

Are All Revolutions Bourgeois?:
Revolutionary Temporality in Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*¹

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Introduction

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte merits serious political and philosophical consideration, its rhetorical flourishes notwithstanding. Setting two modes of revolutionary temporality alongside one another, the text illuminates the problem of revolutionary temporality in all of Marx's later work. The first mode is the temporality of hoarding, which characterizes bourgeois revolutions. The second mode is the temporality of distillation, which characterizes proletarian revolutions. I contrast these temporalities, showing the difference Marx sees between the two types of revolution, a difference that is crucial to his prescriptive project for lasting political change. Then, drawing on Georges Bataille's consideration of Stalin's regime from Volume III of *The Accursed Share*, I use the slim margins of difference between the two temporalities to call Marx's contrast into question. Philosophically, the collapse of the two temporalities foreshadows Marx's return to the Hegelian logic of history in his later texts.

The Temporality of Hoarding

Hoarding is an inherently risky behavior, a gamble or a gambit. The gamble rests on temporal deferral. One must arrive at a stage of enjoyment of the resources that have been stockpiled. This enjoyment conditions hoarding's success. Should the enjoyment remain imaginary, asymptotic, the hoarding has been in vain.

Hoarding eclipses enjoyment itself. The anticipated pleasure or use supplants the current one: hoarding leads to more hoarding and the temporal deferral becomes

permanent. Pleasure or use ultimately becomes the anticipation itself, rather than the promise it holds. Because of this, hoarding is not simply risky, but a logical contradiction.

Hoarding is at the root of the problem of all private property. Having something in the first place, holding it in reserve for future use, makes one vulnerable to having it taken away, be this through one's own death and concomitant loss of the capacity for enjoyment, or to theft. The desire to steal is itself logically conditioned by that which it undermines. I steal in order to have and keep the commodity in question, even when I am not using it, not to have it stolen in turn, be this commodity an object or the throne and its attendant powers.²

Hoarding is also the foundational or pivotal moment of capital and its representative class: the bourgeoisie. In texts on the miser from Volume One of *Capital*, as well as in earlier texts from the *1844 Manuscripts*, Marx distinguishes hoarding proper from accumulation. The difference between the two terms is historical: hoarding belongs to the era of manufacture, accumulation to capital. But the two are linked schematically: accumulation is the essentially private behavior of hoarding become public, the means by which capital employs labor and begets still greater stockpiles of wealth, which are circulated on a grander and grander scale.³ But leaving aside the finer points of this distinction for want of space, let me suggest that hoarding behavior conditions the logical and psychological schema for subsequent, more social behaviors of accumulation.

One can hoard many types of things. One can hoard food, as my grandmother who lived through the Great Depression stocked canned goods in the cellar long after plenty was a reality. One can hoard books one has read, as external technologies of the

memory, books one has not, as external reminders that one should. One can hoard time, scheduling interruption now in order to avoid it later. And one can hoard one's energy, laying low or resting in anticipation of expenditure, as one does before all modes of performance. Louis Bonaparte hoards energy in this fashion, letting those who would oppose him wear themselves out by attrition. Like the guest who deliberately arrives late at a party to enter in on an already developed situation, Bonaparte arrives with fresh energy to take his place among those who have already become tired or drunk.

In the *Brumaire*, the Constituent National Assembly (II; 1996, 40-52), the Legislative National Assembly (III; 1996, 52-66), and the Ballot-Falloux legislature (IV; 1996, 66-76) have each become tired and drunk in turn.⁴ Upon accession to political power, each legislative body attempts to hoard this power, and in doing so wears itself out. The actions of the respective legislatures call any distinction between political and economic hoarding into question: the parvenus' relationship with power is reminiscent of the victim of starvation who eats herself to death. But as power is progressively delivered by increments from the "baser" elements of its constituency, the legislatures lose their power base. Unlike the low expenditure of political energy that pays off for Louis Bonaparte, these legislatures gamble with hoarding and lose.

