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## **A Reply to The Spectral Proletariat: The Politics of Hauntology in *The Communist Manifesto* by Tim Fisk**

Simon Choat

The revised article is a valuable contribution to readings of *The Communist Manifesto*, providing an original interpretation of Marx's understanding of the proletariat while skilfully negotiating a path between both classical Marxist determinism on the one hand and post-Marxist critiques of essentialism on the other. The discussion of Laclau is now much more sophisticated and provides a convincing critique of his work. Given the complexity of Laclau's work – and the complexity of his relations to both Marx and Derrida – a longer analysis would be needed to do justice to all the issues touched upon, but for the author's purposes the discussion in the revised article is more than adequate.

Equally impressive is the author's use of Derrida. Work on Derrida tends to be dominated by either hagiographical repetition or kneejerk dismissal; both approaches tend to lapse into parody (of the unthinking disciple or the outraged critic respectively). The author avoids both these pitfalls, however, drawing intelligently upon *Specters of Marx* without merely repeating Derrida's reading of the *Manifesto*, and in fact challenging that reading using Derrida's own resources: the author shows well that Marx is more hauntological than Derrida thinks or admits. The discussion of the figure of the spectre is nuanced and insightful, usefully distinguishing spectre from spirit, detailing the spectre's relation to manifestation and embodiment, and convincingly arguing that the spectral logic developed by Derrida (and read back into Marx) is a form of materialism. Although the relations between Marx and Derrida are more carefully traced in the revised article, and although the author does not try to claim that Marx and Derrida are engaged in the same project, I do still think that the differences between them are glossed over a little (though I am not asking for further revisions here): it could still be argued that Marx's desire to 'de-spectralize' or exorcise the ghost of communism presents a strong challenge to any attempt to read the notion of the spectre into Marx's work – perhaps more of a challenge than the author admits. Overall, however, this article does very well in highlighting the (partial) compatibility of Marx and Derrida and demonstrating the utility of Derrida for a radical, materialist politics.

The reference to post-Fordism in the title of the article has (as I recommended) now been removed: given that the article itself said little about post-Fordism, that removal is a sound decision. Nonetheless, the exorcised reference to post-Fordism does perhaps point towards ways in which the work done in this article could be developed. The strengths of the article are its insights into Marx's political-philosophical work; future work could investigate the significance of Marx's concept of the proletariat for the twenty-first century – a project which although clearly outside the scope of this article could build nicely upon the work therein.