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Capital and Spirit: The Physics of the Universal

The article will examine the status of capital and spirit—two conceptual forces, as analysed by Deleuze and Guattari, and Hegel, respectively. Capital, the decoded flow of money and labour, and spirit, the persistent rhythm of negation, will both be considered as embodiments of the universal, which I want to define as material expansiveness of the concept. Contrary to the common conception, Deleuze and Guattari do not renounce the idea of universality but alter and accommodate it in accordance with their theoretical agenda. The text will explore the idea of history as an arena of the expansion of thought. In both the dialectical and schizoanalytical frameworks, history becomes a field in which conceptual energies are distributed. I propose to understand universality precisely as this distribution and its dynamics. I will consider spirit and capital as material processes transforming historical codes. The seemingly paradoxical physical interpretation of meaning will serve to examine its constitution and mechanism outside the relation of representation. Representation is a structure of meaning functioning on a molar level. Meanwhile, both dialectical and schizoanalytical methods work with the molecular properties of codes, examining their conceptual density, energetic flows and relational intensities. Deleuze and Guattari, and Hegel approach meaning as a conceptual substance which literally makes history, eliciting material properties of thought as it makes its way into being.

Keywords: universal, Hegel, spirit, Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism, schizoanalysis

Capital and spirit—two immaterial phenomena endowed with material existence, ideal matrices which permeate existence, fill it to the brim with their dynamic spread. The article will examine the status of these two conceptual forces, as analysed by Deleuze and Guattari, and Hegel, respectively. Capital, the decoded flow of money and labour, and spirit, the persistent rhythm of negation, will both be analysed as embodiments of the universal, which I want to define as material expansiveness of the concept.

Spirit is the self of the actual consciousness which spirit confronts, or rather which confronts itself as an objective actual world, a world which has, for the self, just as much lost all significance as something alien, just as the self has lost all sense of being a dependent or independent being-for-itself separated from that world. Spirit is the substance and the universal self-equal, lasting essence. (Hegel 2018, 253–254)

The universal is not defined as a general logical validity but as the force of thought capable of installing logical structures in the outside world. It is the expansiveness of thought process understood as an artificial force of transformation active in immanence and possessing a vast outreach.

Contrary to the common conception, Deleuze and Guattari do not renounce the idea of universality but alter and accommodate it in accordance with their theoretical agenda. “The principle of reason such as it appears in philosophy is a principle of contingent reason and is put like this: there is no good reason but contingent reason; there is no universal history except of contingency” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 93). Although history does not follow a unifying logical pattern, its contingency does not remain local but develops into a powerful conceptual force capable of the thorough transformation of being. It is this transformative force which is recognised as universal. Deleuze and Guattari share Hegel’s fascination with the potency of thought and its material impact. This is why they write about “the powers of concepts (...) (which) take effect on a plane of immanence that is an image of Thought-Being” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 65). Being is powered by thought, traversed and energised by conceptual flows. The contested Hegelian idea of universality is an expression of this very reality—thought penetrating its outside, becoming immanent to it.

Therefore, history becomes an arena of the expansion of thought. It is how thought spills into being, or, to use the Hegelian idiom instead, how it externalises and objectifies itself. In both the dialectical and

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schizoanalytical frameworks, history becomes a field in which conceptual energies are distributed. Universality is precisely this distribution and its dynamics; it is how history occupies and penetrates space. According to Hegel, it produces a “system of the shapes of consciousness as a life of spirit ordering itself into a whole—the system which is here under examination and which has its objective existence as world history” (Hegel 2018, 173). Deleuze’s and Guattari’s answer to this idea is the concept of geophilosophy, which also traces the process of philosophical distribution, following concepts as they spread across the surface of the globe. Universality is this expansive, sprawling quality of thought; it is a matter of performance and should not be confused with abstract logical necessity.

To think of history in terms of expansion is to transpose it into a spatial plane and, thus, to free it from the linear relation of causality which organises and chains time. Thanks to this interpretative shift, history opens itself to different types of relationality and, thus, different modes of organisation and forms of regularity. It is precisely in search of these new possibilities that guided Manuel De Landa in writing *A Thousand Years of Non-linear History*, where he postulates the need to “allow physics to infiltrate human history” (De Landa 2000, 15). He argues that “human society may be seen as a »material« capable of undergoing these changes of state as it reaches critical mass in terms of density of settlement, the amount of energy consumed, or even intensity of interaction” (De Landa 2000, 15). De Landa’s take on history corresponds with the definition of the universal as the spatial expansion of thought-material. Accordingly, I will consider capital and spirit as two distinct conceptual physics whose laws determine historical rhythms, intensities and processes of distribution.