All movement and all change require the expenditure of energy. In the *Brumaire*, Marx addresses the useless squandering of political energy in petty disputes, periodic seasonal dissolution, and measures to consolidate power, all of which simply wear out the legislative bodies. This expenditure is a force of attrition. Let us follow the particularities from Section IV, in which Marx describes the attrition of the final legislative body prior to Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état*, the coup that will eliminate

legislative power altogether. Section IV clearly illuminates the logical contradictions that beset early bourgeois rule, a rule whose ensuing political, economic, and psychological contradictions are still with us.

In Section IV, Marx describes the legislature of the d'Hautpoul ministry. This ministry is thoroughly bourgeois, having cleansed itself of any remaining power bases in other classes, and of all republican sympathizers. Of this ministry Marx writes, "Never did the bourgeoisie rule more unconditionally, never did it display the insignia of power with more bravado"(IV; 1996, 69). What is the character of this bourgeois rule? For Marx, the term "bourgeois" operates in two ways: first, as a descriptive term of a number of historical classes and second, as a psychological characterization or profile. Let me take each of these in turn.

In the period of French history under consideration, the bourgeois classes are dispersed, except in the face of opposition of a common enemy. Insofar as the identity of the reigning bourgeoisie is consolidated at all, it is consolidated reactively. Recall Nietzsche's analysis of *ressentiment* from the *Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche shows how an identity consolidated in terms of reaction is ultimately an expression of weakness (1969). The fundamental weakness of the bourgeoisie is to have an identity predicated on phenomena external to it. This is also why the bourgeois legislature makes a showy display of its power. It demonstrates a hyper-awareness of those who watch it.

Slowly, the opposition that both enabled and consolidated this bourgeois government has been removed, first through the June massacre, second through the dissolution of the upper and lower houses, and generally through the reversal in the direction of revolutionary energy as Marx describes it in Section III (1996, 52-3). But,

finding nothing to unite against, this “bourgeois class” as a unified movement itself dissolves in turn.

Over the course of the *Brumaire* as a whole, we see how the bourgeoisie is split—and these categories are not mutually exclusive—into pure Republicans, the Montagne, Legitimists, Orleanists, members of the Party of Order, the Petit Bourgeoisie, readers of the *National*, readers of the *Journal des débats*, and the so-called ‘aristocracy of finance’.⁵ Strategic alliances decompose once the common enemy that was uniting them seems to have been effaced.

In the middle sections of the *Brumaire*, Marx makes this point about the Party of Order, a subsection of the bourgeois class. Marx considers the Party of Order’s legislative dissolution in Section IV; the Party of Order’s interests will ultimately be stymied by the Bonaparte coup. Marx writes, “The Party of Order was a conglomerate of heterogeneous social components. Constitutional revision raised the political temperature to the point where decomposition had to occur”(VI; 1996, 93).

Note the metaphors of chemistry that Marx employs in this passage: he characterizes the political party as a thermodynamic body, subject to forces of heat, dissolution of its unity, and attrition of its energy.⁶ The political body’s attempt to hoard power finds its Janus-face in the party’s squandering of energy, for to hoard is also to squander. In the end, the legislature breaks up in the same way as a chemical compound. Hoarding brings about inevitable political decay.

Marx’s image for this legislature and the moves it makes to protect and insure its power is the sword of Damocles (IV; 1996, 72), a classical image in which an excessively servile courtier is reminded of the perilous tenure of all happiness by having a sword

suspended over his head by a hair at dinner. The point of this image is to illustrate the danger that hides at a scene of apparent well-being and enjoyment. By extension, this danger is the existential one: the vulnerability to change of all static states, and particularly of all scenes of enjoyment.

