

The radical gap

A preface to Auguste Blanqui, *Eternity by the Stars*

Jacques Rancière

I leaf through the programme and learn that the very stars themselves – which, I am firmly convinced, should be but rarely disturbed, and even then only for high reasons of meditative gravity ... – the very stars are present!¹

Mallarmé penned these ironic lines about a ballet performance at the Eden Theatre. Nevertheless, such stellar flights seem as natural to the choreographer as they do to the poet. This is less obviously the case when the one disturbing the stars is a revolutionary leader. Of course, there is a good excuse for this: this profession offers welcome recompense in the form of no few moments of forced leisure that lend themselves to reverie. And, indeed, it was in the Fort du Taureau, in the solitude of a prison surrounded by waters he wasn't even permitted to see, that Blanqui, in 1871, composed *Eternity by the Stars*.

And yet it would be rather glib to explain the work by its circumstances, even if the text speaks to us of police and dungeons, of separation and solitude. For his thirty-seven years of imprisonment never led Blanqui to prefer the calm of contemplation over the risks and tumults of action. In Taureau, he did not forget the trial that awaited him in Paris – for his role in the demonstration of 31 October 1870, and especially for his apparent responsibility for the Paris Commune, of which he was indeed 'innocent' since he had already been imprisoned when the insurrection erupted. He entrusted the manuscript of *Eternity by the Stars* to his sister, along with *Capital and Labour*, where he affirms the radicalism of his communist commitments. These stars must therefore be more than a distraction for a prisoner, obliged to look skywards. We might add that it was not by gazing at the stars that he became acquainted with the disputes over the nature of the comets, the discoveries of spectrometry, or the hypotheses on

the cooling of the sun. There must indeed have been 'high reasons of meditative gravity' that led him to get mixed up with the stars. Certainly, obvious analogies link the condition of the caged prisoner with that of the earthling separated from myriad other star systems, and the situation of the incarcerated revolutionary with that of the comets, brought down by the 'police' of terrestrial gravitation. How else can we understand the author's tenderness for those 'suppliant captives, enchained for centuries to the boundaries of our atmosphere', even as he declares them to be of little scientific interest? But even if the prisoner sympathizes with the fantastic creatures that share his fate, the thinker seeks out another side, the side of the 'police' of gravitational attraction,² the essential link between the astronomical question and its socio-political counterpart.

This division of interests will surprise only those who cling to a simplistic idea of the nineteenth century – those for whom it was the age in which a stupid faith in scientific progress and in the virtues of education replaced heavenly hopes with the knowledge and conquest of earthly realities alone. And for whom revolutionaries, needless to say, would have been the first to bring about this simple 'secularization' of providence, by tracing a short, straight line from the science of nature to the science of history, and from the science of history to humanity's march down the road of bright tomorrows. Others, of course, will have bent the stick the other way. The stupid century, according to them, never stopped wallowing in occult and necromantic reveries and mystifications, from the time of Swedenborg to that of Hélène Blavatsky. A rather more dialectical spirit is needed to understand the relationship that the revolutionary puts in place between the vain splendours of the comet army and the ineluctable force of gravity. The

torsion, in fact, goes back further still. It was already there when the old name of revolution, which signified the regular course of the celestial bodies, came to designate, conversely, the violent overthrow of the terrestrial order of government. From that point forward, so many different arguments have continually mixed, connected and opposed the lessons of science to the reasons of order or revolution, the demands of action to inquiries into the march of history, and the conquest of the here and now with the promises of a beyond.

