

**The Jewish Question Revisited:
Marx, Derrida, and Ethnic Nationalism***
Pre-Print Version
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Abstract: The question of nationalism as spoken about in contemporary circles is structurally the same as Marx's 'Jewish Question.' Through a reading of Marx's early writings, particularly the 'Jewish Question' essay, guided by Derrida's *Specters of Marx* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, it is possible to begin to rethink the nationalist question. In this light, nationalism emerges as the byproduct of the reduction of heterogenous 'people' into a homogeneous 'state;' such 'excessive' voices occupy an ontological space outside of the categories within which the state operates, and thus return to, in Derrida's terms, 'haunt' it. When viewed in this way, contemporary solutions to the nationalist question which depend on reproducing this reduction are called into question.

Keywords: Marx --- Derrida --- Nationalism --- Gottlieb, G. --- Kaplan, R. --- Anderson, B.

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'We are now leaving little by little.'

--- Sergei Esenin¹

We will begin with the observation that the question of nationalism as spoken about in contemporary political circles --- 'Serbian Nationalism,' 'Chechnya,' 'Palestinian National Authority' --- was articulated more originally by Marx and named the 'Jewish Question.' This is not to say that either nationalism or the Jewish question began there --- Benedict Anderson finds traces of what will later be called 'nation' in the middle ages.² Rather, it is to disagree with Tom Nairn that 'the theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure' (qtd. in Anderson 13), at least insofar as that charge is applied to Marx himself. In brief: with Marx we can say that to formulate a question properly is to answer it, which is to say that to answer a question is to disperse it into other questions. Thus answered, the nationalism question turns on a responsibility to the ghosts of not-present or partially-present cultures. This means not only that an originary giving, an inheritance, as heard by Derrida, is among the voices of Marx, but also that to betray that voice is to betray Marx's insight, and thus to fail to adequately formulate the nationalist question. Standing from within the space opened by Marx, such a failure emerges as pervasive in contemporary circles, some of which we will critique here. It would be running ahead of ourselves, if not violating the directives given by Marx, to announce at the outset what precisely is meant by 'ethnic nationalism' or the like. It is better, perhaps, to note instances of it, points at which things have occurred that we would like to name 'nationalism,' and not to attempt a comprehensive or exhaustive definition. So, let this be the $\delta\omicron\zeta\alpha$ from which we begin: nationalism can be said in many ways.

¹ Sergei Esenin, *Sitkhotvoreniya i Poemi* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1975), 202.

² He refers, for example, to Portugal's Dom Manuel's solution to his own 'Jewish question' in 'the last decade of the fifteenth century.' *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 60.

If, as Marx suggests, all the great world-historical events occur twice,³ then we can understand that the nationalist question has already been here, and that it begins for us by coming back. It is, to use terms that Derrida develops, spectral and appears as a ghost, which is also to say that it is both a ‘repetition and [a] first time,’⁴ a question that is simultaneously the same and different from the one Marx asked. This gives us a directive for its study: we must begin with a look backwards to one of its sources, a point at which it was originally uttered. We must begin the study of the nationalist question therefore with the study of the Jewish question, in an attempt to locate, or better, to indicate, points at which this spectral nationalism enters. That is, we must study it as both a repetition *and* a first time; these are reflections about an origin, a point at which and from which nationalism emerges. In other words, and to run ahead a bit, it is a point, a locus, to which nationalism is in excess.

If the nationalist question is like the Jewish question in the sense that it begins by coming back, then let there be no confusion: we are not looking for *the* origin of the question, for the instance at which it is only a first time but not a repetition. Such a search is chimerical at best; as Anderson points out, the constellation of things which make the modern self-understanding of ‘nation’ (e.g. and primarily language) ‘looms up imperceptibly out of a horizonless past’ (132). The search for an original horizon is thus misguided from the start. ‘Nation’ is something that for its believers has always been here, and to analyze it otherwise is to impose already a certain understanding of history which is foreign to it: the nation is something which appears as immanent,⁵ outside the causal order of past-present-future. To locate it conceptually then is a

³ ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,’ in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd. ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1978), 594. All Marx page references will be to this volume unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), 10. Perhaps we can note with Anderson that Vietnam’s invasion of Cambodia --- one socialist country’s going to war with another --- has status as a world-historical event and that ‘China’s assault on Vietnam ... rapidly confirmed the precedent’ (12). Perhaps, like Hegel, Anderson forgot to add: the second, in which Vietnamese border guards repelled the invading PLA of China presents itself as a parody of the first, in which the Vietnamese drove the Khmer Rouge from power.

⁵ This, perhaps, is the reason why Simon Critchley, commenting on Derrida, points not just to spectrality but also to *l’ici maintenant sans présence*: the here-now without presence. We will return later to presence, but for now the distinction in temporal orders should be highlighted. ‘Here and now’ is not part of ‘past-present-future,’

category error, which is to say that the nation will find expression in our history and we will call it nationalism, but to locate an absolute origin of the concept is to conflate two orders of questioning.

There is also a plurality in a repetition and a first time. Such a question opens a gap within itself, presenting itself as its own alterity, an alterity for which the search for an absolute origin would irredeemably deface by reducing this plurality to a singularity. But why is the Jewish question a plurality? What about the question makes it plural in this way? Before beginning our reading of Marx, further reflection on this plurality and the search for origins is in order. Adorno, writing not so much from the ‘pessimism’ with which Critchley labels him but from the standpoint of one who sees clearly that the Nazi concentration camps can ‘mean’ only the imperative to question unremittingly,⁶ offers the following, which I quote at length:

Totalitarian systems have ... rather brutally executed what ideology for thousands of years had prepared spritually as the lordship of spirit. The word ‘elementary,’ however, includes both the scientifically simple and the mythologically original. The equivocation is as little an accident as most. Fascism sought to actualize philosophy of origins. The oldest, what has existed the longest, should immediately and literally rule. Hence the first’s inclination to usurpation lurches glaringly into the light The identity of originality and lordship came down to whoever had the power being presumably not just the first, but also the original.⁷

insofar as the former is seen as not connected to anything outside of themselves. Critchley (rightly, I think) points to the voice of Benjamin in Derrida; for this context, it is worth following out to indicate the inversion that occurs between the two temporal orders. The *ici maintenant* is neither causal nor conceptual, unlike the past-present-future; it thus has an affective reality that is missing in conceptual time. Simon Critchley, ‘On Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*,’ *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 21:3 (1994), 1--30, p. 15.

⁶ He writes: ‘A new categorical imperative has been imposed by Hitler upon unfree mankind: to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen This imperative is as refractory as the given one of Kant was once upon a time. Dealing discursively with it would be an outrage, for the new imperative gives us a bodily sensation of the moral addendum.’ *Negative Dialectics*, Trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum Books, 1973), 365. That is, the imperative is not something that can be conceptualized, and it is to be understood as an injunction and not a theoretical apparatus. Elsewhere, he writes that ‘beside the demand thus placed on thought, the reality or unreality of redemption itself hardly matters.’ *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1978), 247.

⁷ *Against Epistemology: A Metacritique*. Trans. Willis Domingo (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1983), 20-21.

Much could be said here, but for now the following will have to do: fascism is a matter of insisting on an absolute origin, which is to say that it is a matter of insisting on something being, in the terms being developed here, a first time but not a repetition. It is thus a matter of forgetting, of effacing the repetition and the sense to which the question must always be thought as irreducibly plural; as Adorno puts it elsewhere, ‘a new beginning at an alleged zero point is the mask of strenuous forgetfulness’ (1973: 71).