But the Damoclean sword has a special significance for the suicidal bourgeois legislature. Because this legislature lives from a perceived scarcity of power, in the fear of the loss of its enjoyment, it enhances its vulnerability by conservative measures that seek to further consolidate this power. The bourgeois legislature tries to solidify itself into a kind of hyper-stasis and hyper-order, moves intimidated by the name “Party of Order”. The legislature’s rhetoric cites safety from the violence of further revolution as the justification for its measures. But what could ultimately be simpler, more conservative, and safer than a return to the absolute power of a single voice? This drive towards safety, towards simplicity and elegance, undermines the conditions of legislative sovereignty, which is predicated by definition on a plurality of voices. The hair breaks and interrupts the meal, mid-way through the third course. The courtier, suffering from indigestion, cuts the string himself in order to avoid further torment.

Let me turn to the second, psychological significance of the term “bourgeois” as a descriptor for this legislature. The term “bourgeois” operates not only as a historical descriptor of a class, but also as characterization of a certain manner of wielding power, the outlines of which we have seen above. Bourgeois governments wield power in fear and weakness: that is, conservatively in the literal sense of a drive to conserve. Conservatism lives not from the scarcity of power itself but from its perceived scarcity: it lives in memory of past deprivations of power and in anticipation of future

deprivations. The bourgeois mode of wielding power returns us to the logical contradictions of the behavior of hoarding. The psychology of the bourgeoisie is the psychology of the hoarding consciousness. The politics of the bourgeoisie is a performance of the memory of deprivation of political power: a tyranny brought to power by a democracy. The political economy of the bourgeoisie is one of stockpiled wealth and its intermittent, disastrous crises of accumulation. These latter are the recurrent bourgeois revolutions of the nineteenth century.⁷ The temporality of hoarding thus has psychological, political, and economic expressions.

If the laws passed do not at the same time become an accumulation that engages the public power base in support of legislative sovereignty, the legislature squanders its energy in its attempt to hoard power. In practice, the conservatism of the bourgeois legislature caused it to make laws that replicated the authoritarian structures of the feudal era, and not only in form. In Section IV, Marx relates that these laws include a wine tax and a law abolishing unbelief (1996, 69). They also demonize as “socialistic” all forms of technological and infrastructural progress, and ultimately all forms of opposition or change. These reactionary measures are added to the general unproductiveness of a legislature so beset by internal tensions that it fails to do anything but engage in “petty intrigues”(1996, 73). When not engaged in such intrigues, the legislature takes breaks in which its factionalism is further enhanced and the time of its attrition lengthened.

Images of hoarding are explicit in the closing section of the *Brumaire* (VII). Marx employs them to show how that which appears as liberation can become a chain, as when one lives in poverty in order to hoard money or undermines one’s political power base in order to save it. Marx describes the hoarding characteristic of the rural

conservative peasantry. Newly liberated from feudalism, members of this class are overly anxious to hold onto titles to their land. The memory of the revolutionary importance of ownership retains its grip even as these titles become a new way of extorting mortgage payments instead of feudal duties. The small landholdings also divide and isolate the rural peasants, precluding class-consciousness. Landholdings become vehicles for the ascendance of capital, and thus for the class oppression they originally opposed. Marx writes that in its haste to “satisfy [its] new found passion for property undisturbed”, the peasant class causes its own ruin, for the small landholding “has developed in the course of [the 19th] century into the law of [its] enslavement and pauperisation”(VII; 1996, 119). Peasants hoard titles to land: mortgages become a tithe changed in name but not in content, in form but not in function.

The Temporality of Distillation

In Section VII of the *Brumaire*, Marx supplements the image of the peasant’s proprietary hoard of the small landholding with a more specific invocation of hoarding. At the close of the section, he uses the temporality of distillation to describe the proletarian revolution that is still to come. Foreshadowing the doom of the whole era of history under consideration, Marx writes of the corruption of Louis Bonaparte and the Society of December 10: “Every day he and his hangers-on call to each other as the Italian Carthusian called out to the miser who made a show of counting up the money on which he would be drawing for years to come: ‘You are counting up your goods, but you should first be counting up your years.’ So as not to get the years wrong, they count the minutes”(VII; 1996, 126).

