probably impossible. But since this sums up perhaps the strange subject of this lecture devoted to the specters of Marx, as well as the avowed distortion of its axiom, permit me then to turn the objection around. Guarantee translatibility, given homogeneity, systematic coherence in their absolute forms, this is surely (certainly, *a priori* and not probably) what renders the injunction, the inheritance, and the future—in a word the other—impossible. There must be disjunction, interruption, the heterogeneous if at least there must be, if there must be a chance given to any "there must be" whatsoever, be it beyond duty.³⁰

Once again, here as elsewhere, wherever deconstruction is at stake, it would be a matter of linking an affirmation (in particular a political one), if there is any, to the experience of the impossible, which can only be a radical experience of the *perhaps*.

So, once again, Blanchot; and in this very powerful ellipsis, in this almost tacit declaration, I take the liberty of underlining a few words there where Blanchot only underlines, but significantly, the words "multiple" and "at once," that is, at the sign of the contradiction without contradiction, of the non-dialectical (or "almost" non-dialectical) difference that runs through and is at work in every injunction:

Let us not develop these remarks any further here. The example of Marx helps us to understand that the voice of writing, a voice of unceasing contestation, must constantly develop itself and

break itself into multiple forms. The communist voice is always at once tacit and violent, political and scholarly, direct, indirect, total and fragmentary, lengthy and almost instantaneous. Marx does not live comfortably with this plurality of languages that are always colliding and disjoining with each other in him. Even if these languages seem to converge toward the same end, they could not be retranslated into each other, and their heterogeneity, the divergence or gap, the distance that decenters them, renders them non-contemporaneous. In producing an effect of irreducible distortion, they oblige those who have to withstand the reading (the practice) of them to submit themselves to an ceaseless recasting.

The word "science" is becoming again a key word. Let's admit it. But let us remember that although there may be sciences, there is not yet science, because the scientificity of science always remains dependent on ideology, an ideology that no particular science, be it human science, is able to reduce today; and on the other hand, let us remember that no writer, even if he is a Marxist, can turn himself over to writing as to a kind of knowledge . . . (P. 19–20)

So, more than thirty years ago, already, Blanchot wrote "The End of Philosophy." At that time, in 1959, a funerary note already echoed there—crepuscular, spectral, and therefore resurrectional. Re-insurrectional. It is indeed a question of the philosophical "spirit": its very process consists of visibly heading the march at the moment of its "disappearance" and its "putting in the ground," it consists of leading its own funeral procession and of raising itself in the course of this march, of hoping at least to right itself again so as to stand up ("resurrection," "exaltation"). This wake, this joyous death watch of philosophy is the double moment of a "promotion" and of a "death of philosophy," a promotion in death. Here is philosophy—and is this absolutely new?—becoming its own *revenant*; it itself haunts its own places

more than it inhabits them. And philosophy, of course, is always more than philosophy:

This promotion of philosophy, which has become the all-powerful force in our world and the shape of our destiny, can only coincide with its *disappearance*, announcing at least the beginning of its *putting in the ground*. This *death of philosophy* would belong, therefore, to our philosophical time. The death does not date from 1917, nor even from 1857, the year in which Marx, as if performing a carnival test of strength, would have overturned the system. For the last century and a half, with his name as with that of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, it is philosophy itself that has been affirming or realizing its own end, whether it understands that end as the accomplishment of absolute knowledge, its theoretical suppression linked to its practical realization, the nihilist movement in which all values are engulfed, or finally by the culmination of metaphysics, precursor sign of another possibility that does not yet have a name. This then is the sunset that from now on accompanies every thinker, a strange *funereal* moment which the philosophical spirit celebrates in an exaltation that is, moreover, often joyful, leading its slow funeral procession during which it expects, in one way or another, to obtain its *resurrection*. And of course, such an expectation, crisis and feast of negativity, experience pushed as far as it will go to find out what resists, does not touch only on philosophy . . . (Pp. 292–93; my emphasis)