The consideration of origins, however, should point to a certain congruence of questions here. That is, under fascism the Jews were perhaps marked for eradication because their existence denied that the first and the original are the same. In this way, we are given a clue as to the *why* of the Jewish question. Not only is Jewish origin different from that posited by fascism, but Judaism also gives a different sense to origin, one in which the comportment it demands of its students --- *e.g.* Biblical interpretation, in which recent events are discovered to have been coded in the text --- renders the origin definitionally plural. Each passing event reconfirms that the origin, thought here as a revealed text, is *not* simple; each event denies that the original and simple could, in principle, be coextensive. There is thus a double denial of the equivocation: the existence of a Jewish community shows an alterity and thus a complexity to the original, and Jewish thinking confirms the matter as one of principle.⁸ Having thus pointed out the dissonance between simple and original, Jewishness demands its own question: one is not to look for the origin, either in the past as a moment of simplicity or in the future as the *telos* of that moment. As Benjamin puts it, ‘The kingdom of God is not the *telos* of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set as a goal. From the standpoint of history it is not the goal, but the end.’⁹ That is, the question

⁸ Critchley interestingly remarks that the discourses which Derrida critiques in *Specters* are ‘Christian in Hegel’s sense of the word, that is, discourses of incarnation and revelation’ (8) and then later asks rhetorically ‘is *hantological* Marxism a continuation of what we might call “philosophical Judaism” by other means’ (17)? The Jewish question, then, is the one that *has* to be asked at this point. Critchley’s echo of von Clausewitz’s rhetoric is disturbing, however, as it seems to lean toward reducing Marx to being programmatic in the sense of trying to construct something. It is this tendency against which I am working here.

⁹ ‘Theologico-Political Fragment,’ trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), 312.

of simplicity is about starting and ending, but the question of *prima causa*, or origin, is another matter altogether. Marx, then, always sensitive to excesses, asks the Jewish question at least in part because the question (and more of this later) is one of excess and of the denial that the original is simple.

The first task, therefore, is to read Marx carefully. The word about which to worry here is ‘care,’ and we must neither read Marx as the dead founder of Communism nor the newly discovered ‘great philosopher’ whom we can finally study without, as Derrida puts it, ‘being bothered --- by the Marxists and why not, by Marx himself, that is, by a ghost that goes on speaking’ (32). Such a limited course of study is to fail Marx --- to attempt to read Marx without hearing echoes, ghosts, and a heterogeneity of voices. This listening to voices is exactly what Marx’s thinking demands: Marx always locates a moment of reduction, a point at which objects suddenly exceed the concepts designed for them, which means that in the reading of Marx we must take into account, if we are to be faithful to him on his own terms, that his text is always going to exceed the concepts we have designed for it. There will always be a heterogeneity in Marx in excess of our reading, and so to read Marx responsibly is to reread Marx and to listen to that heterogeneity.¹⁰

This heterogeneity also tells us to guard against easy interpretations and understandings. One can hear, for example, and I will not deny that this voice is there, in the ‘Jewish Question’ the demand that all thinking be political, bounded somehow by the sublation of the ‘real, individual man [who] has absorbed into himself the abstract citizen’ (46). This inscription of the individual can then be heard as the demand that all proper emancipatory activity be political. It can, in a word, be read quite easily as did Lenin, or more properly, perhaps, Stalin. The point here is that

¹⁰ In this way, Critchley’s reading of Derrida seems a bit misplaced when he (almost with resignation) suggests that we are to take Derrida as saying ‘deconstruction is Marxism.’ Better to say, it seems to me, that Derrida is indicating that deconstruction stems from a certain voice in the spirit of Marx --- and that equate the two is exactly the sort of reduction against which Derrida warns.

this is not the only voice in Marx, and that part of our responsibility in reading Marx is to hear other voices, other points of communication and contact with ourselves.

Marx has written (better: he has spoken), and we must approach him above all with a spirit of indebtedness to him, as the inheritors of his creation. It is no good to say that human emancipation ended for many at Kolyma, because Marx has promised human emancipation, or at least its possibility. That his promise has been violated is an injunction to study it more carefully, and see how human emancipation might come to be violated. Marx has given, and as Derrida says:

A Messianic promise, even if it was not fulfilled, at least in the form in which it was uttered, even if it rushed headlong toward an ontological content, will have imprinted an inaugural and unique mark in history. And whether we like it or not, whatever consciousness we have of it, we cannot not be its heirs. There is no inheritance without a call to responsibility. An inheritance is always the reaffirmation of the debt, but a critical, selective, and filtering reaffirmation, which is why we distinguished several spirits (91--92).¹¹

Our preliminary, and in this sense primary, directive is then to read Marx with a reaffirmation, a necessary reaffirmation to the debt that is his heterogeneous voices. The debt 'is' and it is many: as such, it already dissolves itself as a unity into a multiplicity, and this is why it must always be reaffirmed, because to acknowledge a point of indebtedness is to acknowledge one point, at the exclusion of others. Our debt is thus one of always filtering, always listening. It is to a promise that is always binding, and always unfulfilled.

This question of heterogeneity, then, of ghosts, as Marx and Derrida will name it, is breached from the outset. To read Marx is to recognize ghosts in his inheritance, or in any location of that inheritance. To read Marx is therefore to be attentive to the spectral. And to be attentive to the

¹¹ My interest in Derrida's text, then, is not with its 'content' *per se* but as a way to approach Marx. That is, I am interested in the way it points us to certain possibilities opened by Marx's texts. Critchley points out (his note 11) that Derrida seems to ignore a number of German neo-Marxists in his commentary. Insofar as my reading is heavily informed by Adorno, it suggests the existence of a heterogeneity in both Marx's texts and those of his students; this is all the more reason to (re)read them.

spectral, and here the debt is to Derrida, is to break down, or at least to complicate, our ontology into a 'hauntology.'¹² The ontology is, as it were, still there, but it is heterogeneous. There are things in a hauntology that are between the poles of ontology, which are in its terms either both here and not, or neither here nor not. In other words, to think the Jewish question, and hence to think the nationalist question, is to think already of, or to be guided in thinking by, things which exceed even our most basic effort to decide if they are present or not. The question of nationalism is after all (and here a few examples should sufficiently illustrate the point: Chechnya, Algeria, Quebec) the question of voices which insist that they do not fit the structure of the state as given to them. It is therefore a question of voices of excess, of excesses to the concept of a state. Put differently, if the (national) state is, as Anderson puts it, an 'imagined community' of people who see themselves as contiguous, brought together by some sort of 'historical destiny,' then race becomes an 'eternal contamination ... outside history' (136).¹³ Hence it is a question of voices which in terms of the state cannot exist. And yet they do exist: they keep speaking, keep disrupting normal politics and resisting efforts at their schematization.

A final preliminary observation concerning the general nature and intent of Marx's text is necessary before we begin our look at it. The article is a critique of Bauer, an attempt to indicate the degree to which the latter has, on Marx's account, failed to satisfy the demands raised by the Jewish question. Two points are worth noting. First, Marx is not looking for a 'political solution' to the problem, and efforts to read him as providing one should be resisted. Such programs are, following Critchley's read of Derrida, those that refuse, or close off, spectrality. It is only in such a closed, homogenous reading of Marx that one feels the necessity (always itself an expression of a certain closure) of construction, of 'building socialism.' Secondly, it follows that for our

¹² Critchley astutely points out that 'the difference between *ontologie* and *hantologie* ... can only be marked grammatologically in writing ... [it] by-passes phoneticization' (3). That is, the articulation --- the bringing forth and laying down --- of the term risks its effacement. To see the difference, one has to *look* at it, as a constellation of letters, an object first, before one treats the utterance as indicating a concept.