The passage is ambiguous. On the one hand, Marx shows Bonaparte and his ruffian crew to be critics of hoarding, which operates in the too-lengthy time frame of the temporal deferral. On the other hand, Marx shows how failure to consider the future at all can go awry: how the time frame can become too narrow, a matter of minutes and petty temporary gain. To squander energy resources to an infinitely deferred future is one thing, to squander with no future at all in view quite another. A squanderer of the second sort, Louis Bonaparte “produces anarchy in the name of order”(VII; 1996, 127), or produces a terror.⁸ Marx’s implicit suggestion must be for mediation between overly lengthy models of temporal deferral and schemes for short-term gains that fail to take into account the future altogether.

For Marx, even the terror brought about by Louis Bonaparte’s government will have a kind of productive force. Marx’s apocalyptic closing comments in the *Brumaire* indicate the framework of temporal deferral that he himself uses to work the events of mid-nineteenth century France into his overarching revolutionary schema. Marx explains Bonaparte’s ascent in relation to the proletarian revolution that is yet to arrive definitively. Marx risks the structure of temporal deferral as a mode of explanation. This is his gamble at making sense of the bloodshed, the apparent defeats of proletarian revolutions represented by the June massacre and similar events in Germany.

Marx’s summarizes the bloody events of mid-nineteenth century continental politics in relation to his revolutionary schema, asserting that the advancing proletarian revolution is moving through an indefinite purgatory (VII; 1996, 115).⁹ Through the process of purgation, the elements of revolution—a unified class of oppressors and an equally unified class of oppressed—will be distilled into sufficiently pure essences. But

just as the tortures of purgatory are predicated upon accession to heaven, just as the hoarder must have his or her day of enjoyment in order for the hoarding to have been worthwhile, the accumulation of bodies and dispersed legislatures must in the end be *for* something.

In addition to explaining that the revolution's defeats are moments of a larger movement that will become apparent from an enlarged historical scope, Marx gives an account of why the bodies of his contemporary revolutionaries are accumulating. His chemical rhetoric of purity and distillation are not incidental. For to the sectarian and therefore insufficiently unified Bourgeoisie, Marx adds a sectarian and insufficiently unified Proletariat of at least three warring characters: urban-industrial, rural, and lumpen.¹⁰ The proximity to feudal dissolution taints the class purity of both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The revolution's purgatory is also the distillation of its elements: a crucible for the formation of two less messy bodies or forces, purified and more simply opposed. The drive is to elegance, in its logical and mathematical sense. But Marx's appeal to this temporality of distillation suggests that he himself struggles to escape the temporality of hoarding and its futural thrust. It also shows his proximity to the philosophy he repudiated in his early years: the Hegelian logic of history.

In *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx writes, "The revolution, which finds here not its end, but its organisational beginning is no short-lived revolution. The present generation is like the Jews whom Moses led through the wilderness.¹¹ It has not only a new world to conquer, it must go under in order to make room for the men who are able to cope with a new world"(Tucker 1978, 592). Marx calls for a new being, ambiguously

human, forged in the fire of the revolutionary crucible. But how much sacrifice can Marx sanction without giving up his critique of exchange value?

The passage also shows that Marx recognized the problem of the individual revolutionary subject: this subject lives from the memory of deprivation and will always favor safety over continual risk.¹² The revolutionary subject lives in the past and in fear of the future, and a number of generations must intercede before this memory is worn away. Only upon completion of the distillation will the continuing cycle of revolutions, themselves a continuation of the revolving cycle of class oppression, culminate in the proletarian revolution. For in the proletarian revolution, safety itself is called into question in favor of constant critique. The temporalities of hoarding and distillation and their attendant questions address the problems of all revolutionary subjects, or, still more generally, the problems of all subjects undergoing conversion experiences in which the prior and subsequent states are incommensurable and yet live from one another.¹³

Regardless of whether the revolutionary subject is an individual, political, or class body, such a subject of conversion has a fundamentally reactive identity. This reactivity pertains to both sides of the conversion, threshold, or revolution. In the prior state, the subject lives from the anticipation or refusal of the subsequent one; in the subsequent state, the subject lives in the memory of the prior state. The qualitative shift that pertains to the conversion itself operates not with the exclusionary logic of contraries, but with the thoroughly modern logic of degree. The revolutionary conversion occurs at a certain critical mass, and preserves within itself the remainder of its prior state. But as long as the remainder is a memory of suffering, conservatism ensues.

