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158 Oxford University Press, there already is an electronic edition available for the texts, but not annotation, of unpublished letters, together with the texts and annotations for the published ones. Published electronically in the InteLex Past Masters series (<http://www.nlx.com/titles/title117.htm>), that version of these texts indicates that it derives from the same Oxford University Press print edition edited by John Kelly under review here, though not yet updated to include annotation from the fourth volume. The electronic edition has the further advantage of being machine-searchable and thus sparing users navigation of the bulky seventy-eight page index to the print version. Some combination of print selectivity with electronic amplification and searchability would make the impressive scholarship displayed in these volumes available to the larger audience that it surely deserves.

***Poetry of the Revolution: Marx, Manifestos, and the Avant-Gardes.* Martin Puchner. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. Pp. 315. \$60.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).**

**Reviewed by Laura Winkiel, Iowa State University**

The manifesto has long been considered a genre embarrassing to modernist studies: it often sounds downright mad as it prophesies the coming of an impossible and now unfashionable utopia. And it always seems to fall short of its aims: the revolution doesn't fully come off, the new art movement is superseded by another, or the avant-garde peters out entirely. But Martin Puchner's *Poetry of the Revolution* resurrects the genre and the avant-garde in groundbreaking ways. Declaring that "writing the history of a futurist genre such as the manifesto" to be "a paradoxical if not outright perverse enterprise" (259), Puchner embraces this perversity as he swerves from a teleological to a cyclical model of genre based not upon death or utopia, but on difference and repetition. He invokes a postmodern understanding of historicity to argue that each manifesto, whether explicitly or not, draws upon and revises the manifestos that have preceded it. Puchner's methodology sees the manifesto stretched between theatricality—understood as a rehearsed repetition of a pre-existing script—and performativity—understood as an instrumentalist use of language, doing things with words, beginning the revolution *now!* Throughout his cultural history of the manifesto, Puchner insists on keeping both poles in dialogical play, "suspended between past and future" and between the repetition of the past and what he calls the "replacement" for the future (262).

Puchner's most striking and central claim is that Marx and Engels invented the genre with *The Communist Manifesto*. Certainly manifestos existed prior to 1848, and Puchner discusses those of the English Revolution and the Reformation. But he says that *The Communist Manifesto*, and Marx more broadly, invented a poetics of revolution: the manifesto form itself. This form "would help revolutionary modernity to know itself, to arrive at itself, to make and to manifest itself" (1). All prior manifestos become retroactively recognizable as the "prehistory" of the manifesto. This claim may be contestable: despite the cyclical nature of generic history that Puchner lays out, he paradoxically advocates a radical break between the "backward-looking" manifestos of the French Revolution and the poetics of the future he claims for Marx. Nevertheless, by making Marx and Engels' manifesto the lynchpin of his argument, Puchner is able to weave together the strands of international socialism, world literature, and avant-garde aesthetics in a powerfully persuasive argument that makes the case that the manifesto was *the* crucial innovation of the avant-garde and one that we should continue to take seriously as a means of intervening in modernities worldwide.

Puchner's highly readable and erudite prose covers a large swathe of the manifesto's cultural history from Martin Luther to the contemporary pages of *The Drama Review*. He first argues for the retrospective historicity of *The Communist Manifesto* through the subsequent prefaces written by Marx and Engels and the anxiety of its influence on the part of later socialist and communist manifesto writers and on the avant-garde itself. This historicity allows him to foreground the tensions between party discipline (instrumentalist language) and aesthetic play (theatrical language) present in avant-garde manifestos. Secondly, Puchner graphs the worldwide dissemination and translation of *The Communist Manifesto* to argue that it inaugurates a new instance of world literature, one whose ongoing project is that of displacing bourgeois literature and remaking literature through its international, traveling, and translated form. Puchner finds this model of world literature, envisioned by Marx and developed by the international avant-garde, on the concept of modernity's uneven development. This model takes into account the avant-gardes of the so-called periphery as Puchner's study moves from western Europe and the European peripheries of Italy and the Soviet Union to Latin America and, briefly, to the Caribbean. In each instance, the manifesto translates modernity into multiple modernisms of displacement and travel.

While the First World War intensified the nationalist proclivities of Futurism, vorticism, and German expressionism, it animated the internationalist sentiments of dada and surrealism. Following the travels and activities of Frances Picabia, Tristan Tzara, Hannah Höch, and surrealist writers including Aimé Césaire, Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro, André Breton and his brief manifesto collaboration with Trotsky in Mexico, and Antonin Artaud, Puchner demonstrates how each artist grappled with conflicts between revolution and art by appropriating the manifesto in some way in their art. For instance, Puchner reads Hannah Höch's photo-montage *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the Last Weimar Beer-Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* and collage more generally as "an extension of the political manifesto culture of the day," a mode by which the avant-garde reoriented advertising toward the social revolution (163). Giving up the *grand récit* of *The Communist Manifesto*, the avant-garde targeted its interventionism at everyday culture rather than the total proletarian overcoming theorized by Marx and Engels. This point may not be a new one, but it allows Puchner both to side-step the Hegelian narrative that too narrowly subsumes the avant-garde under the very revolutionary narrative they both longed for and struggled against, and to claim the centrality of the manifesto in avant-garde art.

Puchner rejects the recent "theory death" argument of the avant-garde. Instead, he claims that for the avant-garde, as for Marx, theory was not something opposed to and devoid of action but was "first and foremost a practice, and one that took the form of a new manifesto" (234). This formulation allows him to follow the manifesto through surprising juxtapositions and displacements: from Guy Debord's situationism, Valerie Solanas's *SCUM Manifesto*, recent advertisements, and then into the academy with *The Drama Review* and, finally, to Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. But to say that the manifesto has become a form of academic praxis strikes me as too narrow an outcome and perhaps the result of the Western focus of this study. For instance, Puchner avowedly restricts himself to the history of the West when he writes, "During the forties and fifties ... avant-garde art and manifesto politics receded into the background, at least in the West, even though they never went entirely away" (211). Given his argument for the manifesto's internationalism, it is problematic that Puchner ignores decolonization movements and manifestos, especially during the critical years between the Manchester Pan-African Congress (1945), the Bandung Conference (1955), and the national independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s. Moreover, Puchner's coverage of Latin America extends mainly to Vicente Huidobro's manifestos. We lose sight of the many manifestos closely related to mass political movements with more fluid, autonomous definitions of socialism than those Puchner charts during the pre-war years. But Puchner's supple and rich historical analysis of the manifesto form and the avant-garde makes the continued worlding of his Western narrative fertile ground for subsequent studies.