¹³ One should note the odd juxtaposition of the temporal and atemporal: these people are brought together by history, but their community stands outside history, at its terminus. Hence, when something that occurs independently of the imagined destiny, like race, it cannot but be represented as 'eternal' and as a contaminant.

purposes here, it will not be necessary to determine Marx's actual 'solution' to the problem of emancipation.

First, to a point of agreement between Marx and Bauer: both see a fundamental incompatibility between full Judaism and full citizenship. Hence, Bauer is quoted as remarking that the fully assimilated Jew, *i.e.* one who no longer allows his religious code to interfere with his secular/political life, would 'really have ceased to be Jewish' (29). Marx himself refers to the 'schism' (34) separating the two, and writes that 'the Jew likewise can only adopt a Jewish attitude, *i.e.* that of a foreigner, towards the state, since he opposes his illusory nationality to actual nationality, his illusory law to actual law' (27). The dichotomy between 'illusory' and 'actual' should be foregrounded, because it indicates a gesture on Marx's part to his obsession with the spectral. Illusory law and nationality are law and nationality that are somehow not-law and not-nationality despite their being both law and nationality. In other words, they occupy an ontological space somewhere between being and not-being --- the same ontological space occupied by ghosts and specters. Marx, who as Derrida points out, thinks in terms of presence and absence, comes down hard on the side of not-being --- to be an illusory law is to be not a law at all, but even the formulation suggests this spectral space between the two. Derrida remarks:

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 (39).

We will return to this point in much greater detail later, but it is sufficient to note for the time being that even here, in Bauer's formulation and Marx's before the *Manifesto* and before *Capital*, in a text which is a critique, there is a gap opened up between the supposedly inviolable categories of presence and absence. Further, this gap is opened up with an oblique reference to the spectral, here termed 'illusory.' And, importantly, this reference to the spectral problematizes

concepts like ‘border;’ this problematization of ‘border’ is the starting-point of a critique of some answers to the nationalist question. Suffice it to say for now that despite his ultimate occlusion of it, Marx has raised the issue.

To return to the Jewish question, Marx writes: ‘to formulate a question is to resolve it. The critical study of the Jewish question is the answer to the Jewish question. Here it is in brief: we have to emancipate ourselves before we can emancipate others’ (28). The motion then, is not one of construction¹⁴ but of dissolution or reformulation: the answering of one question occurs in its proper articulation, with the result a constantly shifting series of formulations. Two points are worth noting first and then discussing in some detail. First, and again, the answer to the question is in its formulation, which means that there is no abstraction involved. Secondly, our current thinking --- about the political or whatever --- is inadequate to emancipation, which means that constructions or solutions based on it are not going to work.

The first of these is worth pursuing in some detail, since Marx is sometimes read as failing by constructing too many abstractions --- ‘capital’ and so forth. I wish to exonerate him from this charge, at least in this case. First, to the specific argument that the critical study of a question is its answer and my corollary contention that this critical study amounts to properly asking the question. This motion is the precisely the one Marx uses to answer to Jewish question. He writes:

There is a great difference between saying: (i) that the perfect state, owing to a deficiency in the general nature of the state, counts religion as one of its prerequisites, or (ii) that the imperfect state, owing to its deficiency in its particular existence as an imperfect state, declares that religion is its basis ... The so-called Christian state needs the Christian religion in order to complete itself as a state. The democratic state, the real state, does not need religion for its political consummation (37).

¹⁴In the Cartesian sense, derived from his geometry, that the motion of thinking is the motion of reducing problems to formulae and then constructing, building, solutions to them. Cf. David R. Lachterman, *The Ethics of Geometry* (London: Routledge, 1989), especially at 126--148. I wish to mark here the degree to which Marx moves away from this sort of epistemological stance, as he is often misread on the point.

There is terminology here to which we should be sensitive. The language always indicates particularity: the Christian state needs the Christian religion --- and the perfect state does not, but only for its political consummation. Words like ‘Christian’ and ‘political’ provide definitions, in the original Aristotelian sense of horizons, within which certain things --- religion, the state, and so on --- operate. Marx explicitly *rejects* the temptation to carry his inquiry outside of the space afforded by these first principles, and he specifically indicts Bauer for the making the logical jump when he should not: at the point ‘where the question ceases to be *theological*, Bauer’s criticism ceases to be critical’ (31). Put differently, the emphasis is on asking the question appropriate to the given situation and terms; if one wants to ask a different question, one had better select a different set of terms in which to couch it. Choosing the wrong terms by abstracting them is to invalidate the answer. Hence, the answer has to involve a motion of reformulation of the question, or perhaps better to say, its dissolution into other terms.

There are indications in other texts of the early Marx that we should understand things in this way. For example, in ‘For a Ruthless Criticism,’ he comments that ‘we only show the world what it is fighting for’ (15). Again, the motion is one of reformulation, understood in this case as presentation. That is, it is the presentation of things as they are, the formulation of that presentation into a question. Abstractions are only useful as conscious artifices to determine differences in individual instances. The focus is always on the individuals. Put bluntly, Marx does not reify words like ‘production.’ A passage from his ‘Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy’ should serve to illustrate, if not adequately defend, the argument:

The most modern period and the most ancient period will have categories in common. Production without them is inconceivable. But although the most highly developed languages have laws and categories in common with the most primitive languages, it is precisely their divergence from these general and common features which constitutes their development. It is necessary to distinguish these definitions which apply to production in general, *in order not to overlook the essential differences* existing despite the unity that follows from the very fact that the subject, mankind, and the object, nature, are the same.¹⁵

Much could be said at this point, but let it suffice to note that definitions (recall that Marx understands these as horizons) postulated for production in general are marked only for a reason, that reason being the indication of differentia. The genera are used only for the sake of locating the species. This means that the genera and species are posited *together* in the definition, as codependent on one another, which means that even if it is correct to say that Marx finds the wrong genera, or the wrong categories, it is not correct to say that he does so without qualification. The direction is the reverse of that accusation; the individuals come first, and words like ‘production’ exist to help us differentiate between them.

Let us return to the Jewish question, and Marx's original formulation. To recapitulate: ‘The critical study of the Jewish question is the answer to the Jewish question. Here it is in brief: we have to emancipate ourselves before we can emancipate others’ (28). Marx signposts two related but distinct directions of inquiry here which we will follow. First, and basically, what is, or what does it mean to say, the critical study of the Jewish question? Secondly, what is our condition as not emancipated? We can expect from the outset that these should be essentially connected, and if what I have said already about Marx's methodology holds any water, the first should resolve itself into the second.

So what is the study of the Jewish question? There are several things we should note. First, it dissolves almost immediately into questions as to the relation of religion and the state. As noted already, the problem with Bauer's critique is that it glosses this distinction between the political

¹⁵ in *The German Ideology*, ed. C. J. Arthur (New York: International Publishers), 126, emphasis mine.

and theological, and hence, at the ‘point where the question ceases to be theological, Bauer's criticism ceases to be critical’ (31). The question, then, is one involving demarcation and the question’s own limits, or more properly, the recognition of those limits. There is a gap between the political and the religious, and the articulation of this gap opens for us another space of questioning. The answering of the Jewish question consists in its reformulation. The dissolution is into a questioning of the formation of the political state as such. Marx writes:

The question of the relation between political emancipation and religion becomes for us a question of the relation between political emancipation and human emancipation. We criticize the religious failings of the political state by criticizing the political state in its secular form, disregarding its religious failings. We express in human terms the contradiction between the state and a particular religion, for example, Judaism, by showing the contradiction between the state and particular secular elements, between the state and religion in general, and between the state and its general presuppositions (31-- 32).