The two temporalities appear in Marx's famous explicit contrast between bourgeois and proletarian revolutions from Section I of the *Brumaire*:

Bourgeois revolutions, such as those of the eighteenth century, storm along from strength to strength; their dramatic effects outdo one another, people and events seem to have a jewel-like sparkle, ecstasy is the feeling of the day; but they are short lived, quickly attaining their zenith, and a lengthy hangover grips society before it soberly absorbs the burning lessons of such *Sturm and Drang*. By contrast, proletarian revolutions, such as those of the nineteenth century, engage in perpetual self-criticism, always stopping in their own tracks; they return to what is apparently complete in order to begin it anew, and deride with savage brutality the inadequacies, weak points, and pitiful aspects of their first attempts. They seem to strike down their adversary, only to have him draw new powers from the earth and rise against them once more with the strength of a giant; again and again they draw back from the prodigious scope of their own aims, until a situation is created which makes impossible any reversion, and circumstances themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta! Hier ist Rose, hier tanze!* (I; 1996, 35)

Marx formulates one of the clearest historical characterizations of the two types of revolution: he dates them, giving each its century. In addition, he lays out a pivotal logical contrast between them: the basic philosophical opposition between stasis and change or solidity and flux. Temporally, Marx develops a contrast between the movement of a single revolutionary generation or individual versus the vaster temporal movement of the species towards self-transformation and the distillation of a sufficiently pure revolutionary class. That is, the two types of revolution work in different temporal registers.

The passage ends with a citation from Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Thematically, the Hegelian twist obtains: stasis is shown to be dangerous and change lasting, if not inevitable. Submission to change calls for a lack of fatigue, a kind of hyper-vigilance, a constant enactment of self-critique, a willingness to endure dinner with the sword suspended above one's head. Such a posture will characterize the proletarian revolution, as well as its relegation not to a moment but to a continual process spanning

many moments. The proletarian revolution as Marx describes it here most resembles two other descriptions from the *Brumaire*: Paris's permanent state of siege (II; 1996, 46) and the process of legislative action itself as a regime of unrest (IV; 1996, 71). Tellingly, proletarian revolution as constant critique can resemble either violence and terror or the practical day-to-day operations of democratic life.

Note how constant critique would preclude the utter, definite distillation of a final essence, moment, or resolution. But Marx cannot resist the teleological impulse, and the description of the revolution as constant critique jars oddly with its final moment of crisis or culmination, especially insofar as the moment itself is singular or the state that follows static. To insist on a final moment is to collapse the temporality of continual distillation into that of hoarding. Cleansed of this telos, the proletarian revolution becomes the permanent, ever-present, and underground process and set of practices.¹⁴

Conclusion: Bataille and the Slim Margins of the Two Revolutionary Temporalities

Early twentieth century French political economist George Bataille calls the contrast between the two models of revolution into question. Bataille suggests that any distinction simply collapses: that all revolution will be bourgeois in character, that there is no such thing as a proletarian revolution except as methodological postulate or fiction.¹⁵ For Bataille, the impossibility of Marx's proletarian revolution was an historical fact. But revolution to end class oppression is also a logical problem connected with the essential tendency to hoard of the revolutionary subject. Bataille writes:

I cannot help but insist on these aspects: I wish to stress, against both classical and present-day Marxism, the connection of all the great modern revolutions, from the English and the French onward, with a feudal order that is breaking down. There have never been any great revolutions that have struck down an established bourgeois

domination. All those that overthrew a regime started with a revolt motivated by the sovereignty that is implied in feudal society. (1993 II & III, 279; 1976 VIII, 321)

The temporal model of revolution, minus its final moment, becomes a Nietzschean eternal recurrence: the repetition of class oppression through nominal change. This means the proletarian revolution proper can never arrive because it always undoes itself before it ever fully takes place. This is the same structure we see illustrated in the *Brumaire*.