In the case of both dialectics and geophilosophy, these laws of conceptual physics will be shown to govern the production of difference—a theme which is central to the recently revived debates concerning the relation between Hegel and Deleuze.¹ Deleuze’s own position on the matter is famously one of self-praise. Although he considers Hegel to be a philosopher of difference, he also claims that Hegel fails to do the concept justice because he reduces it to contradiction, which functions as a unifying category. Difference needs to be pure, a process with no constraints whose model Deleuze finds in repetition. Contemporary

1 The volume *Hegel and Deleuze: Together Again for the First Time* (Houle and Vernon 2013) edited by Karen Houle and Jim Vernon is an excellent overview of the possible areas of research, with strong focus on difference as the axis of apparent dispute and possible rapprochement between these philosophers.

scholars complicate Deleuze's position with regards to dialectics. They reconstruct the production of difference in both conceptual settings, focusing on a variety of aspects, like determination vs indeterminacy, unilaterality vs reflexivity, quantity vs quality, disjunction vs sublation. The consensus seems to be that the relation between the two theoretical propositions is much more complex than a straightforward choice between exalting difference, on the one hand, and subjugating it, on the other. It is rather a question of nuanced perspectives and differently placed accents.²

The approach proposed here is to examine how difference is produced in the sphere of history, tracing its occurrences and behaviour in the element of temporally changing social constructions. The laws of conceptual physics will be shown to be operating within the historical systems of meaning, or in what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as codes. I will consider spirit and capital as material processes transforming historical codes. The seemingly paradoxical physical interpretation of meaning serves to examine its constitution and mechanism outside the relation of representation.³ Representation is a structure of meaning functioning on a molar level. Meanwhile, both dialectical and schizo-analytical methods work with the molecular properties of codes, examining their conceptual density, energetic flows and relational intensities.⁴

2 "It is indeed the value of difference that is at stake in the dialectic" (Houle and Vernon 2013, 179)—writes Juliette Simont, referring to the Nietzschean language of value in order to suggest that in his straightforward condemnation of Hegelian contradiction, Deleuze tends to be a little too objectivist for his own good. His claim that there are genuine and fake forms of differing establishes a standardised version of the process, despite the stated goal to do the exact opposite.

3 The non-representational character of dialectics and schizoanalysis is identified by Anne Sauvagernes as one of the most profound affinities between the two theories. Accordingly, she demonstrates how Hegelian Deleuze in fact is when criticising Hegel for his supposed overreliance on representation: "The speculative Hegelian tenets are thus not speculative enough, and his ontology is held captive by the subjective structure of representation. It attains difference only »underneath quality, within extensivity,« and retains only a qualified opposition, not the true movement of difference. Hegelianism approaches difference only in its actualized mode, and thus misses its becoming, which for Deleuze means the tension that determines the passage from virtuality to actualization. Again, this argument is distinctly Hegelian: thought does not rise above the speculative proposition but rather stays trapped in the antinomies of representation" (Houle and Vernon 2013, 50).

4 The idea of "molecular" science of history is rather tricky, since history is speaking in codes, that is, molar patterns of meaning. De Landa, whom I discussed above, faces this difficulty, but the common response is to avoid it by treating

Deleuze and Guattari, and Hegel approach meaning as a conceptual substance which literally makes history, eliciting material properties of thought as it makes its way into being.⁵

The dialectical and schizoanalytical physics are, of course, two very different models. Deleuze and Guattari discover the materiality of codes whilst dismantling them, decoding their structure and thus creating the molecular composition of flows. Here, the transposition of history into physics results in the former's vanishing. Accordingly, in the first part of the text, I will focus on what Deleuze and Guattari define as *adsorption* which dissolves codes and pushes them to the surface, creating volatile flows of meaningless intensities. Hegel, of course, goes in the opposite direction, with the molecular composition underwriting the formation of the speculative patterns of meaning. In the second part of the text, I will be examining this process in its most intensive manifestation—in the final fragments of *Phenomenology* devoted to absolute knowing, whose constitution relies on the conceptual physics of *summary*, an operation which is purely textual and yet it will be considered in terms of pressure applied to the argumentative structure.

Deleuze and Guattari—the Adsorption of Capital

Capital—an all-consuming, pervasive and insidious abstraction. And an inspiration for the production of concepts. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari discuss it as a driving force of philosophy. They

molecularity solely as a metaphor of history written from the perspective of minorities and appreciative of diversity. This is precisely what Nicholas Thoburn does, connecting Deleuze's critique of capitalism to radical politics which the author defines as "primarily a process of (minor) difference against (molar) identity" (Thoburn 2003, 15). Constructed around this coarse opposition, Thoburn's argument leans towards an ethical proclamation at the expense of the ontological vicissitudes of capital closely examined by Deleuze and Guattari.