As always for Marx, much hinges on how we understand his use of ‘relation’ here. In *Capital*, the problem is one of reification: property as a relationship is taken as an entity, some sort of spectral machine --- a case of, as Derrida puts it, ‘hardheaded specters’ which ‘have commerce among themselves’ (155). Here, the relationship that Marx asks us to observe is different. It is one of contradiction: the question of the relation between political emancipation and religion is also, at the same time, the question of the *contradiction* between political emancipation and religion. To be politically emancipated is to be not religious; the Jew would cease to be a Jew. This question of relation as contradiction refracts repeatedly through the text: by the understanding of the first contradiction, we understand the contrariety of political and human emancipation, the abstract state and the particular religion, and so on. Worth noting here, for our purposes, is that the contradiction is always between the particular and the abstract, where the particular is always in some way in excess of the abstract. It is as though the political state would like very much to assimilate the religious into itself, but cannot. There is always a residual

‘particular element’ left outstanding in the relationship between the state and its general presuppositions.

So the question of contrariety then turns on one of residuum. What is left over, occluded, in the formation of a relation? In the case of the Jewish question, the answer is precisely Judaism. Put differently, the demand for Judaism can be seen here as a demand for particularity. What I am suggesting is that Marx's insight here is about what happens when the particular secular elements of a people, of a state, of a social totality, are conceptualized into words like ‘state.’ For our purposes, the question becomes: what happens in this assimilation? What happens when the particular is reduced to the universal? To carry it further: what is the nature of the excess that is created? In terms of the concept, the excess has no meaning. It does not exist. But it is irreducible. It both exists and does not. It occupies an ontological space between existence and non-existence. In a word, it is spectral.

This is the reformulation of the Jewish question. Marx calls it: ‘this secular opposition, to which the Jewish question reduces itself --- the relation between the political state and its presuppositions ... these profane contradictions’ (35). The profane (as other to theological or holy) indicates something of this world; Marx is thus repeating his gesture to the world and existing peoples within it. They are profane contradictions, which is to say that they are contradictions introduced into the profane by the contradiction between the political state as it exists in reality and its presuppositions. The establishment of the relationship establishes profane contradictions. How one views these contradictions, of course, depends on one's point of view: hence, from the point of view of the state's presuppositions, religion --- the expression of particularity --- is a defect of the state (31). Of course it must be so, since the expression of particularity is exactly the expression of what lies outside the concept.

The elision of this gap between the conceptual and the real is, recalling Hegel's ‘cunning of reason,’ the ‘sophistry of the political state.’ In this case, the echo both demonstrates the argument and foreshadows another of Marx’s invocations of Hegel: that the great world-

historical events occur twice. The necessary (therefore tragic) cunning of reason finds repetition in the political state, which through sophistic (illusory, and thus for Marx false) imitation reproduces the conceptual cunning in real social spaces. In Hegel, the cunning of reason is one of insistence on its own form, and hence the sophistry reproduces this insistence --- form for its own sake, for which one word we might use is 'bureaucratization.' To see through this sophistry is to raise the question of human emancipation. The transition from one to the other, or from our first question to the second is:

We do not say to the Jews, therefore, as does Bauer: you cannot be emancipated politically without emancipating yourselves completely from Judaism. We say rather: it is because you can be emancipated politically, without renouncing Judaism completely and absolutely, that political emancipation itself is not human emancipation (40).

Before making the transition, however, we should pause for a moment and consider the Jewish nature of the question. We can recall that Derrida names two moments of the question, which when put together, can perhaps serve to guide our reflections: they are that Marx has made a 'Messianic promise' and that things begin 'as a repetition and a first time.' The Messianic calls to mind something outside of history, a promise spoken from history's end point, a promise made from a point where its utterance indicates its realization. The promise indicates, if you will, a certain estrangement from the historic, which to follow Benjamin, contemplates the consummation of history, the moment at which the Messiah 'redeems, completes, creates its relation to the Messianic' (1978: 312). History does not become Messianic in the promise; rather, there is always a gap --- a 'relation' --- between the two in its contemplation.¹⁶

¹⁶ Here, perhaps, one can see most clearly the *aporia* induced by attempts to 'build socialism.' Recall Benjamin: 'The kingdom of God is not the *telos* of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set as a goal. From the standpoint of history it is not the goal but the end' (1978: 312). The building of Marxism then reflects a certain conflation of *telos* and end (perhaps borne of a conflation of origin and simple); the coming of the Messianic is something which is 'quietest' (*ibid.*). One's work in history is toward happiness or some worldly end, not toward instantiating utopia.

There is one element of the Jewish Messianic which is of particular interest here: as David was rescued from Babylon, so the Messianic coming --- here we see its character as both a repetition and a first time --- will re-integrate the diaspora and give it a home. The estrangement of the promise is thus one that contemplates a consummation, a return home. When the question is seen as not estranged, when the Messianic and historic are conflated, this theological repetition and first time become profane. Thus lowered from 'Messianic intensity' (*ibid.*) to the historic past-present-future (a sequence of causal chains strung together like 'beads on a rosary'¹⁷) --- the first time disappears altogether and leaves behind only repetition, an iteration of endless identical rosary beads. The violation, that is the profanation of the Messianic, is thus a matter of repetition; at the point where the gap between the sacred and profane is elided, the profane protests the elision and generates images of itself. World-historic events, then, events within the world conceived as governed by the *telos* of history, necessarily occur twice: first tragically as they are lowered into the historic and then farcically as the lowering attempts to replicate itself but entirely within the historic.¹⁸ One might (more of this later) label this repetition a simulacra insofar as it involves inevitably the copy of a copy.

Insofar as the issue for Marx is one of estrangement, and insofar as the Jewish question is one of estrangement from the Messianic, there is again a certain congruence between Marx's question and the Jewish question: we might perhaps say that Marx's question *is* the Jewish question, or perhaps more suggestively, the Jewish question is, throughout his texts, the one raised by Marx. In the same vein, one can hear in Marx the possibility of a very different voice from the one that gets him labeled anti-Semitic (as when in 'The Jewish Question' he remarks that 'the social emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of society from Judaism' (52)).

¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History,' trans. Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 263.

¹⁸ When Marx speaks later in the 'Eighteenth Brumaire' of the 'new social formation,' it is in terms of its need to invoke ghosts --- repetitions without a first time; that is, repetitions estranged from their original habitation in bodies and on the earth --- because bourgeois society 'had need of heroism' (595) and 'earlier revolutions required world-historical recollections' (597).

Speaking earlier in the essay in this other voice, he refers to the distinction between the ‘sabbatical’ and ‘profane’ Jew and refers to a time at which Judaism would be eliminated. We can understand these passages as referring to the elimination of the profane --- the ordinary --- Jew. One might recall that one characteristic of Messianic time is that everyone will observe the Sabbath. More importantly, what emerges is that Marx is referring to the elimination of Judaism as an ‘ism.’ That is, he is referring to the elimination of ‘Jew’ as a category of estrangement, of the estrangement of Messianic and historic time. In Messianic time, the diaspora will be brought together and the Jew will have a home. In brief: in the Messianic kingdom, there will be no reason to name anyone as a ‘Jew.’¹⁹ The question then immediately turns to community. Recall that Anderson refers to the modern capitalist nation as an ‘imagined’ community. That is, for the purposes of this context, it is a community that exists only in estrangement, in the separation between myself, existing and working in a particular location, and my imagining self, existing in vocational homogeneity with others. There is thus a double homelessness: I as homeless relative to my self-conception, and the self-conception as conceptual, historic, estranged from the Messianic. To anticipate things a bit: the Jewish question will be a matter of thinking this estrangement, of finding a home.