The psychological profile of bourgeois rule as I have outlined it above leads to the impossibility of proletarian revolution. A revolutionary subject is always bourgeois because mobile from one state to another: from the scarcity to the plenitude of some available resource. In the subsequent state of plenitude, the preceding scarcity is not effaced and obliterated, but lived from, like the unconscious. The revolutionary subject is a hoarder of the newfound resource, be this resource political sovereignty, copious cash, or a small landholding.

Marx runs up against his own temporal limitations each time he tries to describe the properly distilled revolutionary subject, which for him is no individual but a class. In answer to Bataille's charge, the Marx of *The German Ideology* would have insisted that the act of violence itself transforms this subject: that the process of Revolutionary action is sufficient for the oppressed to overcome accumulated habit and conditioning, learn to consume well, and thus become fit for rule (Tucker 1978, 193). But the Marx of the *Brumaire* writes after the proletarian revolution's repeated failures to gain lasting power and in the face of the massacres of workers. This later Marx lengthens the time frame of the revolution beyond the span of a single revolutionary generation or even several revolutionary generations. After the *Brumaire*, a weary Marx documents the wearing

away of the residues of the feudal world and the character of the exploitation engendered by this wearing away, as we find in *Capital*. Lengthening this time span still further, one might ask with Bataille: do we continue to be in the throes of a feudal order that is breaking down? Have we stalled out in the revolution's purgatory? And can we find our way out of the constitutive double temporality of this purgatory, in which both the temporality of distillation and the temporality of hoarding are overcome?

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² See Kinch Hoekstra, who in his article “Hobbes and the Foole” relates the problem of theft to that of regicide: the theft of the throne and usurpation of sovereign power that undermines all sovereignty (1997, 631-635). My suggestion is that political and economic hoarding are subject to the same paradoxes, if not precisely identical in structure.

³ The distinction between hoarding and accumulation turns on the distinction between private and public and on the analogous distinction between use and exchange value. Marx spells out this latter distinction most fully in Volume I of *Capital*. For an argument about why the use/exchange value distinction is at the root of the Marxist critical project, see Derrida 1994. The distinction parallels Heidegger’s critique of the enframing or *Gestellung* at issue in modern life and especially in technology (See Krell 1977). The vulnerability of all enjoyment to death, and of all instrumentality to breakage is also a central theme of *Being and Time* (1996).

⁴ I have used a notation that cites the section of the *Brumaire* in addition to the dating system from the Standard English translation.

⁵ Through his references in the *Brumaire*, Marx gives a catalogue of the often short-lived periodical literature in nineteenth century France. This is not trivial. Though Marx loathed the necessity of earning living at all (Tucker 1978, 6), when he did so, it was as a newspaper reporter, as a journalist. Historians such as Benedict Anderson have argued the importance of the press, and in particular the newspaper, to the rise of nineteenth and twentieth century nationalisms (1991). Through shared texts, citizens spread out over vast geographical, ethnic, cultural and linguistic distances are bound to one another through affective ties. The affective ties of shared narrative work to solve the classic problem of a political body that has become too large, diverse, or otherwise unwieldy. A press or journal also acts as a representative body much like a party: it crafts a common readership and builds a common worldview. This is why conservative reforms proposed by the bourgeois government infringe on the practical freedoms of the press. It is also why Marx, who wishes to use the press to undermine national in favor of class-based identification, is in deep contradiction with the use of the press in his time.