Imminence and desire of resurrection. Re-naisance or *renaissance*? At nightfall, one does not know if imminence means that the expected one has already returned. Had he not already announced himself? To announce oneself, moreover, is that not already to be there in some way? One does not know if the expectation prepares the coming of the future-to-come or if it recalls

the repetition of the same, of the same thing as ghost (“What, ha’s this thing appear’d againe tonight?”). This not-knowing is not a lacuna. No progress of knowledge could saturate an opening that must have nothing to do with knowing. Nor therefore with ignorance. The opening must preserve this heterogeneity as the only chance of an affirmed or rather reaffirmed future. It is the future itself, it comes from there. The future is its memory. In the experience of the end, in its insistent, instant, always imminently eschatological coming, at the extremity of the extreme today, there would thus be announced the future of what comes. More than ever, for the future-to-come can announce itself as such and in its purity only on the basis of a *past end*: beyond, if that’s possible, the last extremity. If that’s possible, if there is *any* future, but how can one suspend such a question or deprive oneself of such a reserve without *concluding in advance*, without reducing in advance both the future and its chance? Without totalizing in advance? We must discern here between eschatology and teleology, even if the stakes of such a difference risk constantly being effaced in the most fragile and slight insubstantiality—and will be in a certain way always and necessarily deprived of any insurance against this risk. Is there not a messianic extremity, an *ekhaton* whose ultimate event (immediate rupture, unheard-of interruption, untimeliness of the infinite surprise, heterogeneity without accomplishment) can exceed, at *each moment*, the final term of a *phusis*, such as work, the production, and the *telos* of any history?

The question is indeed “whither?” Not only whence comes the ghost but first of all is it going to come back? Is it not already beginning to arrive and where is it going? What of the future? The future can only be for ghosts. And the past.

In proposing this title, *Specters of Marx*, I was initially thinking of all the forms of a certain haunting obsession that seems to me to organize the dominant influence on discourse today. At a

time when a new world disorder is attempting to install its neo-capitalism and neo-liberalism, no disavowal has managed to rid itself of all of Marx's ghosts. Hegemony still organizes the repression and thus the confirmation of a haunting. Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony.³¹ But I did not have in mind first of all the exordium of the *Manifesto*. In an apparently different sense, Marx-Engels spoke there already, in 1847-48, of a specter and more precisely of the "specter of communism" (*das Gespenst des Kommunismus*). A terrifying specter for all the powers of old Europe (*alle Mächte des alten Europa*), but specter of a communism then to come. Of a communism, to be sure, already namable (and well before the League of the Just or the Communist League), but still to come beyond its name. Already promised but only promised. A specter all the more terrifying, some will say. Yes, on the condition that one can never distinguish between the future-to-come and the coming-back of a specter. Let us not forget that, around 1848, the First International had to remain quasi-secret. The specter was there (but what is the being-there of a specter? what is the mode of presence of a specter? that is the only question we would like to pose here). But that of which it was the specter, communism (*das Gespenst des Kommunismus*), was itself not there, by definition. It was dreaded as communism to come. It had already been announced, with this name, some time ago, but it was not yet there. It is only a specter, seemed to say these allies of old Europe so as to reassure themselves; let's hope that in the future it does not become an actual, effectively present, manifest, non-secret reality. The question old Europe was asking itself was already the question of the future, the question "whither?": "whither communism?" if not "whither Marxism?" Whether one takes it as asking about the future of communism or about communism in the future, this anguished question did not just seek to know how, in the future, communism would affect European history, but also, in a more muffled way, already whether there would still be any future and any

history at all for Europe. In 1848, the Hegelian discourse on the end of history in absolute knowledge had already resounded throughout Europe and had rung a consonant note with many other knells [glás]. And communism was essentially distinguished from other labor movements by its international character. No organized political movement in the history of humanity had ever yet presented itself as geo-political, thereby inaugurating the space that is now ours and that today is reaching its limits, the limits of the earth and the limits of the political.

The representatives of these forces or all these powers (*alle Mächte*), namely the States, wanted to reassure themselves. They wanted to be sure. So they were sure, for there is no difference between "being sure" and "wanting to be sure." They were sure and certain that between a specter and an actually present reality, between a spirit and a *Wirklichkeit*, the dividing line was assured. It had to be safely drawn. It ought to be assured. No, it ought to have been assured. The sureness of this certainty is something they shared, moreover, with Marx himself. (This is the whole story, and we are coming to it: Marx thought, to be sure, on his side, from the other side, that the dividing line between the ghost and actuality ought to be crossed, like utopia itself, by a realization, that is, by a revolution; but he too will have continued to believe, to try to believe in the existence of this dividing line as real limit and conceptual distinction. He too? No, someone in him. Who? The "Marxist" who will engender what for a long time is going to prevail under the name of "Marxism." And which was also haunted by what it attempted to foreclose.)