And so when we return to the transition, immediately raised is the second problem: what is our condition as not emancipated? Marx provides a direction in his critique of Bauer, whom he cites as demanding the abolition of religion as a precondition of the emancipation of the Jews as citizens (29); from this we can infer that it is as citizens that we are not fully emancipated --- this Marx sees as the ‘general question of the age’ (30).

¹⁹ Insofar as an ‘ism’ refers to difference or particularity from a group, Anderson’s discussion of nationalism comes immediately to mind: one ‘paradox’ he mentions is that of the ‘formal univocality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept’ versus ‘the irredemable particularity of its concrete manifestations’ (14). ‘Judaism’ is conceptual, and yet the appellation ‘Jew’ is always a manifestation of particularity --- either ‘so-and-so is Jewish,’ meaning ‘not like us,’ or ‘we are Jewish,’ meaning ‘not like them.’ The gap between these is the matter of estrangement.

Specifically, Bauer's solution to the problem --- the state abolition of religion --- involves a double motion. It does indeed excise the state from religion, but it at the same time also entrenches religion into man by making it his private matter. As it were, the state can remove itself from religion, but in so doing, it succeeds mainly in legitimating itself as a (political) state and in legitimating the idea of religion. Marx's example of this is the question of private property: for a state to say that private property is a right, or that one has the right to dispose of one's property as one sees fit (*a la Locke*) is to say first of all that property is a relationship the protection of which is valued. If property did not exist, it would not come to the state to abolish it or not. By analogy, if the state says that one has a right to exercise one's religion, then it has also said that religion is a thing the protection of which is to be valued.

The problem is that the state depends on these oppositions to sustain itself. Marx writes: 'It is conscious of being a political state and it manifests its universality only in opposition to these elements' (33). In other words, the existence of a political state depends on both aspects of this double motion; the outcome is not a step toward some sort of human liberation but a justification, an entrenchment, of the original presupposition of the state: the distinction between the public and the private spheres. Every time the state relegates something to the private sphere, it also legitimates the idea of a private sphere. Hence, the original claim to universality contains within it already its contrary: the claim to the particularity of individuals within it. Every such entrenchment deepens this 'schism' (34) and increases the forced separation of individuals from their society.

There is a subtext here, a consequence of this motion, upon which we have already remarked briefly but to which we shall now return in greater detail: the state's separation of the individual involves a conceptualization of the individual on the part of the state. If the state marks itself in opposition to particularities, then its image of itself involves the reflection of those particularities, expressed *qua* or in relation to the universal. To bridge the gap, however, involves a reduction of the individual. The motion here for Marx is one of reduction, if nothing

else of the qualitative to the quantitative,²⁰ of the individual to his universal concept, of (in more contemporary terms) the undefined, non-specific social totality to a clearly demarcated ‘society.’

The question of reduction, and of the excess it generates, is of repeated concern to Marx and to us here, and he turns the resolution of several questions around it. For example, consider the qualitative into the quantitative: in ‘The Meaning of Human Requirements’ the ‘wealth’ of human needs is reduced by the current economic system to terms of quantity: ‘the quantity of money becomes to an ever greater degree its sole effective attribute: just as it reduces everything to its abstract form, so it reduces itself in the course of its own movement to something merely quantitative’ (93). The reduction is one that moves not only to reduce individuals and things to their abstract, universal form; it then reduces *itself* to that form, and the outcome is that there is no longer anything but the abstracted form, estranged abysally from the individuals over which it hovers and altogether unconscious of those individuals. If the reduction is unaware of these individuals, that is not to say that it exerts no power over them; Marx continues that man ‘calls *even* his life *human* life and existence.’ (95) Man reduces himself to the abstract concept of man, no more conscious than the system of his own abstraction. But there is a problem here: it is one thing to abstract a system that is already in some way abstract, but a living man is not such an abstraction and he does not fit into his concept, whether he calls himself by its name or not. There is an excess, a residuum, that is not soluble into the system. An excess that must be --- it is there --- but not be --- it is not articulated, or not even capable of being articulated from within the concept. In a word, it is spectral, and the reduction introduces ghosts.

The manifold reduction is operative in *Capital* in the concept of ‘labor’ as well:

²⁰This calls to mind Adorno’s observation in *Negative Dialectics* that ‘objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder;’ that dialectics ‘indicates the untruth of identity, the fact that the concept does not exhaust the thing conceived’ (1973: 5).

The labor ... that forms the substance of value, is homogeneous human labor, expenditure of one uniform labor-power. The total labor-power of society, which is embodied in the sum total of the values of all commodities produced by that society, counts here as one homogeneous mass of human labor-power, composed though it be of innumerable individual events (306).

Here we see, explicitly, that the abstraction *is* the reduction. Labor is heterogeneous events: the sewing of a jacket, the removal of a bit of iron ore, and so on. Labor *qua* value is neither heterogeneous nor an event. It is first, and above all, homogeneous, with a smooth surface, a countable, measurable mass which can be dispensed evenly as quantity into whatever productive process calls for it. Labor events cannot even be counted; counting requires sameness of kind, but to be an event is precisely, if one resists the urge to reduce, not to be a kind. An event is a singularity, in a specific time and place; there is a heterogeneity of labor-events. Yet in this labor-power there is no heterogeneity, and no event. There is only counting. Something has happened to the events; there can be no countable 'labor power' (despite labor power's insistence to the contrary) without them, but they are not countable labor power. They exist spectrally somewhere outside of labor power, haunting it, returning to it, but never as a part of it. Marx tells us that 'experience shows that this reduction is constantly being made,' which means that disassociated, fragmented spectral labor-events are constantly being made, constantly being generated and made homeless, left to haunt that space between the object and its concept.

The process of reduction, which is to say the process of conceptualization, then, always can be said to spawn ghosts. And it can be said to spawn them in many ways: ghosts as those individuals excluded from the larger word 'society;' ghosts as living individuals within themselves, *i.e.* within their own self-conception; ghosts as heterogeneity made homeless in homogeneity; ghosts as any particularity estranged from universality.

Ghosts are, to depart briefly from Marx, even involved in the creation of the nation-image. On Anderson's account, the development of nations was substantially dependent on the creation of

the printing press and resultant growth of common vernacular print languages.²¹ The common language is then used to conjure spirits in the creation of a community which is itself spectral, imagined:

Nothing connects us affectively to the dead more than language. If English-speakers hear the words 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust' --- created almost four and a half centuries ago --- they get a ghostly intimation of simultaneity across homogenous, empty time (132).

Here, then, are the ghosts of dead heroes from the 'Eighteenth Brumaire,' as the invocation reduces time to a countable homogeneity in which even the distant past seems somehow to be present. The invocation of 'ashes to ashes' reduces the utterance of four centuries ago to something that is in one sense repeatable --- it occurs in imagined community with the speaker today --- but in another sense not, as the spoken utterance resists conceptualization by becoming ever more distant in terms of the countable, homogenous time into which it has been thrust. There is thus an excess, and when the voice speaks it does so spectrally.