5 De Landa insists that physics should not be treated as a mere source of metaphors for history (De Landa 2000, 16). He argues that human society is a material which is affected by the very same processes which occur in physics. Although I agree that the relation between physics and history should not be constructed as merely metaphorical, I do not believe that it is literal either. This is because history is not a natural processes and, therefore, has its specificity as a material which makes the distinction between the metaphorical and literal use of physics obsolete. Both Deleuze and Guattari and Hegel steer clear of it and, therefore, capital and spirit are both states of matter which are conceptual rather than gaseous, liquid or solid.

consider capital to be a direct counterpart of the Greek milieu where philosophy first came into being.

Why did philosophy survive in Greece? We cannot say that capitalism during the Middle Ages is the continuation of the Greek city (even the commercial forms are hardly comparable). But, for always contingent reasons, capitalism leads Europe into a fantastic relative deterritorialization that is due first of all to city-towns *and that itself takes place through immanence*. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 97)

The fragment establishes an affinity between philosophy and capitalism, defining both as geophilosophical forms and shifting grounds of deterritorialization which operates on a global scale. It continues in the following manner:

Territorial produce is connected to an immanent common form able to cross the seas: wealth in general, “labor tout court,” and their coming together as commodity. Marx accurately constructs a concept of capitalism by determining the two principal components, naked labor and pure wealth, with their zone of indiscernibility when wealth buys labor. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 97)

The flow of this fragment takes us through the process of decoding historical circumstances by conceptual abstractions which intervene in the process of accumulation, allowing for its full development. We begin with relative deterritorialization which capital brings about through its global expansion.

The sea which Deleuze and Guattari invoke in the fragment is an ever-shifting historical scene where capitalist relations of production unfold and continuously increase their outreach. It is a scene of capitalism as the relative plane of immanence where immanence is defined by the historical contingency of events which propel the formation and subsequent expansion of capital. It is this shifting scene that Deleuze and Guattari recognise in Braudel’s *Civilisation and Capitalism*, a narrative of the emergence of capitalism in a flurry of events which follow no predetermined pattern. It is in connection to Braudel that they introduce the idea of the contingent universal, which I discussed in the introduction:

The only universal history is the history of contingency. Let us return to this eminently contingent question that modern historians know how to ask: why Europe, why not China? Apropos of ocean navigation, Fernand Braudel asks:

why not Chinese, Japanese, or even Moslem ships? Why not Sinbad the Sailor? (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 224)

Braudel follows the non-linear development of capitalism, which he perceives in terms of a vast institutional constellation unified into a single world. This unification does not occur through some developmental necessity. Although the world economy is bound by shared rules, these do not reflect the immanent nature of the system but are contingent upon a network of institutional relations responsive to the constantly changing historical circumstance.

The idea of deterritorialization is rooted in Braudelian thinking in terms of institutional constellations whose development is dependent upon myriads upon myriads of everyday occurrences defined by specific socio-geographical frameworks. However, while Braudel remains on the descriptive, macro-level of contingency with his narrative, Deleuze and Guattari seek to push the concept in the direction of the micro-contingency of abstraction—where capital reveals itself as an artificial, socially produced substance composed of abstract, conceptual intensities.

Therefore, the above-quoted fragment which begins at the sea of circumstance, takes deterritorialization further—into the desert of “wealth in general” and “labor tout court.” We see the flurry of events being transformed into a concept of capitalism. The authors adopt Marx’s core conceptual framework, defining value as a relation between two abstractions—socially necessary labour time and the general equivalent. However, they do not integrate these categories into an argumentative structure but channel historical materialism into two flows of abstraction: money and labour.

That is why capitalism and its break are defined not solely by decoded flows, but by the generalized decoding of flows, the new massive deterritorialization, the conjunction of deterritorialized flows. It is the singular nature of this conjunction that ensured the universality of capitalism. (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 224)

Abstract flows should not be mistaken for representative figures of the social dynamic of capitalism. They do not represent but rather embody capital, as two streams of conceptual energy. Therefore, I contend that for Deleuze and Guattari capitalism is not only a geo-historical condition of philosophy, a framework of social institutions which are favourable towards a certain kind of thinking: it is itself philosophy, the energy of transformation produced by thought.

