



ESSAY

Marx: A Nineteenth Century Ghost

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THE “GHOST” THEME IS THE MAIN POINT of the manifesto's famous sentence. “A ghost of communism haunts Europe.” The ghost is the repressed one. But here the ghost is the spirit of new life. The ghost is the enemy pursued by those who use ancient rituals to banish him. Marx and Engels spoke of the regenerative power of this specter by looking at history. What was this life? The moment of history, which is a class conflict, has established a revolutionary system that extinguishes the spirit of life. At the same time this was the bourgeois revolution which was charmed Marx and Engels. The ghost idea of Marx and Engels is different. A ghost is a nightmare that wanders for a new life. It was the soul of utopia. Perhaps the ghost is an unknown relative or metamorphosis, of the spirit in Hegel.

Jacques Derrida dealt with the ghost theme much later. He even established relations between Shakespeare and Marx. The ghost of Hamlet and the ghosts of Marx. I quote the expression “ghosts” from Derrida. Derrida mentioned not one but several ghosts: 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”. On the other hand, I am more attracted to Lacan than Derrida. Slavoj Žižek writes that Lacan thinks the concept of “symptom” was invented by Marx. Marx before Freud. We can think of it like a psychoanalytic question: Why is communism shown

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in ghost form? Does this mean the spirit of the world that is not wanted to be seen or to be seen and wanted to be suppressed?

My work, “Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Ghost,” seeks to bring to mind this symptom. It's a constructed punctum. The technique of my work is digital manipulation. My inspiration is nineteenth century ghost photographers. Its visual aesthetic is gothic, a reference to the metaphors of ghosts and nightmares that Marx chose to use.

The ghost interpretation in contemporary culture is based on that communism is over. The ghost is dead (end of history theories in the 1990s). But the ghost is staring. It is always nearby. There's a ghost when it comes to mind. For the time being it has haunted the form of Marx. But he/it wants to say the same thing. “This new life is possible.”

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WORK

Marx: A Nineteenth Century Ghost

Photomanipulation by Engin Ümer, 2017