It is first of all a matter of knowing how and for whom science speaks. And it is understood that astronomy is, in this respect, exemplary. It is the science that *sensually or sensibly* separates sensible experience from itself. But this separation itself can be understood in two opposite ways. It is the knowledge that strips the sky [*ciel*] of its religious veil and deprives superstition of the prestige it places in the service of the established order. But it is also, conversely, the knowledge of the immutable order that confounds the vain pretensions of men to change the course of things. And, sure enough, the gravitational attraction that imposes the same laws upon the revolutions of the stars as upon falling objects here on earth only redoubles this ambivalence. Is not the order of the heavens [*cieux*] stripped of its difference only at the price of reinforcing the immutability of sublunar events? The very fortune of Laplace, author of an *Exposition du système du monde* [*Exposition of the System of the World*] (1796), servant of the Ancien Régime, the Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration, seems to allegorize this accord between the regularity of the planets and a political order of things that triumphs over passing meteors.

Shall science, like an opportunistic scientist, therefore endorse nothing but the perpetuation of the order of things? The contemplation of celestial mechanics may lead, however, to the opposite conclusion. If the human order is subject to disastrous perturbations, this is because it in no way reflects the planetary order. Its arbitrariness learns nothing from the lessons offered by the latter. Revolutions are arbitrary in so far as the dominations that they overthrow are themselves arbitrary. The true end of the revolutionary 'crisis' is not the re-establishment of a monarchy, be it constitutional or absolute. It is not to be found in any sort of political regime, but in the organization of society according to the laws of the system of the world.

Such, in principle, is the reasoning followed by those we call utopians. But this utopia can take

quite opposite paths, depending on how the notions of attraction and gravitation are understood. One way seeks to translate the very notion of attraction [*attraction*] into the human order.

Just a few years after the publication of *Exposition of the System of the World*, Charles Fourier penned the *Theory of Universal Unity*, which denounced the great subversive vice of every social order: they flout the laws of attraction. They oppose the natural movements that carry certain human beings towards certain beings and certain tasks, and that repel them from others. They go against the mechanism of the passions that is the analogue of the ordered movement of the celestial bodies. The existing social order, left to its own devices, is thus subversive. The harmonious society shall orient its destiny in accordance with the forces of attraction. But the cosmic order is not just the model of social organization. It is also, strictly speaking, its future, a future that, with Fourier, amounts to 810 intra-worldly existences and 810 extra-worldly existences, but that also continues from planet to planet, and universe to universe. And this is an essential point: whatever hasty theorists of 'secularization' might say, the thinkers of radical transformation refrain from transferring to historical progress the promises of religious salvation.

As Miguel Abensour and Valentin Pelosse – who were the first to exhume Blanqui's opusculum – have indeed shown, the case is quite the contrary: they recognize no theatre appropriate to progress but the infinite.³ Only the plurality of existences in the infinite expanse of time and space measures up to the demands of the progress of bodies and souls, of individuals and collectives. It is by no means just the harmony composed of celestial bodies that suggests itself to social reformers as a model to imitate. The celestial sojourns and histories are considered as vectors of human progress. Heaven [*le ciel*] is no longer the paradise that rewards good and evil. It is no longer, as Jean Reynaud will say, an abode, but a road on which a progressive movement carries on, fettered by the brevity of lives and societies, along which individual souls perfect themselves up to the point where they can merge into the great soul of the world.⁴ It is the infinitude of the universe that is the seat of collective humanity. The 'great history of the heavens', Flammarion will say, is the 'true universal history'.⁵

In order for the laws of celestial harmony to be translated into a social order founded on the soaring movement of the passions, we must then expand the celestial perspective beyond the known laws of our

own planetary system. This expansion, which Fourier proclaims, will also form the horizon of Blanqui's reasoning. But, in the meantime, it was violently rejected by a utopian of a different sort: one of those who wish to found the social order, not on the human passions' mimetic relation to the celestial movements, but on the translation of the power of scientific law into a spiritual power governing society. This is partly led by Auguste Comte, the utopian founder of a new religion that would soon inspire the reasonable Republic. Its programme can be summed up as follows: to banish into the shadows of the unknowable whatever extends beyond our solar system. To declare the current state of the planetary system, such as it can be explained by the mathematical laws of celestial mechanics alone, to be the final stage of evolution. In other words: to know nothing of the stars and their movements beyond the model of order taught by geometry, excluding any consideration of their chemical nature and their dependence upon other laws, such as those concerning the transformation of heat into mechanical energy.