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There is a decisive methodological change involved here, whereby Marx's historical materialism is converted into the abstract materialism of physics. The transformation is deliberately regressive and allows Deleuze and Guattari to rewrite the genealogy of capitalism in a challenge to the dialectical vision of history which still informs Marx's account. The regression to physics, as the authors conceive of it, does not lead to reification or substantialisation of historical materialism. Deleuze's and Guattari's interpretative gesture is not an attempt to capitalise on the ontological status of physics as an "exact" science dealing in natural certainties. To them, the physics of capital is the radicalisation of its two components, contingency and abstraction. Ultimately, it pushes contingency to leave the plane of history altogether and produce a conceptual texture of randomly distributed difference. The regression towards physics leads history straight towards schizophrenia, the erratic behaviour of particles which compose the flow of capital.⁶

Deleuze and Guattari research the genealogy of finance, following its ascent as a dominant form of "production" in the late stage capitalism. Though labour factors prominently in their analyses, constituting one of the decoded flows of capital, they are focused primarily on the abstract differential relation between flows. Just like they do with Braudel, Deleuze and Guattari begin with Marx's materialist framework only to shift its focus towards becoming-abstraction. Capitalist schizoanalysis is a genealogy showing the delusional evolution of financial capital attempting to shed the corset of material means of production and produce through the sheer difference anticipated in Marx's formula $M-M'$.

Both flows follow the same dynamic, mobilising history towards ever greater abstraction. The process begins with dismantling local codes through various economic practices of varied but ever-expanding outreach. At this stage, decoding produces a motley crew of institutions and processes which come into being independently of one another but are eventually conjoined in the flow of capital. Capitalism streams with the accumulated force of their diversity, covering the ever wider expan-

6 While neoclassical economy attempts to borrow its legitimacy from physics, styling the market as laws of nature, Deleuzo-Guattarian schizophrenic economics makes the exact opposite use of physics. The physical science of history involves regressive patterns of desire, destabilising social structure. In the words of David Lapoujade: "From this perspective, the universal history of *Anti-Oedipus* is just as much a history of social formations as a *history of the unconscious*, a history of different social bodies produced by the unconscious. (...) These social bodies are deliria of the unconscious" (Lapoujade 2017, 165).

ses of the Earth. However, the two flows eventually leave codes behind. As the abstractions of money and labour are universalised, their micro-level differential relation emancipates from the macro-level historical contingency.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari dive right into the shifting and unstable dynamic of the flows which are both set into motion by the process of primitive accumulation, that is, the appropriation of resources on a massive scale which lays the foundations for the accumulation of capital. The analysis of primitive accumulation offers a radically contingent and historicised definition of capitalist property, which Marx opposes to the genealogies of property which narrate it in terms of individual industriousness in the state of nature. As he writes in *Capital*: “The so-called primitive accumulation, therefore, is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production” (Marx 1990, 874–875). This divorce dissolves communities and destroys the historical codes binding them together, thus removing obstacles for the accumulation process.

The flow of money is mobilised by different forces moving from different directions. There is the stream of gold extracted from colonial mines, which enters and circulates in the intricate web of commercial institutions of different scale. There is public debt which deterritorializes nations, simultaneously boosting their energies for colonial expansion and liquefying their borders in relation to foreign finance; there are enclosures and colonial conquest which appropriate and decode land, abstracting it from location, natural properties and the communities which depended on it for their subsistence. These are diverse social practices which nevertheless participate in a common geo-historical dynamic of displacement. Money is the abstract product and medium of this process, which abstracts from its own geo-historical conditions. It dissolves geographies into commensurate units of exchange.

The same goes for peoples expropriated from their rights to communal land or enslaved and displaced in the process of colonisation. They dissolve into bodies, countless women and men, all exiled into the labour market where they are stripped of everything apart from their capacity for labour, which becomes a commodity. Capitalism is the monstrous history of this exile with all the contingent routes, legislative and administrative solutions and varying demand. Yet, in the end, abstraction divorces bodies even from the history of their exploitation, as well as from their biology. Ultimately, it is not even the energy which they produce for the labour market that matters, but the quantification of this energy which gains conceptual autonomy as the determination of value.

Although the figure of the flow might suggest that this process occurs as a linear progression, it is in fact far from it. The diachronic dimension of capitalism is not organised as a succession. It is rather a pool of events—an overflowing contingency of phenomena which occur in different moments of discontinuous time. There is no necessary connection between them, until there is. Deleuze and Guattari wonder at this industrious conundrum: “All sorts of contingent factors favor these conjunctions. So many encounters for the formation of the thing, the unnamable!” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 226). The exclamation is made in the spirit of Marx’s genealogical approach which only works backwards, as a retrospective reorganisation of contingent events into logical patterns. Capitalism does not evolve. It happens when all of its condition have finally had the chance to materialise.

Yet, in order to fully account for the abstraction and contingency of capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari radicalise this genealogical principle. They embrace the reversed and fractured genealogical time-line and push it beyond the point of breaking.