Today, almost a century and a half later, there are many who, throughout the world, seem just as worried by the specter of communism, just as convinced that what one is dealing with there is only a specter without body, without present reality, without actuality or effectivity, but this time it is supposed to be a past specter. It was only a specter, an illusion, a phantasm, or a ghost: that is what one hears everywhere today ("Horatio saies,

'tis but our Fantasie, / And will not let beleefe take hold of him"). A still worried sigh of relief: let us make sure that in the future it does not come back! At bottom, the specter is the future, it is always to come, it presents itself only as that which could come or come back; in the future, said the powers of old Europe in the last century, it must not incarnate itself, either publicly or in secret. In the future, we hear everywhere today, it must not re-incarnate itself; it must not be allowed to come back since it is past.

What exactly is the difference from one century to the next? Is it the difference between a past world—for which the specter represented a coming threat—and a present world, today, where the specter would represent a threat that some would like to believe is past and whose return it would be necessary again, once again in the future, to conjure away?

Why in both cases is the specter felt to be a threat? What is the time and what is the history of a specter? Is there a present of the specter? Are its comings and goings ordered according to the linear succession of a before and an after, between a present-past, a present-present, and a present-future, between a "real time" and a "deferred time"?

If there is something like spectrality, there are reasons to doubt this reassuring order of presents and, especially, the border between the present, the actual or present reality of the present, and everything that can be opposed to it: absence, non-presence, non-effectivity, inactuality, virtuality, or even the simulacrum in general, and so forth. There is first of all the doubtful contemporaneity of the present to itself. Before knowing whether one can differentiate between the specter of the past and the specter of the future, of the past present and the future present, one must perhaps ask oneself whether the spectrality effect does not consist in undoing this opposition, or even this dialectic, between actual, effective presence and its other. One must perhaps ask oneself whether this opposition, be it a dialectical

opposition, has not always been a closed field and a common axiom for the antagonism between Marxism and the cohort or the alliance of its adversaries.

Pardon me for beginning with such an abstract formulation. In the middle of the last century, an alliance was constituted against this specter, to drive off the evil. Marx did not call this coalition a Holy Alliance, an expression he plays with elsewhere. In the *Manifesto*, the alliance of the worried conspirators assembles, more or less secretly, a nobility and a clergy—in the old castle of Europe, for an unbelievable expedition against what will have been haunting the night of these masters. At twilight, before or after a night of bad dreams, at the presumed end of history, it is a "holy hunt against this specter": "All the powers of old Europe have joined [verbündet] into a holy hunt against this specter [zu einer heiligen Hetzjagd gegen dies Gespenst]."

It would thus be possible to form a secret alliance against the specter. If Marx had written his *Manifesto* in my language, and if he had had some help with it, as a Frenchman can always dream of doing, I am sure he would have played on the word *conjunction*. Then he would have diagnosed today the same *conjunction*, this time not only in old Europe but in the new Europe, the New World, which already interested him very much a century and a half ago, and throughout the world, in the new world order where the hegemony of this new world, I mean the United States, would still exercise a more or less critical hegemony, more and less assured than ever.

The word *conjunction* has the good fortune to put to work and to produce, without any possible reappropriation, a forever errant surplus value. It capitalizes first of all two orders of semantic value. What is a "conjunction"?

The French noun "conjunction" gathers up and articulates the meanings of two English words—and also two German words.