Blanqui's position is clear: positivism is above all the religion that places science in the service of the established order. The moderate disciples of Comte, those who would inspire the Republic of Jules Ferry, would oppose, to no avail, the inventor of sociology's original theory and its theocratic deviations of the 1850s and 1860s. The high priest of the hierarchy, offering his services to the despots, and the professor of the Course in Popular Astronomy during the 1830s and 1840s, are one and the same person.⁶ To oppose the alliance of science and order, in astronomy as in politics, we must breach Comte's double prohibition. We must recover the infinite universe that the narrow vision of the 'system of the universe' closed up into a cosmos akin to a hierarchical order. We must, in our contemplation of the universe, reconsider the enigmas of the sidereal order, and the unfinished adventures of its history. On the other hand, we must reduce that order to the laws of matter, as manifested, first of all, in the chemical composition of the celestial bodies. The system of the world will thereby escape the 'spiritual power' venerated by the adoring hierarchs of order. The system of the world will be returned to the tradition of great materialism: the Epicurean rain of atoms and the regenerative Stoic fire shall take to the stage in the modern theatre of the infinite universe.

This is possible because the scientists themselves, in the years of order that followed the repression of the revolutions in 1848, have both laid the groundwork

for a new astronomy and bequeathed, to the stars and stellar systems, the fate of beings subject to birth and death. This is, on the one hand, due to the strides made by spectral analysis, marked by the works of Kirchoff, Huggins, and Father Secchi. The analysis of the rays of the spectra of stars allowed for the enumeration of the simple bodies of which they are composed. The stars shall no longer escape the chemical science of elements or the great equality that it institutes, beneath any mathematical order. They shall no longer escape – this will form the groundwork of Blanqui's reasoning – the law of number that governs simple bodies and their combinations. On the other hand, this follows from Carnot's second principle, which reduces the self-equality of celestial movement to the transformation of heat into movement. William Thomson had already, in 1852, stated the consequence of the tendency of heat to dissipate: 'Within a finite period of time past, the earth must have been, and within a finite period of time to come the earth must again be, unfit for the habitation of man as at present constituted.'⁷ Soon the great anxiety provoked by the exhaustion of heat and the cooling of the sun would come to nourish the spread of Schopenhauerian pessimism. Celestial revolutions no longer ensured the stability of natural orders. Still less could they guarantee the future of humanity, end point of evolution, master and sovereign of the universe. The unity of composition and the infinitude of the all should join up with the history of a universe subject to mortality.

There is no univocal law of progress. Communism's 'future society' is nevertheless dependent on the lights of science. On the virtues of the latter, Blanqui is as categorical as the positivists. Communism is the equality of men who share the same knowledge of the heavens. Suppose, says the revolutionary,

that one fine night all the soldiers are transformed into scientists. I imagine that the officers' entrance into the barracks the next morning would present the most picturesque spectacle, and that they would soon exit at no slower than a jog-trot pace. Even better, let us dream of the 38 million Frenchmen metamorphosed like these soldiers, at the wave of a wand. In twenty-four hours, not a trace of government would remain, and at the end of a month the community would be fully operational.⁸

But this equality, which no wave of the wand will make real, no longer depends on a teleology of nature and history. 'Between what is and what shall be exists a distance so prodigious that thought cannot cross it.'⁹ As strange as it may seem to some, faith in

learning and faith in progress are absolutely distinct from one another. Light simply does not progress at the slow and triumphant pace of teleological history. It moves quickly, and can always flicker out.