Primitive societies are not outside history; rather, it is capitalism that is at the end of history, it is capitalism that results from a long history of contingencies and accidents, and that brings on this end. It cannot be said that the previous formations did not foresee this Thing that only came from without by rising from within, and that at all costs had to be prevented from rising. Whence the possibility of a retrospective reading of all history in terms of capitalism. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 153)

In order to account for capitalist flows, it is not enough to reshuffle history retrospectively. Genealogy allows the emergence of the flows to be explained, but not their subsequent turning against history, whose codes choke on the abstract thingness of capital. Therefore, the historical past is not a source of the logical structure of the present, like it is for Marx. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari use the genealogical method to demonstrate that capitalism is inexplicable in terms of the historical circumstances which might have produced it but which nevertheless belong to a completely different register. Theirs is a misconstrued genealogy of history becoming philosophy, demonstrating the immanent impossibility of capital.

Deleuze and Guattari explicitly posit capitalist genealogy as a narrative of illegitimacy.

And isn’t that also what Oedipus, the fear of incest, is about: the fear of a decoded flow? If capitalism is the universal truth, it is so in the sense that makes

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capitalism the negative of all social formations. It is the thing, the unnamable, the generalized decoding of flows that reveals a contrario the secret of all these formations, coding the flows, and even overcoding them, rather than letting anything escape coding. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 153)

Both incest and capitalism threaten social organisation with dismantling its basic condition—coded structure which holds communities together within the boundaries of a territory. Yet, while the tabooisation of incest exploits the threat, using it to install the paradigmatic social code of familial structure, capitalism offers no such pretext for coding to intervene. On the contrary, it presents a systemic impossibility of tabooisation. It is illegitimate coupling returning with a vengeance—not as a dreaded exception but as a universal non-rule, a systemic flagrancy which undermines the possibility of all systems.

Therefore, I argue that the eponymous formula of *capitalism and schizophrenia* is not meant as an opposition but as a conjunction of two terms, the latter defining a condition of dissociation and the former determining this condition as universal. The authors extrapolate a utopia of difference from the actual workings of capitalism which is an immense reservoir of conceptual intensities. Their conceptual production taps into the energetic potential of capitalism, which is already there, accumulated in history. However, it is caught up in the actuality of the global division of labour and the rationale of profit. The methodologico-material dynamic of the flows serves precisely to uncouple capital from codes and release its pent up conceptual energies. Their liquid instability disrupts capitalism's careful balancing act on the edge of history and leads it to its illogical conclusion and the emergence as the universal non-principle—an overflow of decoded abstraction released from the entanglement with its social structure.⁷

7 As Jay Lampert aptly shows, Deleuzo-Guattarian universalism is not based in universal law, but, paradoxically, in its dissolution: “These decoding procedures are precisely what allow it (capitalism—M.O.) to do universal history, in a way that no society committed to specific social codes could do. A coded society can only *compare* itself to other societies, or colonize them by force; capitalist society is beyond historical comparison, since it decodes differences and sees universality everywhere. Capitalism is therefore the only schema that can date events in history on a commensurable time-line. It conducts universal history not only because it lies at the end of history so far; it does so because its decoding mechanisms make retrospectivity possible. Capitalism is the first historical age, treating all precedents as its gradual becoming; and it is also the first non-historical age, since from its perspective nothing has ever changed, and history itself is decoded” (Lampert 2006, 123). However, his interpretation suggests that capitalist decoding triumphs

I will now trace the mechanisms of decoding and quasi-physical processes producing conceptual matter.

The differential relation expresses the fundamental capitalist phenomenon of the transformation of the surplus value of code into a surplus value of flux. The fact that a mathematical appearance here replaces the old code simply signifies that one is witnessing a breakdown of the subsisting codes and territorialities for the benefit of a machine of another species, functioning in an entirely different way. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 228)

The transformation between the two types of surplus value is immanent to the capitalist relations of production. *The old code*, assembling social patterns and regularities which bind communities together, is not simply gone with the pre-capitalist past, instantaneously replaced by *mathematical appearance*. History always speaks in code, creates patterns of meaning which define societies. Global capitalist society is no exception. While it is a product of deep running deterritorialization, the historical dynamic of expansion and accumulation reproduces a code or rather a network of codes necessary for the organisation of the global division of labour and the management of the sheer scale of the enterprise. Deleuze and Guattari note that capitalism reterritorialises itself, although its territory is not local. It is the entire globe.