1. *Conjunction* signifies, on the one hand, "conjunction" (its English homonym) which itself designates two things at once:

a. On the one hand, the conspiracy (*Verschwörung* in German) of those who promise solemnly, sometimes secretly, by swearing together an oath (*Schwur*) to struggle against a superior power. It is to this conspiracy that Hamlet appeals, evoking the "Vision" they have just seen and the "honest ghost," when he asks Horatio and Marcellus to swear ("swear't," "Consent to swear"). To swear upon his sword, but to swear or to swear together on the subject of the spectral apparition itself, and to promise secrecy on the subject of the apparition of an honest ghost that, from beneath the stage, conspires with Hamlet to ask the same thing from the sworn: ("The Ghost cries from under the stage: Swear"). It is the apparition that enjoins them to conspire to silence the apparition, and to promise secrecy on the subject of the one who demands such an oath from them: one must not know whence comes the injunction, the conspiracy, the promised secret. A son and the "honest ghost" of the father, the supposedly honest ghost, the spirit of the father, conspire together to bring about such an event.

b. "Conjuration" signifies, on the other hand, the magical incantation destined to evoke, to bring forth with the voice, to convoke a charm or a spirit. Conjuration says in sum the appeal that causes to come forth with the voice and thus it makes come, by definition, what is not there at the present moment of the appeal. This voice does not describe, what it says certifies nothing; its words cause something to happen. This is the usage encountered again in the words of the Poet at the opening of *Timon of Athens*. After having asked "How goes the world?" and after the Painter has told him "It wears, sir, as it grows," the Poet exclaims:

Ay, that's well known;
 But what particular rarity, what strange,
 Which manifold record not matches?—See,
 Magic of bounty, all these spirits thy power
 Hath conjur'd to attend. I know the merchant. (I,i)

Marx evokes more than once *Timon of Athens*, as well as *The Merchant of Venice*, in particular in *The German Ideology*. The chapter on "The Leipzig Council—Saint Max," also supplies, and we will say more about this later, a short treatise on the spirit or an interminable theatricalization of ghosts. A certain "Communist Conclusion" appeals to *Timon of Athens*.³² The same quotation will reappear in the first version of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. In question is a spectralizing disincarnation. Apparition of the bodiless body of money: not the lifeless body or the cadaver, but a life without personal life or individual property. Not without identity (the ghost is a "who," it is not of the simulacrum in general, it has a kind of body, but without property, without "real" or "personal" right of property). One must analyze the proper of property and how the general property (*Eigentum*) of money neutralizes, disincarnates, deprives of its difference all personal property (*Eigentümlichkeit*). The genius of Shakespeare will have understood this phantomalization of property centuries ago and said it better than anyone. The *ingenium* of his paternal geniality serves as reference, guarantee, or confirmation in the polemic, that is, in the ongoing war—on the subject, precisely, of the monetary specter, value, money or its fiduciary sign, gold: "It was known to Shakespeare better than to our theorizing petty bourgeois [unser theoretisierender Kleinbürger] . . . [h]ow little connection there is between money, the most general form of property [die allgemeinste Form des Eigentums], and personal peculiarity [mit der persönlichen Eigentümlichkeit] . . ."³³

The quotation will also make apparent (as a supplementary benefit but in fact it is altogether necessary) a theologizing fetishization, the one that always links ideology irreducibly to religion (to the idol or the fetish) as its principal figure, a species of "invisible god" to which adoration, prayer, and invocation are addressed ("Thou visible god"). Religion, and we will come back to this, was never one ideology among others for Marx. What, Marx seems to say, the genius of a great poet—and the

spirit of a great father—will have uttered in a poetic flash, with one blow going faster and farther than our little bourgeois colleagues in economic theory, is the becoming-god of gold, which is at once ghost and idol, a god apprehended by the senses. After having marked the heterogeneity between the property of money and personal property (there is “little connection” between them), Marx adds, and it is not a negligible clarification it seems to me, that in truth they are not only different but opposed (*entgegensetzt*). And it is then that, cutting into the body of the text and making choices that should be analyzed closely, he wrests a long passage from that prodigious scene in *Timon of Athens* (IV, iii). Marx loves the words of this imprecation. One must never keep silent about the imprecation of the just. One must never silence it in the most analytic text of Marx. An imprecation does not theorize, it is not content to say how things are, it cries out the truth, it promises, it provokes. As its name indicates, it is nothing other than a prayer. Marx appropriates the words of this imprecation with a kind of delight whose signs are unmistakable. Declaring his hatred of the human race (“I am Misanthropos and hate mankind”), with the anger of a Jewish prophet and sometimes the very words of Ezechiel, Timon curses corruption, he casts down anathema, he swears against prostitution—prostitution in the face of gold and the prostitution of gold itself. But he takes the time to analyze, nevertheless, the transfiguring alchemy, he denounces the reversal of values, the falsification and especially the perjury of which it is the law. One imagines the impatient patience of Marx (rather than Engels) as he transcribes in his own hand, at length, in German, the rage of a prophetic imprecation:

... Thus much of this will make

Black white, foul fair, wrong right,

Base noble, old young, coward valiant.