This process of spectral generation itself admits of no discrete characterization. It is not as though we can count these ghosts as they come off of some sort of assembly-line, nor is it as if we could construct a schematic of the ghost factory. We cannot even say if they are present or not. We can only mark the fissures out of which they come. And come they will, as the concept tries always to reintegrate, to close the fissure which it can never touch but only deepen;²² as Derrida puts it:

²¹ And, of course, the corresponding death of indigenous spoken (particular, one might say) languages. Given the current proliferation of professed national identities, it should perhaps be noted that on Alan Thein Durning's account, the world has 6000 cultures when measured by spoken language. This should indicate the infinity of ways in which the nationalist question may arise, even if one looks at it only narrowly, through language. This is cited in Stephen Van Evera's fascinating and widely-discussed 'Hypotheses on Nationalism and War' (*International Security* 18:4 (Spring 1994), 5--39), p. 11 note 9.

²² Benjamin: 'This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close

Once the ghost is produced by the incarnation of spirit (the autonomized idea or thought), when this *first* ghost effect has been operated, it is in turn negated, integrated, and incorporated by the very subject of the operation who, claiming the uniqueness of his *own* human body then becomes ... the absolute ghost, in fact the ghost of the specter-spirit, simulacrum of simulacra without end (127).

At last we return to the Jewish question and our character as unfree. In creating itself in opposition to particularities, in reducing itself from them to the universal, the political state entrenches the contradiction (between the public and the private) around which it is constituted and thus exacerbates the problem that it was originally intended to solve, the problem of how it is that people are to live together in a community. In its effort to protect individuals from one another, it brings them together only in homogenous concept and alienates them *qua* individuals. The state, as Marx puts it 'is no longer the essence of *community*, but the essence of *differentiation*. It has become what it was at the *beginning*, an expression of the fact that man is *separated* from the *community*, from himself and from other men' (35). The answer to our second question, *i.e.* what is it about the character of political man (man as member of a state) that is not emancipated, is that man *qua* man does not exist in the state, or if he does, it is only in estrangement from it, as a ghost haunting it: a ghost bound to but made homeless by the political state.

And it is, recalling Derrida's injunction, a question that has been here before. Anderson points out that 'Europe's "discovery" of grandiose civilizations hitherto only dimly rumored ... suggested an irremediable human pluralism' (67). It was a pluralism that manifests itself as Other to the more or less newly (completely) homogenized national identities of Europe; as Europe tried to assimilate these cultures, it only created more nations (or rather, more national identities). Conquered people began to develop a sense of community with one another --- a community as 'conquered by a certain nation,' a community of people defined as, for example,

them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress' (1968: 257--258).

Spanish but not Spanish --- subjects but not citizens. Hence, they developed their own sense of community as a particularity excessive to the national concepts given them; this excessive particularity in turn strengthened the European country's image of *itself* as a nation: it is that community which has conquered the community-as-conquered. One arrives therefore at Anderson's riddle: 'Why was it precisely *creole* communities that developed so early conceptions of their nation-ness --- well before most of Europe?' (52).

The answer involves historical details that need not directly concern us here,²³ but two points are worth noting. First, this self-conceptualization as nation produced a correlate sense of homelessness among those who held that identity; as particular against the colonial Other, they were also already particular against the indigenous population with which they lived but over which they administered and with which they no longer identified fully. As Anderson puts it, the indigenous intelligentsia could not exist for the homeland: they were indigenous, 'condemned to an irrational permanent subordination' (88). Neither could they exist for the indigenous society in which they found themselves moving. Hence, Chandra Pal observes that an Indian magistrate 'estranged himself from the society of his people and became socially and morally a pariah among them' (qtd. in Anderson 88). As magistrate --- member of a nation --- he was no longer Indian. This imagining as nation thus created people who could exist neither in the self-conceptions of their own population nor that of their conquerors. Yet they did exist; in a word, they were spectral, ghosts haunting the nation but made homeless by it.

²³ Briefly: on Anderson's account, one element which unifies nations is the establishment of a central power to which members make pilgrimages. Hence, 'the pilgrimages of creole functionaries were not merely vertically barred. If peninsular officials could travel the road from Zaragoza to Cartagena, Madrid, Lima, and again Madrid, the "Mexican" or "Chilean" creole typically served only in the territories of colonial Mexico or Chile: his lateral movement was as cramped as his vertical ascent. In this way, the apex of his looping climb, the highest administrative centre to which he could be assigned, was the capital of the imperial administrative unit in which he found himself. Yet on this cramped pilgrimage he found traveling-companions, who came to sense that their fellowship was based not only on that pilgrimage's particular stretch, but on the shared fatality of trans-Atlantic birth hidden inside the irrationality was this logic: born in the Americas, he could not be a true Spaniard; *ergo*, born in Spain, the *peninsular* could not be a true American' (58--59).

Secondly, one should note that this imagining itself created the ground for further imaginings: if the magistrate is not Indian but rules over him, then the Indian has to define himself as other to the magistrate. Thus, in Rwanda, where the colonial government of Holland exploited racial differences among the indigenous population, the Tutsi ruled as magistrates for the Dutch, and the Hutu defined themselves as irremediably different from the Tutsi. To recall Derrida's imagery, the resulting logic involves the generation of 'Ghosts of specter-spirits, simulacrum of simulacra without end' (127). Perhaps this is why Wole Soyinka, European-educated but imprisoned for his race, writing from prison in the Nigerian civil war, asks, 'Must I now reject Kant?'²⁴

Standing within the space opened by Marx and Derrida, we may now return to the contemporary question of nationalism. I wish to focus specifically on Gidon Gottlieb's 'Nations without States.'²⁵ Gottlieb explains his thesis:

A deconstruction and rearrangement of rigid concepts of territorial borders, sovereignty and independence that originated in Western Europe has become a necessity in the East, where the creation of homogeneous nation states is out of the question. This deconstruction leads to 'soft' solutions; it does not entail changes in international borders or the creation of new independent states. It reorders the standing of national communities on an internal constitutional plane as well as on the international diplomatic (105).

He then goes on to outline four such 'soft solutions:' 1) 'Soft spaces' which are somewhat loosely structured spaces for the governance of specific concerns. There is a degree of temporality (in the sense that these structures might vary from time to time) implied here. 2) 'Historical homelands,' which means special regions with limited capacities for self-governance that cross international borders, the idea being to minimize the extent to which it matters whether

²⁴ He continues, quoting Kant: "'However minute a quantity the individual may be in the factors that make up history, he is a factor.'" Must I now say to him: yes, a factor? About as effective as flotsam on ocean currents.' One might add: that to be a factor is precisely to be dead, to be not living, to be reduced, made spectral: not really living, but a quanta haunting history. Wole Soyinka, *The Man Died* (New York: Noonday Press, 1988), 87.

²⁵ *Foreign Affairs*, 73:3 (May/June 1994), 100--112.

one is, say, a Turkish Kurd or an Iraqi Kurd. 3) ‘The Status of Nations:’ ethnic communities and nations granted formal international status. Gottlieb is here thinking along the lines of the PLO, which had full diplomatic relations with many states. 4) ‘National Identity and National Rights,’ though this is perhaps a misnomer. Gottlieb envisions excising the concept of political citizenship completely from the concept of national identity. 5) ‘Union of Peoples and Union of States,’ essentially the same idea as ‘historical homelands,’ but with a different scope. Here the idea is that national communities separated from one another by various conflicts be allowed ties, as a means of pacifying those conflicts.