Capitalism is coded in terms of the social relations of production. Marx's historical materialism works towards retrieving these codes which are dissimulated by the appearance of the autonomy produced by commodities. Marx thinks of value in terms of representation, as an abstract category which dissimulates antagonistic social relations of production—a shifty code which obfuscates the process of social coding that produces it. However, since this representational dissimulation is a necessary logical moment of the capitalist mode of production, it can be deciphered to reveal the underlying code of social production.⁸

over time, reproducing its mechanism despite varying historical circumstance. What I'm arguing for instead is that capitalist universality abandons itself to time—the non-linear, chaotic time of the differential relation.

8 Marx's theory of capitalist representation is discussed in detail by Beverley Best in *Marx and the Dynamic of Capital Formation*. This is how she discusses the mechanism of abstraction: "The dialectical movement at the core of this formulation can be expressed in this way: the mechanism of abstraction that is the historical condition of capitalism's inherent tendency to obscure its own essential structure, relations, modus operandi, and so on—its tendency to thwart its own adequate representation on the part of its agents—develops, at the same time, as the mechanism through which capitalism's essential structure can be revealed and

World-system theories, which are crucial for Deleuze's and Guattari's insight into capitalism, take up Marx's project of grounding economic abstractions in the historical development of relations of production and expand it on a global scale. The uneven development they trace across continents is precisely a historical pattern of meaning organising the workings of the global market. Considered in terms of capitalist expansion, it can be defined as social interdependence on global scale. It emerges as a result of relative decoding, where local patterns of meaning are mercilessly dismantled only to clear the geo-historical space for far-reaching but also far more flexible structures. Coding loses the rigidity characteristic of its local forms, but is still very much in place.

Therefore, the irrevocable breakdown of codes occurs in a different dimension, on a different plane of consistency. It is the work of *a machine of another species* invoked by the authors in the fragment I've just quoted. It is a philosophical machine of abstraction which turns historical circumstance bound by codes into unrestrained conceptual dynamic. Deleuze and Guattari construct it by tinkering with Marx's theory of value. Although they use the term *mathematical appearance* in direct reference to Marx, the opposition to the *old codes* decisively changes the meaning of the term. The authors do not consider values as representative forms but as intensive modifications of the flows. Therefore, they convey their argument through the texture of the flows which they keep transforming, releasing conceptual energy in the process.

The concept of value thus emerges as a zone of indiscernibility between Marx's representation and Deleuzeo-Guattarian decoding. Both are forms of abstraction and, yet, the procedure is understood quite differently in both cases. Marx interprets it as a formal generalisation which serves the dual representative function I have just discussed. Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, understand decoding as a form of abstraction which destroys representation. The history of capitalism is the history of value production and history as value production. It is history that is immanently quantifiable, except that history is impossible to quantify, with patterns of meaning being untranslatable into mathematical language. Therefore, while value is a product of capitalist social formation, it does not dialectically represent this relation as form.

This is why Deleuze and Guattari deem capitalism "profoundly illiterate" (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 240) and eschew representational theory in favour of conceptual physics. This methodological shift allows decoding to be understood as a material force channeled by flows. The

reconstructed in the course of analysis" (Best 2010, 74).

functional illiteracy of capitalism is not a state but a process—a pull of abstraction, a gradual siphoning of social patterns which dissociates value from any logical relation with the relations of production. It generates an elusive, eerie, conceptual matter merging incompatible dimensions of method and texture. *Mathematical appearances*, as Deleuze and Guattari understand them, are material products of this force of transformation which filter into the dynamic of historical circumstance. Ingrained in the flows, they are volatile conceptual particles which do not represent capitalist relations of production but constitute them on a molecular level. Abstraction thus produces the granular structure of capitalism.

Deleuze and Guattari's take on value should be considered in the broader context of their philosophy of difference, which favours the logic of quantity over that of quality. The latter is a formal constraint of difference which it qualifies forcibly in accordance with external categories. The former, on the other hand, imposes no meaning on difference. Therefore, it is pure differing, no logical strings attached. As a result of their conceptual preference, the authors are perfectly attuned to the paradox inherent in abstraction—if the process is pushed far enough, it constitutes a methodological impetus to difference, producing material singularities instead of the general categories it is normally associated with. Thus, it no longer functions as a logic of reduction but as a reduction of logic—a formal procedure as methodological abandon.

This paradox informs Deleuze and Guattari's take on the dynamic of capitalism as the flow from the molar dimension of history to the molecular dimension of value. The abstract flows of money and labour decode meanings to the point of absolute non-description where they turn into swarming particles—direction-less and perfectly contingent in their configuration. Unanchored in any recognisable historico-logical pattern, they are particles of sheer difference scattered all-over the erratic space of the global market—multiplicity run wild with abstraction, the reductive practice of endless proliferation which explains the process of accumulation in its barren excess.