This yellow slave

Will . . .

Make the hoar leprosy adored . . .

This is it

That makes the wappered widow wed again.

She whom the spittle house and ulcerous sores

Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices

To th' April day again . . .

Thou visible god,

That sold'rest closest impossibilities

And mak'st them kiss . . .

sichtbare Gottheit,

Die du Unmöglichkeiten eng verbrüderst

Zum Kusz sie zwingst!

Among all the traits of this immense malediction of malediction, Marx will have had to efface, in the economy of a long citation, those that are most important for us here, for example the aporias and the double bind that carry the act of swearing and conjuring off into the history of venality itself. At the moment he goes to bury the gold, a shovel in his hand, the prophet-gravedigger, anything but a humanist, is not content to evoke the breaking of vows, the birth and death of religions (“This yellow slave/Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd”); Timon also begs [conjure] the other, he pleads with him to promise, but he conjures thus by perjuring and by confessing his perjury in a same and single bifid gesture. In truth, he conjures by feigning the truth, by feigning at least to make the other promise. But if he feigns to make the other promise, it is in truth to make the other promise not to keep his promise, that is, not to promise, even as he pretends to promise: to perjure or to abjure in the very moment of the oath; then following from this same

logic, he begs him to spare all oaths. As if he were saying in effect: I beg you [*je vous en conjure*], do not swear, abjure your right to swear, renounce your capacity to swear, moreover no one is asking you to swear, you are asked to be the non-oathables that you are ("you are not oathable"), you, the whores, you who are prostitution itself, you who give yourselves to gold, you who give yourselves for gold, you who are destined to general indifference, you who confuse in equivalency the proper and the improper, credit and discredit, faith and lie, the "true and the false," oath, perjury, and abjuration, and so forth. You the whores of money, you would go so far as to abjure ("for-swear") your trade or your vocation (of perjured whore) for money. Like a madam who would give up even her whores for money.

The very essence of humanity is at stake. Absolute double bind on the subject of the bind or the bond themselves. Infinite misfortune and incalculable chance of the performative—here named literally ("perform," "perform none" are Timon's words when he asks [*conjure*] the other to promise not to keep a promise, calling therefore for perjury or abjuration). Force, as weakness, of an ahuman discourse on man. Timon to Alcibiades: "Promise me friendship, but perform none. If thou wilt promise, the gods plague thee, for thou art a man. If thou dost not perform, confound thee, for thou art a man" (IV, iii). Then to Phrynia and Timandra who ask for gold—and whether Timon has any more:

Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,
 And to make wholesomeness a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,
 Your aprons mountant. You are not oathable,
 Although I know you'll swear, terribly swear,
 Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues
 Th'immortal gods that hear you. Spare your oaths;
 I'll trust to your conditions. Be whores still . . .

Addressing himself to prostitution or to the cult of money, to fetishism or to idolatry itself, Timon trusts. He gives faith, he believes, he indeed wants to credit ("I'll trust") but only in the imprecation of a paradoxical hyperbole: he himself pretends to trust in that which, from the depths of abjuration, from the depths of that which is not even capable or worthy of an oath ("you are not oathable"), remains nevertheless faithful to a natural instinct, as if there were a pledge of instinct, a fidelity to itself of instinctual nature, an oath of living nature before the oath of convention, society, or law. And it is the fidelity to infidelity, the constancy in perjury. This life enslaves itself regularly, one can trust it to do so, it never fails to kneel to indifferent power, to that power of mortal indifference that is money. Diabolical, radically bad in that way, nature is prostitution, it enslaves itself faithfully, one can have confidence here in it, it enslaves itself to what is betrayal itself, perjury, abjuration, lie, and simulacrum.