Thus we should not think that the scientific discoveries that came about in the 1850s and 1860s cooled the already-dampened hopes of the revolutionaries. That there is no royal road to progress is a lesson the most aware of them had already learned in 1848. The defeat of the revolutions of 1848 was precisely this: the *political* defeat of progress, the defeat of a vision of the world where domination gives way to the republican proof of the law of progress, as shadows are dispersed by light. It was a defeat, above all, of the idea that history has a direction and meaning [*sens*], with which the cause of social justice and political equality could be associated. The unitary vision of history is precisely that of the reactionaries. Was it not this vision, argues Blanqui, that in the 1830s had led an entire faction of republican and socialist thought to count Catholicism as a great progressive force in the development of human *unity*? Auguste Comte was quite right, in his own way: progress rhymes with order. The cause of disorder – and will equality ever be anything other than a superior disorder? – is now linked to the discontinuity of times and the plurality of spaces.

The issue is thus clear: neither history nor the development of Enlightenment can do anything by themselves, so long as power has not been violently torn from the hands of the dominant caste, and so long as measures have not been taken to prevent that caste from taking it back. We must add that the sky [*ciel*] contemplated by equals offers nothing that might nourish an argument in defence of idleness. So long as they study the skies, they will discover neither providence nor evolution guiding their steps to the future. They will certainly know that the skies obey the laws of equality and that in equality the skies find the resources to escape their death. But they will also know that the battle of life against death is a drama with neither beginning nor end, which condemns those who take it as a model to an indefinitely repeated battle, certain of just one thing: at the end of the road, no happy ending awaits them.

What the revolutionary can fall back on, then, is not any guarantee of science, but instead the division of its reasons. Behind the police of gravitational attraction there is the universe's unity of composition. Behind the unity of composition, the unity of elements from which the compositions are formed. 'The universe is only a set of families united, in some

fashion, by flesh and blood. The same matter, classed and organized by the same method, in the same order. Identical ground and government.'¹⁰ The order of the universe is, in the strong sense of the term, anarchical. The sun is made from the same materials that enter into the combination of the planets. Like them, it depends on the synthesis and analysis of elements. And the time will come when the sovereignty of the kingdom of flames collapses into the cold and sombre reign of aqueous vapours. Only the first conclusion to be drawn from this is more satisfying for the scientific principle of equality than for the perspective of humanity's egalitarian future: the earth will fall with its sun into the eternal night.

The atomic law that subjects the 'geometrical proportion' of stars to chemical equality thus carries a death sentence. Matter being unable to augment or diminish itself by a single atom, how is the heat lost by movement to be replaced? If this is to be possible, gravitational attraction must play another role, besides that of conserving the eternal order of things. Blanqui's solution is simple and significant. The extinguished stars can be rekindled only by a shock that creates new sparks. And the only force capable of creating this shock is the attraction that smashes the dead stars one against the other. 'This is why the renewal of worlds through the shock and volatilization of trespassing stars takes place at every minute in the expanses of the infinite.' Attraction is 'the great fertilizing force, the inexhaustible force that no expenditure can put a dent in, because it is the common and permanent property of bodies. It is what sets all of celestial mechanics in motion, and casts the worlds on their endless peregrinations. It is rich enough to yield to the revivifications of stars the movement that shock transforms into heat.'¹¹

It in this respect alone that nature comes to the revolutionaries' defence. All suns would be sentenced to death were it not for the resurrective shock whereby the conservative force reveals itself to be a force of revolution, the inexhaustible generator of new suns and stellar systems. The combined forces of capital, the clergy and the state shall spread the reign of shadows and death over society if people fail to play the role of the force that reanimates light and life. The courage of those who dare to refuse the night of repression. The intelligence of those who are not content to wait, 'cooped up' behind the barricades, for the moment they 'die in battle', but rather ceaselessly busy themselves, inventing the weapons that will render their courage victorious. The advice to stay perpetually busy that the *Instruction pour une*

prise d'armes gave to the rioters¹² does indeed rely on the same rationality that supports the astronomical hypothesis of 'resurrective shocks'.