Therefore, it is abstraction which marks the onset of global schizophrenia, transforming the global market from a deterritorialized code organising global relations of production into a site of schizoid spatial distribution of intensities. Thus, capitalism moves from relative to absolute deterritorialization. The spatial distribution of capitalist utopia which Deleuze and Guattari create with intensities freed both on and from the market. This is how the authors define the difference between the two:

deterritorialization is relative insofar as it concerns the historical relationship of the earth with the territories that take shape and pass away on it, its geological relationship with eras and catastrophes, its astronomical relationship with the cosmos and the stellar system of which it is a part. But deterritorialization is absolute when the earth passes into the pure plane of immanence of a Being-thought, of a Nature-thought of infinite diagrammatic movements. Thinking consists in stretching out a plane of immanence that absorbs the earth (or rather, “adsorbs” it). (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 228)

Adsorption is a process destabilising the material consistency of the earth by an element which is impossible to assimilate and, therefore, needs to be pushed to the surface. This is precisely what becomes of the abstract flows. Rather than suffusing and permeating the earth, as they would were they being absorbed, the flows take to the surface and cover it with particles of abstraction. The differential relation between the flows creates a layer of value—a diagrammatic texture of the global market, or rather the global market as diagrammatic texture, a site of molecular instability created by an unstructured proliferation of differences.

This is the ultimate thrust of the expansion of capitalism, which leaves the sea and takes to the diagrammatic. This is expansion to and through the molecular dimension which is not bound by the limitations of molar geo-historical expansion dependent on the productive forces in their always limited capacity. Deleuze and Guattari embrace the schizophrenia of the capitalist logic of growth, which is always ahead of itself, with the need to reinvest capital always outgrowing what the current relations of production can accommodate. Capitalist reproduction proceeds with suffocating speed, rendering each historical constellation obsolete before its time has even come. Deleuze and Guattari bring this impossible pace to its illogical conclusion with adsorption which constitutes an aggressive and perverse transcendental relation between history and abstraction. The perversity lies in the situation where conditions keep being voided by what they restlessly produce.

Adsorption is the dynamic of the obsolescence of historical circumstances. The flows drain the relations of production of their contingent complexity, creating particles of value bursting to the surface of the earth. Therefore, history doesn't move forwards but surface-wards, having its dynamic patterns vaporised and relieved of value, which is appropriated by the schizoid proliferation of difference. Adsorption thus changes the topology of the global market from the sprawling contingency of world history to a massive abstraction. Suddenly the market

has no history, which it consumes incessantly, reproducing itself as nonsense. Abstraction is a schizophrenic process whereby capitalism loses its grasp on its own accumulation. Losing its transcendental footing, it is beside itself and the instrumental considerations of profit which constituted its rationale.

Having its transcendental structures stripped over and over again, the milieu of immanence is incapable of the formal integration of difference, which surfaces as unchecked conceptual volatility. It is now perfectly horizontal, as there are no categories introducing divisions and hierarchies. This is capitalism as philosophy—an incompatible amalgam which Deleuze and Guattari define as Nature-Thought. The adsorption of transcendental structures of meaning allows for the eruption of thought free of any self-imposed boundaries. It is the emergence of the universal, an unassimilable overflow of thought which roams free across the surface of the Earth.

Hegel—the Summary of the Spirit

The final chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* bears witness to the concept drunk with immense creative power. “For this concept is, as we see, the knowing of the self’s doing within itself as all essentiality and all existence, the knowing of this subject as substance and of the substance as this knowing of its doing” (Hegel 2018, 460). Everything, the entirety of experience, is spirit’s *tour de force*. Dialectics is the expression of its boundless will to power, its methodical flexibility matching the wild and rapacious appetite for creation.

Hegel loves taking stock of the spirit’s progress. Accordingly, the final chapter completing the journey of the universal is one in a long list of summaries which open each new sequence of *Phenomenology* and which keep getting longer and longer. The narrative goes round in circles, since subsequent stages of development are being repeated each time there is a fresh conceptual vantage point, a new shape of consciousness which re-frames the proceedings. The development is repetitive because Hegel introduces new forms of consciousness using the same dictionary all over again. A wide range of themes—including slavery, phrenology, Buddhism, Enlightenment and French Revolution—is covered by recurrent terms. Subject and object, essence and existence, substance and negativity, alienation and reconciliation—a choice group of concepts riddle the text. They keep spinning page after page, following one another, merging and separating in various ways

and from various angles—provoking a strong sense of dizziness in the reader.

The final chapter compounds the experience.⁹ It is a grand summary of the entire conceptual adventure which brings nothing new, except for the Absolute, which can be identified with the possessive gesture of summarising.