⁶ In his later texts Marx integrates metaphors from the physics and chemistry of his day into his descriptions of political processes. Historian of technology Anson Rabinbach argues for the connection between Marx and the first and second generations of scientific materialists. These materialists were working out of the discoveries of thermodynamics, discoveries themselves consequent upon the development and use of the steam engine in production. See especially the section of Rabinbach’s book *The Human Motor* entitled “The Marriage of Marx and Helmholtz” (1990, 72-4). Especially pivotal terms that span the divide as descriptors of both

political and scientific bodies in Marx's rhetoric include *die Organe*, *Auflösung* and *Bewegung*. The term *Masse* surpasses them all in its importance, for the proletarian body is a version of the resistance of matter to the imposition of form, and thus revolution finds its Aristotelian roots. Later, this allows Engels to make a case for Marxist history as a science. As Engels writes in the preface to the third edition to the *Brumaire*, “[D]as große Bewegungsgesetz der Geschichte. . . [hat] dieselbe Bedeutung wie das Gesetz von der Verwandlung der Energie für die Naturwissenschaft” (www.Marxists.org/deutch/arciv/marx-engels/1852/brumaire). Engels echoes these observations in his preface to Volume II of *Capital*.

⁷ Marx's ineluctable capitalist market crises find their general conceptual recasting in Bataille's more general notion of expenditure. See especially Bataille 1991, Volume I.

⁸ The Terror (1793-4) is a specific historical period, but following Hegel's reading of the French Revolution, I am using it in a more general sense here. Hegel writes that because “universal freedom. . . can produce neither a positive work nor a deed. . . there is left only *negative* action. . . the fury of destruction”(1977, 359).

⁹ Marx writes that the bloodshed continues because the revolution is “thorough-going” and “methodical” (*ibid.*). The revolution leaves no stone unturned no matter the time and cost in blood of such an expenditure of energy, and no matter whether such an expenditure makes sense from the time scale of a human life. Here the revolution resembles the Hegelian cunning of reason, or even the invisible hand of Adam Smith.

¹⁰ Marx subdivides the rural proletariat into conservative and revolutionary peasantries (VII; 1996, 116-124). Frantz Fanon's analysis of the factionalism of the Algerian Revolutionaries in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* draws on the breakdown of the proletariat as Marx sketches it here (1968, 1998).

¹¹ Marx draws on the Biblical imagery of Exodus: some of these newly liberated folk wished to return to slavery rather than face the hunger of life in the wilderness (I; 1996, 34). The closeness of the images Marx employs in *The Class Struggles in France* show how it and the *Brumaire* form companion pieces for one another, as does Marx's reference to the *Class Struggles* as within the *Brumaire* (II; 1996, 46). Composed immediately after the *Class Struggles*, the *Brumaire* treats of the same period in French history.

¹² Here I use the term “subject” in the Aristotelian rather than the modern sense. “Subject” denotes any body of action undergoing processes of change. I thereby replicate Marx's conflation of the terms of subjectivity and those of objectivity, his conflation of the political and the scientific, in short: his materialism. For an account of materialism's requirement that philosophy and science be unified, see Horkheimer 1968, 31-34.

¹³ Examples of this type of experience might include such things as religious conversion or its converse, the loss of faith; the process of becoming a parent; the loss of a loved one to whom one is tied in the deep richness of bodily intimacy and habit; becoming a transsexual; and reading Hegel.

¹⁴ We find versions of this notion of revolution in Antonio Negri's *Marx beyond Marx: Lessons on the Grundrisse* (1991, 181) in Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (1994, 99), and throughout Donna Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* (1991) and *Modest-Witness@Second-Millennium. Femaleman-Meets-Oncomouse: feminism and technoscience* (1997), in her insistence on the non-innocence and impurity of all positions of resistance.

¹⁵ The postulate of the proletarian revolution is nonetheless valuable. According to Bataille, it is in the face of this postulate that the question of how sovereign power works can be asked in the twentieth century. The context of Bataille's remarks on revolution is tellingly linked to the themes of the *Brumaire*. In Volume III of his work on political economy, *The Accursed Share*, Bataille sketches the meaning of sovereignty in the early 20th century. In this sketch, Bataille

considers Joseph Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union, which some have likened to the rule of Louis Bonaparte (1991, Vs. I and III; 1976, Vs. VII. and VIII.).