There is much that is problematic here, although before we begin to problematize things, it is important to note that Gottlieb has begun with an insight --- that societies have not organized themselves in a way that we would like. People are having difficulty living with one another. This is important to recognize here and now because it is the same insight that began the enlightenment politics we have just been describing. It is the insight that, to borrow from Hobbes, life in the ‘state of nature’ is ‘nasty, brutish, and short.’²⁶ It is an insight that flatly denies the possibility of Fukuyama’s ‘end of history,’ or at least renders it irreversibly damaged by that which is excessive to it.²⁷ Robert Kaplan, writing from both research and first-hand observation, in an article that has generated substantial attention,²⁸ explicitly brings together the

²⁶ Hobbes writes: ‘Hereby it is manifest that during the time that men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in a condition which is called war; and such a war is of every man against every man.’ One should note immediately the gesture to particularity: this is not a war of one nation against another, but a war, a non-peace of people against one another, as living individuals. He continues: ‘In such condition there is no place for industry ... and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.’ In short, it is life *sans any* concept. (*Leviathan*, in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. Edwin A. Burt (New York: The Modern Library, 1939), 161).

²⁷ In another context, Adorno writes: ‘Our metaphysical faculty is paralyzed because actual events have shattered the basis on which speculative metaphysical thought could be reconciled with experience. Once again, the dialectical motif of quality recoiling into quantity scores an unspeakable triumph ... that in the concentration camps it was no longer an individual who died but a specimen --- this is a fact bound to affect the dying of those who escaped the administrative measure’ (1973: 364).

²⁸ For example, Marc Levy, in assessing the relevance of the environment as a security issue, relates that ‘President Clinton was reported to have scribbled marginal notes on his personal copy, and citation of it became

gap between the lives of Fukuyama's last men and those in Hobbes' state of nature²⁹ --- the spectral ghosts haunting the last men --- in imagery that speaks not directly of ghosts but nevertheless evokes an almost microscopically narrow but infinitely abyssal fissure. He quotes Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon:

Think of a stretch limo in the potholed streets of New York City, where homeless beggars live. Inside the limo are the air-conditioned post-industrial regions of North America, Europe, the emerging Pacific Rim, and a few other isolated places, with their trade summitry and computer-information highways. Outside is the rest of mankind, going in a completely different direction (60).³⁰

Somehow this rest of mankind, homeless though they are, are bound to us and our limousine. They have a *topos* but no home, are doomed to haunt the streets outside of the limousine, and are generated by the same structures that generated the limousines; from inside the limousine they do not exist but they must exist --- and if Marx is right, we inside the limousine create them somehow. Worse still, the simulacra generate more simulacra --- and in conceptualizing ourselves, we haunt ourselves with these ghosts. Every conceptualization is an exorcism, an effort to deny the ghosts generated by the last exorcism, ghosts made out of the living, felt excesses to our own machinery of conceptualization, and thus every exorcism is a conjuration.

Adorno observes, and he is worth quoting at length on this point, for his insight can point us toward an initial response to Gottlieb, that:

practically *de rigueur* for Cabinet members appearing before Congress' ('Is the Environment a National Security Issue?' *International Security* 20:2 (Fall 1995), 35--62:35), and Charles William Maynes singles it out in his critique of 'The New Pessimism' in an article of that title (*Foreign Policy* 100 (Fall 1995), 33--49).

²⁹ 'We are entering a bifurcated world. Part of the globe is inhabited by Hegel's and Fukuyama's Last Man, healthy, well fed, and pampered by technology. The other, larger part is inhabited by Hobbes' First Man' (60). Our attention is thus drawn to two limits, a last and first, the endpoints on a continuum of ways of living, of which continuum neither is part: they are infinitely separated already in concept, before they even leave the realm of the conceptual. Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy,' *The Atlantic*, February 1994, 44--76.

³⁰ For Homer-Dixon's discussion of the environment and security, see his 'On the Threshold: Environmental Changes as Causes of Acute Conflict,' *International Security* 16:2 (Fall 1991), 76--116.

The only trouble with self-preservation is that we cannot help suspecting the life to which it attaches us of turning into something that makes us shudder: into a specter, a piece of the world of ghosts, which our waking consciousness perceives to be nonexistent. The guilt of a life which purely as a fact will strangle other life, according to statistics that eke out an overwhelming number killed with a minimal number rescued ... this guilt is irreconcilable with living. And the guilt does not cease to reproduce itself, because not for an instant can it be made fully, presently, conscious. This, nothing else, is what compels us to philosophize. And in philosophy we experience a shock: the deeper, the more vigorous its penetration, the greater our suspicion that philosophy removes us from things as they are (1973: 364).

There is much that could be said here, and we must content ourselves with marking a few points. The guilt is the spectral. It is --- it haunts, it will not go away --- and yet it is not. In our waking hours, it does not admit of existence. Our 'waking hours:' that is to say, in our conceptualizing hours, the times when our 'metaphysical faculty' is operative. Then the spectral guilt does not, cannot exist. It is excessive of our concepts, and it denies them. The concepts must exist --- this is our imperative from Kant --- and so the guilt must not. The problem is that every attempt to grasp this guilt, to bring it out into the light of day so as to deal with it properly (conceptually) only causes it to reproduce itself, an indefatigable heterogeneity within ourselves, spawned by our own efforts at homogeneity. Derrida will call it a 'presence,' Adorno an 'affirmation;' at the end of the day they are the same insofar as they are a denial of what does not fit them. As denial, they are 'absence' and 'negativity,' concepts into which their objects will not fit. And so these ghosts of guilt reproduce themselves *ad infinitum*, kept at arm's length by the conceptualizing apparatus which tries to shoehorn them into either something or nothing. It is this indefatigable guilt which first compels us to philosophize, which means philosophy in this sense is first and above all an exorcism, and as such it can never succeed. It can only remove itself further and further from things as they are.

The point of all of this digression is to indicate that Gottlieb's insight is his haunting by the excess of the concept 'nation.' Thus compelled to philosophize, Gottlieb is moved by a time that is, as Derrida is fond of quoting, 'out of joint.' This is precisely where his problems begin. As

Derrida remarks, ‘Empiricism has a vocation for heterology’ (123), which is to say that the among other things facts do not correspond to their concepts any more after his attempt to narrow the gap between them than before.³¹ If the original concept ‘nation’ generated ghosts, then Gottlieb’s solution as concept is bound to generate them as well, only infinitely more because he multiplies by five the number of concepts and borders involved in the process, and so multiplies by five the number of fissures from which ghosts emerge. Empiricism is looking at the world, and that it has a vocation means (certainly, after Weber) that it pursues its object with a single-mindedness that defies comprehension; when this single-mindedness pursues heterology, this means that every successive look at the world generates more contours and more shapes, more heterogeneity. Every instance of heterogeneity assimilated into homogeneity is also a fissure. Insofar as he generates maps, Gottlieb is doomed from the start.

The question, then, can in one sense be viewed as topographical. The original discomfort, by all accounts, is with maps. People do not fit onto maps, and in nationalism, they announce that. Gottlieb proposes a series of steps designed to remedy the situation by freeing the people from state-generated maps. He generates for them their own maps, privatizing the maps that ethnic communities have, and in so doing returns us directly to the Jewish question. Gottlieb generates what amounts to a right to a map, and a freeing of the state from maps. But generating a right to a map is like generating a right to property. It does not eliminate the problem of property at all; rather, it depends on it. It generates a political emancipation, which is to say that it generates an emancipation not from but in terms of property, and in so doing occludes altogether the question of human emancipation.³² In terms of Gottlieb’s proposal, he does indeed solve the problem

³¹ Derrida here is discussing Marx’s critique of Stirner’s appropriation of Hegel and follows with ‘One recognizes actual experience by its encounter with some other.’ That is, in the case of phenomenology, we are in Hegel’s sense always dealing with ‘life and history ... transfigured, in this very diversity, into relations of consciousness to the object’ (*ibid.*). When one turns that relation over to the object, one discovers an irreducible alterity, a tendency of the object to exceed its concept, and thus one encounters the tendency to proliferate concepts to cover the gap.