Which are never very far from the specter. As is well known, Marx always described money, and more precisely the monetary sign, in the figure of appearance or simulacrum, more exactly of the ghost. He not only described them, he also defined them, but the figural presentation of the concept seemed to describe some spectral "thing," which is to say, "someone." What is the necessity of this figural presentation? What is its relation to the concept? Is it contingent? That is the classic form of our question. As we do not believe in any contingency here, we will even begin to worry about the classical (basically Kantian) form of this question which seems to marginalize or keep at a distance the figural schema even as it takes it seriously. The Critique of Political Economy explains to us how the existence (*Dasein*) of money, metallic *Dasein*, gold or silver, produces a remainder.³⁴ This remainder is—it remains, precisely—but the shadow of a great name: "Was übrigbleibt ist magni nominis umbra." "The body of money is but a shadow [*nur noch ein Schatten*]."³⁵ The whole

movement of idealization (*Idealisierung*) that Marx then describes, whether it is a question of money or of ideologems, is a production of ghosts, illusions, simulacra, appearances, or apparitions (*Scheindasein* of the *Schein-Sovereign* and of the *Schein-gold*). Later he will compare this spectral virtue of money with that which, in the desire to hoard, speculates on the use of money after death, in the other world (*nach dem Tode in der andern Welt*).³⁶ *Geld, Geist, Geiz*: as if money (*Geld*) were the origin both of spirit (*Geist*) and of avarice (*Geiz*). "Im Geld liegt der Ursprung des Geizes," says Pliny as quoted by Marx right after this. Elsewhere, the equation between *Gaz* and *Geist* will be joined to the chain.³⁷ The metamorphosis of commodities (*die Metamorphose der Waren*) was already a process of transfiguring idealization that one may legitimately call spectroptic. When the State emits paper money at a fixed rate, its intervention is compared to "magic" (*Magie*) that transmutes paper into gold. The State appears then, for it is an appearance, indeed an apparition; it "seems now to transform paper into gold by the magic of its imprint [*scheint jetzt durch die Magie seines Stempels Papier in Gold zu verwandeln*; Marx is referring to the imprint that stamps gold and prints paper money]."³⁸ This magic always busies itself with ghosts, it does business with them, it manipulates or busies itself, it becomes a business, the business it does in the very element of haunting. And this business attracts the undertakers, those who deal with cadavers but so as to steal them, to make the departed disappear, which remains the condition of their "apparition." Commerce and theater of gravediggers. In periods of social crisis, when the social "nervus rerum" is, says Marx, "buried [*bestattet*] alongside the body whose sinew it is" (131), the speculative burying of the treasure inters only a useless metal, deprived of its monetary soul (*Geldseele*). This burial scene recalls not only the great scene of the cemetery and gravediggers in *Hamlet*, when one of them suggests that the work of the "grave-maker" lasts longer than any other: until Judgment Day. This scene of burying gold also

evokes more than once, and still more exactly, *Timon of Athens*. In Marx's funerary rhetoric, the "useless metal" of the treasure once buried becomes like the burnt-out ashes (*ausgebrannte Asche*) of circulation, like its *caput mortuum*, its chemical residue. In his wild imaginings, in his nocturnal delirium (*Hirngespinnst*), the miser, the hoarder, the speculator becomes a martyr to exchange-value. He now refrains from exchange because he dreams of a pure exchange. (And we will see later how the apparition of exchange-value, in *Capital*, is precisely an apparition, one might say a vision, a hallucination, a *propety* spectral apparition if this figure did not prevent us from speaking here properly of the proper.) The hoarder behaves then like an alchemist (*alchimistisch*), speculating on ghosts, the "elixir of life," the "philosophers' stone." Speculation is always fascinated, bewitched by the specter. That this alchemy remains devoted to the apparition of the specter, to the haunting or the return of *revenants* is brought out in the literality of a text that translations sometimes overlook. When, in this same passage, Marx describes the transmutation, there is haunting at stake. What operates in an alchemical fashion are the exchanges and mixtures of *revenants*, the *madly spectral* compositions or conversions. The lexicon of haunting and ghosts (*Spuk, spuken*) takes center stage. Whereas the English translation speaks of the "alchemist's apparitions" ("The liquid form of wealth and its petrification, the elixir of life and the philosophers' stone are wildly mixed together like an alchemist's apparitions"), the French translation drops the reference to ghosts (*spuken alchimistisch toll durcheinander*) with the phrase "fantasmagorie d'une folle achimie."³⁹

In short, and we will return to this repeatedly, Marx does not like ghosts any more than his adversaries do. He does not want to believe in them. But he thinks of nothing else. He believes rather in what is supposed to distinguish them from actual reality, in living effectivity. He believes he can oppose them, like life to death, like vain appearances of the simulacrum to real presence.