The work is therefore endless. Not because the life of societies is itself constrained by the law of attraction to revolve around a sun of domination. No fatal order of things obliges equal men to re-engage, after having annihilated them, the black armies of Capital, the State and Religion. What limits the power of revolutions is not some catastrophic dialectic of the forms of transition. It is simply the fact that they take place on an earth that is itself in the grip of a great cosmic necessity.

This great necessity is not only that of the death and resurrection of stars. It is that of the infinite repetition of the same scene. This repetition, itself, follows from the division of reasons, between the law of atomic composition and the theatre of the infinite. Here again, Blanqui's argument is simple. Since the number of simple bodies is finite, then however large the number of their combinations it is finite as well. But there is an infinite expanse to populate, over an infinite stretch of time. Conclusion: all of the original combinations have been exhausted. Life can perpetuate itself only by rejoining not only the same brute matter but the same combinations, the same types. The universe is infinitely populated with copies of these originals. It is populated by duplicates or copies [*sosies*] of earth that bear, have borne and shall yet bear perfect copies of ourselves. We have been, we are and we shall eternally be generated in billions of identical copies, on earths we shall never know.

It is clearly at this point that Blanqui's thesis demands closer scrutiny. The very form of his argument obliges it. The theory of the 'resurrecting shock' finds its answer, at least, in earlier and later scientific theories. Buffon had already suggested it, and Arrhenius gave it yet another novel formulation. By contrast, the argument concerning the finite number of possible combinations is more rhetorical than scientific. Blanqui's opponents will immediately retort that the number of possible material states is not limited by the number of possible combinations of simple bodies. The force of the thesis therefore resides entirely in the allegory it proposes of human action, of its framework and its ends. It is in fact there that Blanqui distinguishes himself most radically from the utopians of his century. The other scrutinizers of the stars and social ills – from Charles Fourier to the lawyer from Lyon, Pezzani, a tireless militant for the plurality of inhabitable worlds, from the old Saint-Simonian engineer Jean Reynaud, whose treatise *Ciel*

et Terre [Heaven and Earth] saw many editions in the 1850s and 60s, to the professional astronomer Camille Flammarion – had all taken the infinitude of space and time as the framework for an infinite progression. They displaced progress from the earth to the heavens, from human history to the history of worlds. But they had maintained, within this very framework, the link between the theme of the infinite and the idea of perfectibility, of a continuous ascension of beings. Blanqui abruptly broke this link. Eternity, in the framework in which the revolutionary situates its action, does not at all promise the infinite perfectibility of individual souls and collective humanity. It promises nothing but the infinite multiplication of the same material compositions, producing a multiplicity of copies [*sosies*] confronting always and everywhere the same situations.

Is this not, at first glance, just what the revolutionary and the man of action, in general, should despise above all: the infinite repetition of the same? It's one thing to radicalize the vision of Ecclesiastes, pronouncing after so many others that the 'most tremendous efforts' of men 'wouldn't stir up a molehill' on the scale of the universe, and therefore have no effect beyond the crimes and misfortunes that they visit on one another. But what are we to make of the fact that this vain comedy is ceaselessly replayed, billions of times over? As opposed to the successive existences of which the century had dreamt, these multiplied representations bear no progress, no lesson. There is no chance that the myriad versions of Blanqui, composed of the same elements, might draw any lessons from the histories of their doubles, living in incommunicable worlds.

I have, at this very minute, through all the lands of heaven, a swarm of copies who are chomping at the bit in the Fort du Taureau, and thinking, as I am, of their imprisoned doubles. We all agree that it is too late to send us good advice, but also that it is rather stupid for us not to have sent ourselves some in time, which would have been enough for all of us. 'Heaven helps those that help themselves.' Those who are dead, since the non-beginning of the world, have had the same reflections, and from now until the non-end of the world, the myriad others who are too young, or who have not been born, will do likewise in turn, which proves that they all have done or will do time in the Fort du Taureau, cooped up in a pillbox, in the company of woodlice and spiders, these cellmates with doubles of their own.¹³

The problem is therefore not that of knowing if one can still act, in the face of such grim certainty.