³² The juxtaposition of property and nation is suggested also by Anderson: ‘The relatively small size of traditional aristocracies, their fixed political bases, and the personalization of their relations implied by sexual intercourse and inheritance, meant that their cohesions as classes were as much concrete as imagined [particular as

generated by heterogeneity outside of state maps, but in so doing, he raises the problem of heterogeneity from his own maps. If nationalism is an expression of particularity, we should have no reason to expect that it should suddenly assimilate into *any* concept. Kaplan seems to be on target when he says, ‘maps ... create a conceptual barrier that prevents us from comprehending the political crack-up just beginning to occur worldwide. Consider the map of the world, with its 190 or so countries, each signified by a bold and uniform color: this map ... is generally an invention of modernism, specifically of European colonialism’ (69). His own [Kaplan’s] empiricism’s call for heterogeneity generates a vision of future cartography that problematizes the entire notion:

Imagine cartography in three dimensions, as if in a hologram. In this hologram would be the overlapping sediments of group and other identities atop the merely two-dimensional color markings of city-states and the remaining nations, themselves confused in places by shadowy tentacles, hovering overhead, indicating the power of drug cartels, mafias, and private security agencies. Instead of borders, there would be moving ‘centers’ of power, as in the Middle Ages. Many of these layers would be in motion. Replacing fixed and abrupt lines on a flat space would be a shifting pattern of buffer entities ... to this protean cartographic hologram one must add other factors, such as migrations of populations, explosions of birth rates, vectors of disease. Henceforward the map of the world will never be static. This future map --- in a sense, the ‘Last Map’ --- will be an ever mutating representation of chaos (75).

Here we must ask ourselves: what emerges from the juxtaposition of Gottlieb’s and Kaplan’s cartographies? If what we have been saying about Marx is correct, if empiricism really does have a vocation for heterogeneity, if conceptualization produces always already more ghosts, then we should be able to identify the one in the other. The fit is not exact, and nor should it be (the one

conceptual]. An illiterate nobility could still act as a nobility. But the bourgeoisie? Here was a class which, figuratively speaking, came into being as a class only in so many replications. Factory-owner in Lille was connected to factory-owner in Lyon only by reverberation ... But they did come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves through print language’ (74). Hence, he speaks of the nation as a concept that becomes pirated --- or, in other words, a concept the owning of which, the reduction of which to concept, is in principle impossible. Its very universality guarantees its replication and appropriation.

is a concept and the other an object), but the primordial shapes of Kaplan's map are there, held in stasis, in Gottlieb's concept. Kaplan suggests the sort of simulacric production of ghosts of which I have been speaking: for example, in Liberia, 'The guerilla leader Prince Johnson didn't just cut the ears off President Samuel Doe before Doe was tortured to death in 1990 --- Johnson made a video of it' (73--74). The significant moment, in this sense, is not the event but its repetition in Sierra Leone two years later when the plotters of a failed coup were executed in the same way. The effect is an imitative imagined community, one mediated by video tape and the original nation's concept as national; somehow the community of those who govern has replicated the vocational logic from which original nations emerged. Whereas as a trader in early Paris I could read the newspaper and imagine myself doing many of the same things as a trader in Dijon, here the logic takes a perverse form: as a military leader the community is that of those who cut off the ears of their opponents. We are thus returned to Marx: the 'tragedy' of nation, *i.e.* the lowering of the concept 'nation' from the Messianic has become a repetition without a first time, a simulacric reproduction of imagined communities, one after another and without end.

Specifically, Gottlieb's fifth proposal, unions of peoples recognized across official borders which would help to pacify conflicts, sounds perilously close to the idea of 'buffer zones.' Kaplan does not see a world in which there are no boundaries. Borders may go away, but their replacement is by things --- 'centers,' 'buffers' --- that have edges, edges which interact and abrade one another in the same way that borders do. There are a lot more of them, to be sure, and their edges are more difficult to discern: in a word, they are 'soft.' Secondly, Gottlieb explicitly solves the problem of national borders by laying things over them. He never questions the lines on the map. In fact, he explicitly rejects the idea of changing them: 'Boundary changes offer no panacea to national communities scattered without geographical continuity across regions and

empires' (101)³³. Thirdly, Kaplan invokes words like 'tentacles' and 'shadowy' --- a gesture which suggests that there is something inherently problematic in the postulation of these entities as existing. Better to say they are spectral, in that ontological realm between presence and absence, oscillating between them, impossible to exactly pin down (if that could be done, they could be *on* the map, rather than hovering *over* it). Gottlieb makes a similar move in his conclusion when he refers to the 'forces of fragmentation' (112); forces are something which do not properly exist either, at least not as things that are either present or absent (they are neither), but they do haunt in the sense that they cannot be avoided and must be accommodated, shadowy tentacles moving peoples like chess pieces. Finally, Kaplan refers ironically to his as the 'last map.' Gottlieb indicates his intention to help achieve the 'reconciliation of these profoundly conflicting trends' (112). There is a certain finality to that promise, a suggestion that the reconciliation having been done, the conceptual process will have reached fruition. There is an implicit Hegelian gesture here, the soft states as an *Aufhebung*, and it is the sense of finality of the proposal that is disturbing.

There are of course many differences in the pictures. They are also by and large accidental. Gottlieb, for example, does not seem to recognize, or at least give adequate attention to, problems such as the environment or refugee movements.³⁴ Except insofar as he would

³³ It is important here to contextualize Gottlieb's comment a bit, if only to underscore a point. He is responding to the argument that the answer to the nationalist question is the creation of more states, preferably at the level of ethnic homogeneity. He does not offer a citation, but one can assume that he is responding to Michael Lind's 'In Defense of Liberal Nationalism' (presented opposite Gottlieb's article, in the same issue: *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 73, No. 3 (May/June 1994), 87--99). Lind argues that nationalism is not necessarily a bad thing, and that in ethnically homogenous states, it tends to hold them together. Gottlieb is right that this is problematic, insofar as the arbitrary removal of existing borders to fiat the creation of many more new ones would be likely to 'embroil entire regions in hideous strife similar to the Yugoslav war' (101). Given that Gottlieb resists any efforts to change borders, the point seems relevant here; one must ask of Gottlieb, however, the question that if he is legitimate in using what amounts to implementation problems in answering Lind, how *he* plans to implement his *own* proposals. Either possible answer underscores the original problem of the resistance of the concept and object to one another. If Gottlieb answers that implementation details are not relevant, he moves philosophy another step further from the world; if he answers that it simply *should* be done, then we return immediately to his problem with Lind and the violence (in a very real sense, here) inherent in shoehorning people into political concepts.

³⁴ On Kaplan's argument, environmental stresses caused by overpopulation will be the single most important generative of conflicts in the next fifty years. He writes: 'The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution, and possibly, rising sea

characterize them as ‘fragmentary,’ they would seem to escape his conceptual lens. The *essential* difference is that Kaplan’s map is in motion whereas Gottlieb’s is not. The essential question, then, is whether Gottlieb’s map is in stasis only because it is conceptual and abstracted from reality, existing outside of time and actual events. What would happen if it were lowered into time, out of the eternal *now* of conceptual politics? History suggests an outcome not at all consonant with his intent.

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levels in critical, overcrowded regions like the Nile Delta and Bangladesh --- developments that will prompt mass migrations and, in turn, incite group conflicts --- will be the core foreign-policy challenge from which most others will ultimately emanate’ (58).

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