He believes enough in the dividing line of this opposition to want to denounce, chase away, or exorcise the specters but by means of critical analysis and not by some counter-magic. But how to distinguish between the analysis that denounces magic and the counter-magic that it still risks being? We will ask ourselves this question again, for example, as regards *The German Ideology*. "The Leipzig Council—Saint Max" (Stirner) also organizes, let us recall once more before coming back to it later, an irresistible but interminable hunt for ghosts (*Gesperst*) and for revenants or spooks (*Spuk*). Irresistible like an effective critique, but also like a compulsion; interminable as one says of an analysis, and the comparison would not be at all fortuitous.

This hostility toward ghosts, a terrified hostility that sometimes fends off terror with a burst of laughter, is perhaps what Marx will always have had in common with his adversaries. He too will have tried to conjure (away) the ghosts, and everything that was neither life nor death, namely, the re-appearance of an apparition that will never be either the appearing or the disappeared, the phenomenon or its contrary. He will have tried to conjure (away) the ghosts like the conspirators [*conjurés*] of old Europe on whom the *Manifesto* declares war. However inexpiable this war remains, and however necessary this revolution, it conjures [*conjure*] with them in order to exorcise-analyze the spectrality of the specter. And this is today, as perhaps it will be tomorrow, our problem.

2. For "conjunction" means, on the other hand, "conjurement" (*Beschwörung*), namely, the magical exorcism that, on the contrary, tends to expulse the evil spirit which would have been called up or convoked (OED: "the exorcising of spirits by invocation," "the exercise of magical or occult influence").

A conjunction, then, is first of all an alliance, to be sure, sometimes a political alliance, more or less secret, if not tacit, a plot or a conspiracy. It is a matter of neutralizing a hegemony or overturning some power. (During the Middle Ages, *conjuratio* also

designated the sworn faith by means of which the bourgeois joined to together, sometimes against a prince, in order to establish free towns.) In the occult society of those who have sworn together [*des conjurés*], certain subjects, either individual or collective, represent forces and ally themselves together in the name of common interests to combat a dreaded political adversary, that is, also to conjure it away. For to conjure means also to exorcise: to attempt both to destroy and to disavow a malignant, demonized, diabolized force, most often an evil-doing spirit, a specter, a kind of ghost who comes back or who still risks coming back post mortem. Exorcism conjures away the evil in ways that are also irrational, using magical, mysterious, even mystifying practices. Without excluding, quite to the contrary, analytic procedure and argumentative ratiocination, exorcism consists in repeating in the mode of an incantation that the dead man is really dead. It proceeds by formulae, and sometimes theoretical formulae play this role with an efficacy that is all the greater because they mislead as to their magical nature, their authoritarian dogmatism, the occult power they share with what they claim to combat.

But effective exorcism pretends to declare the death only in order to put to death. As a coroner might do, it certifies the death but here it is in order to inflict it. This is a familiar tactic. The constative form tends to reassure. The certification is effective. It wants to be and it must be in effect. It is effectively a performative. But here effectivity phantomalizes itself. It is in fact [*en effet*] a matter of a performative that seeks to reassure but first of all to reassure itself by assuring itself, for nothing is less sure, that what one would like to see dead is indeed dead. It speaks in the name of life, it claims to know what that is. Who knows better than someone who is alive? it seems to say with a straight face. It seeks to convince (itself) there where it makes (itself) afraid.⁴⁰ now, it says (to itself), what used to be living is no longer alive, it does not remain effective in death itself, don't worry. (What is

going on here is a way of not wanting to know what everyone alive knows without learning and without knowing, namely, that the dead can often be more powerful than the living; and that is why to interpret a philosophy as philosophy or ontology of life is never a simple matter, which means that it is always too simple, incontestable, like what goes without saying, but finally so unconvincing, as unconvincing as a tautology, a rather heterological tauto-ontology, that of Marx or whomever, which relates everything back to life only on the condition of including there death and the alterity of its other without which it would not be what it is.) In short, it is often a matter of pretending to certify death there where the death certificate is still the performative of an act of war or the impotent gesticulation, the restless dream, of an execution.

the *Possibility of Justice*, eds. D. Cornell, M. Rosenfeld, D.G. Carlson, trans. M. Quaintance (New York: Routledge, 1992). The French text will appear in 1994.