For what is certain is precisely the impossibility of not always acting in the same manner. But it is also that this 'grim certainty' of an action forever repeated, with the same risks, alone delivers us from the far worse servitude tied to belief in historical necessity. The decisive act is thus to turn the repetition against itself. Curiously, this is the same solution as, ten years later, the thinker seemingly furthest removed from the communist and insurrectionary concerns of Blanqui: Friedrich Nietzsche. He too saw the presupposition of a state of equilibrium as the greatest danger, but interpreted this state differently. For Blanqui, equilibrium wears the face of the capitalist and statist order, underwritten by positivist astronomy. Nietzsche, for his part, assimilates it to the reign of the last man, who takes on the traits of the socialist ideal, nourished by scientism. But the notes of 1881, which explain the basics of the eternal return, pose the problem in the same terms as Blanqui: repetition or death; the eternal resumption of the solar game, or the big chill that brings life to a halt. The hypothesis of repetition thus suggests itself, for those who refuse any providence, as the only alternative to mortal equilibrium.

The world of forces is not subject to any diminution; because otherwise it would have been weakened and ruined over the course of infinite time. The world of forces is not subject to any standstill; because otherwise it would have been reached, and the clock of existence would stand still. The world of forces therefore never reaches a state of equilibrium. It never has a moment of respite; its force and its movement are equally great at any given moment. Whatever condition this world may reach, it must have reached it already; not once but innumerable times. This moment, for instance: it has already been here once, and many times, and will return, all of the forces distributed exactly as they are now.¹⁴

With Nietzsche, as with Blanqui, the scientific argument counts for less than what he is trying to stage: the redoubling at the very heart of repetition. Repetition does not entail resignation. On the contrary, it splits in two, and this split obliges us, every time, to replay one repetition against another. The people we face will forever return, all of them alike, each time rehearsing the same situations. 'The man of whom you are weary, the little man, returns eternally.' Faced with the eternal return of mediocrity (Nietzsche) or oppression (Blanqui), it is necessary, with each return of the dice, to once again place your wager on the regenerative shock. For, precisely, the

only ones who can confront mediocrity or oppression are those who know – which is to say, those who axiomatically posit – that the same situation will ceaselessly reappear, and that each time one must act as if one had chosen it for all times.

Between Nietzsche and Blanqui, it is nonetheless the latter who attaches the most radical conditions to this choice. Not only does he multiply the repetition in an infinity of coexisting worlds while the former limits it to a succession of worlds, but he excludes the possibility of this knowledge ever forming a new type of man or overman. He does not, however, exclude all hope or expectation [*espérance*]. That situations replay themselves eternally, with the same characters, does not mean that the outcomes are and will always be the same. Hope in progress is barred. But there remains a hope in bifurcations. Each similar conjunction may play itself out in a different fashion. It is not that the myriad other Blanquis will ever draw the lessons from their experience:

I hope that more than one copy [*sosie*], better advised, will have had the intelligence to go right or go left, and to separate his destiny from those who have blundered. I hope for it, and I strongly doubt it. Such variations would be thoroughly contrary to the laws of physiology.

And so only chance can 'send two doubles down different paths'. This unforeseen inclination of the atoms that compose the person of Auguste Blanqui can itself be understood in two ways. Another Blanqui, through the aleatory concatenation of circumstances, might turn out to be an inoffensive citizen. But, yet another Blanqui might turn the chance of insurrection in his favour. This does not mean that he must sit and wait for chance to play its hand. No doubt it is he alone who might one day make the insurrection triumph. No willed plan will ever abolish the necessity of a return to throwing the dice [*Aucun plan de la volonté n'abolira jamais la nécessité de s'en remettre au lancer des dés*].¹⁵ But, conversely, the only insurrections that have a chance of triumphing will be those that intelligent and courageous men have meticulously prepared and executed in all their details, leaving *nothing to chance*. Nothing, except for the only thing it comes down to [*qui lui revient en propre*]: fortunate bifurcation.