- 5 Derrida writes "l'à-venir," which spaces out the ordinary word for the future, *avenir*, into the components of the infinitive: to come. Whenever this insistence recurs, we will translate "future-to-come," but in general one should remember that even in the ordinary translation as simply "future," *avenir* has the sense of a coming, an advent. (Tr.)

1 INJUNCTIONS OF MARX

- 1 A common term for ghost or specter, the *revenant* is literally that which comes back. We leave it in French throughout. (Tr.)
- 2 The term *hantise*, translated here as "haunting," also has the common sense of an obsession, a constant fear, a fixed idea, or a nagging memory. We will continue to translate it simply with the gerund "haunting" so as to maintain a clearer link with the ghostly in general. (Tr.)

- 3 Paul Valéry, "La Crise de l'esprit," in *Oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1957), vol.1, p. 993. Ought one to have recalled here that in the West, near the end of the European peninsula, Denmark almost became, precisely along with England, the last State of the resistance to a certain Europe, that of Maastricht? No, this corollary on the royal head would be oriented instead toward other places. First of all the places of articulation between these propositions and those of *The Other Heading* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992) which also analyzed a treatment of the *capital* (the chief and the head), in particular by Valéry, so as to reintroduce the question of Europe as the question of *spirit*—which is to say that of the specter. And we will not fail to insist as well, accordingly [*c'est le premier chef*], on a certain figure of the head, if one can put it that way, *der Kopf* and *das Haupt*, on the way it returns, regularly, to impose itself in many places of Marx's corpus, and among those that are most hospitable to the ghost. In a more general and more implicit manner, the present essay pursues earlier paths: around the work of mourning that would be coextensive with all work in general (in particular in *Glas* [Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986]), on the problematic border between incorporation and introjection, on the effective but limited pertinence of this conceptual opposition, as well as the one that separates failure from success in

the work of mourning, the pathology and the normality of mourning (on these points, cf. "Fors," Preface to *The Wolfman's Magic Word*, by N. Abraham and M. Torok [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986], esp. pp. xxi ff., "Shibboleth," in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick [New Haven, Ct.: Yale University Press, 1986], *Cinders* [Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1991], *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989], *Mémoires, for Paul de Man* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1989]), on the surviving of a survival that is reducible neither to living nor dying ("Living On," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, eds. Geoffrey Hartman et al. [New York: Seabury Press, 1979]), on the economy of debt and gift (*Given Time* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992]). As for the logic of specificity, inseparable from the idea of the idea (of the idealization of ideality as effect of iterability), inseparable from the very motif (let us not say the "idea") of deconstruction, it is at work, most often explicitly, in all the essays published over the last twenty years, especially in *Of Spirit*. "Revenant" was also there the first noun ("I will speak of the *revenant* . . .").

- 4 Valéry, p. 1025.
- 5 Valéry, p. 1029.
- 6 Also it concerns us, it is our concern: "[il] nous regarde." (Tr.)
- 7 Paul Valéry, *Lettre sur la société des esprits*, op. cit., p. 1139.
- 8 *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 80, 1 August 1959
- 9 In *L'Amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 109–17; "Marx's Three Voices," trans. Tom Keenan, *New Political Science* 15 (Summer 1986). Page numbers in the text refer to this translation, which has been somewhat modified here in accordance with the emphasis on certain terms. (Tr.)
- 10 There are three idiomatic expressions here—*ça va*, *ça marche*, *par les temps qui courent*—that all speak of movement: going, walking, running. (Tr.)
- 11 *Hamlet*, trans. Yves Bonnefoy (Paris: Gallimard, Folio, 1992).
- 12 *Hamlet*, trans. Jean Malaplate (Paris: Corti, 1991).
- 13 *Hamlet*, trans. Jules Derocquigny (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1989).
- 14 *Hamlet*, trans. André Gide (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959).
- 15 I must here refer to a more systematic approach to these questions of law and the oblique (especially with regard to Kant), notably in my *Du droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), p. 80 and *passim*, and in *Passions* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), pp. 33ff.