One must therefore, each time, deny and affirm chance simultaneously. At this price, perhaps, of one of the myriad Blanquis may at some point glimpse the dawning of a world of free men. Perhaps one among them, elsewhere, has already glimpsed it, on

one of those planets from which no news shall ever reach us. This, of course, changes nothing, on the scale of infinite spaces and times. He who consents to pass his life in the prisons of power, so as to liberate himself from the prison of submission, knows that the earth where this is all happening is, itself, just another enclosure, fenced off from every other earth and, like them, fated to vanish without a memory. If he knows all of this, he would not be wrong to hope and try for the impossible. This is *L'Enfermé's* incredible message, and it is once more worth the effort of listening to it, in our bleak age so adoring of every form of necessity. What other revolutionary, of thought or action, has ever proposed such a radical gap between the 'objective conditions' of action and the courage of his enterprise? It is understandable that posterity has preferred to retain the reassuring image of an unrepentant conspirator who was regrettably ignorant of the laws of history.

Translated by Olivia Lucca Fraser

Notes

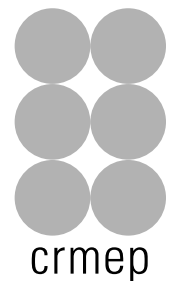
This article is a translation of Jacques Rancière's preface to Louis-Auguste Blanqui, *L'Éternité par les astres* [1872], Les Impressions Nouvelles, Paris, 2002; it is translated with the kind permission of Les Impressions Nouvelles.

1. Stéphane Mallarmé, 'Ballets', in Roger Copeland and

- Marshall Cohen, eds, *What is Dance?*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1983, p. 111.
2. The French term *attraction*, in an astronomical context, normally translates simply as 'gravity', but later in the article Rancière will play on its polysemy [translator's note].
3. Miguel Abensour and Valentin Pelosse, 'Libérer l'Enfermé', in Auguste Blanqui, *Instruction pour une prise d'armes. L'Éternité par les astres, hypothèse astronomique, et autres textes*, ed. Abensour and Pelosse, Éditions de la Tête de feuilles, 1972; republished by Sens et Tonka, Paris, 2000.
4. Cf. Jean Reynaud, *Terre et ciel*, Paris, 1855, p. 275.
5. Camille Flammarion, *Astronomie populaire*, Paris, 1884, p. 820.
6. Cf. Blanqui's fragments collectively entitled 'Contre le positivisme', in Abensour and Pelosse's edition of *L'Éternité par les astres*.
7. William Thomson, 'On a Universal Tendency in Nature to the Dissipation of Mechanical Energy,' quoted by Jacques Merleau-Ponty, *La Science de l'univers à l'âge du positivisme*, Vrin, Paris, 1983, p. 235.
8. Louis-Auguste Blanqui, 'Le Communisme avenir de la société', in *Critique sociale*, vol. 1, Paris, 1885, p. 178.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
10. Blanqui, *L'Éternité par les astres*, in Blanqui, *Maintenant il faut des armes*, ed. Dominique Le Nuz, La Fabrique, Paris, 2007, p. 356.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
12. Blanqui, *Instruction pour une prise d'armes*, in *Maintenant il faut des armes*, 284.
13. Cited in Blanqui, *L'Éternité par les astres*, ed. Abensour and Pelosse, Tête de Feuilles, Paris, 1972, p. 57.
14. Friedrich Nietzsche, cited in Rudiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, trans. Shelley Frisch, Granta Books, London, 2002, p. 228.
15. The phrase evokes Mallarmé's poem: *Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* [translator's note].

Kingston
University
London

Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy



Be part of our postgraduate community

MA Modern European Philosophy

MA Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory

MA Aesthetics and Art Theory

MA Contemporary European Philosophy

a joint MA with the University of Paris 8



enquiries s.sandford@kingston.ac.uk

www.kingston.ac.uk/crmep