Our sole contribution here is partly to gather together the singular moments, each of which in its principle exhibits the life of the whole spirit, and partly to hold onto the concept in the form of the concept, whose content would already itself have yielded to these moments and to the form of a shape of consciousness. (Hegel 2018, 460)

Spirit registers itself, end of story. Absolute knowledge is a gathering together, a review of the progress. A trademark of Hegel's summaries is the level of conceptual condensation, so high that the individual sequences often come across as hardly recognisable. And since here spirit approaches the finishing line, the condensation proceeds at full throttle. Hegel writes that the singular moments yield to the form of consciousness. Bursting with the whole life of the spirit, they are transformed under an enormous conceptual pressure.

The conceptual treatment of individual moments is not an operation on meaning alone. Repetition is not merely a rephrasing of the argument but also its material transformation.

As a result, what has come to be the element of existence, or the form of objectivity, is for consciousness what the essence itself is, namely, the concept. Spirit, appearing to consciousness in this element, or, what amounts to the same thing here, what is therein engendered by it, is science. (Hegel 2018, 460)

Science is not just a complete and completed categorial structure but its extension into the form of objectivity. The process does not turn the spirit into an object, enclosing it in a discreet form. The form of objectivity is itself an effect of multiple transformations and, at this point in the narrative, assumes the continuity of the element of existence.

⁹ Rebecca Comay aptly describes the spirit's bravura in the following passage: "Absolute knowing, having »won the concept,« has just run through a breathless recapitulation of the entire sequence of its various misadventures—finally vindicated as learning experiences—in the slightly esoteric shorthand that suggests at once a flashcard sequence learned by rote or a cinematic flipbook of a deathbed vision" (Comay and Ruda 2018, 66).

The circular movement of recurrence thickens the presence of the categorical structure. Repetition integrates concepts into existence, installs and impregnates them, layer after layer. The logical condensation of the argument results in the changing state of matter, an increased saturation of the element of existence by the concept.

This elemental quality is produced by the concept in its repetitive function. It becomes in the methodological procedure of summarising, which will be understood below first and foremost as a material process undergone by the method. Repetition turns out to be a crucial dialectical moment that releases the transformative energies of the concept into existence. Similarly to the Deleuzeo-Guattarian account of the transition from the history of capitalism to its abstract texture, Hegelian dialectics shows how logical operations stray into material forces.

There is a paradox at work here, as the method helps the concept out of the page and into existence but it does this by means of the textual transformation which involves the concept and thus holds it back from ever leaving the space of the argument. The analysis of the relation between time and absolute knowing in Hamacher's *Pleroma* revolves around this fraught relation between the spirit and its textual residue.

But the search not merely closes, it also presents its own closing. However strictly the presentation of absolute knowing in the completed "System of Science" is distinguished from the mere representation of the same domain in religion—for Science is the truth of religion—the concept nonetheless necessarily retains in this presentation its connection with a derivative form of temporality. (Hamacher 1998, 225)

Following Hamacher's interpretative impulse, I will follow the final presentation of the text, the procedure of summarising. I will not concentrate on what happens in the text but on what happens with the text, the how of the wrapping up of the experiences of consciousness. Therefore, the method attempted here will be the physics of textual transformation, applied to explore what kind of movement dialectics becomes towards the very end.

This methodological excursion requires a short remark concerning my deliberately opaque handling of the text of *Phenomenology*. The commentary avoids the task of deciphering the text in order to propose an interpretation. It is rather an attempt to attune the argument to the physical operations which the spirit performs with the matter of the text. Summary is considered here as a certain rhythm and flow of words, their circulation in the space of the argument which the analysis below

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sets out to explore. Therefore, when commenting on Hegel's text, the argument will often latch onto a word or phrase not to comprehend its meaning but to examine how it resonates with the paragraph, that is, what kind of movement it produces in the text which weaves itself around it.

The content is as a result only conceptually comprehended when, in its otherness, the I is at one with itself. More determinately stated, this content is nothing but the very movement just spoken of for the content is the spirit that traverses through itself, indeed for itself as spirit in its having the shape of the concept in its objectivity. (Hegel 2018, 460)

The idea of spirit traversing through itself brings together the formal reflexivity of categories and the spatio-temporal expansion of an element. These are two complementary dimensions constituting the objectivity of the concept. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Hegel explores conceptuality as the spatial distribution of thought production. The dissemination of the concept occurs in subsequent repetitions, consecutive traverses carried by the spirit as it unfolds its categorial structure. These are not simple, mechanical reprisals. The categories are in a continuous state of displacement, entangled in sweeping dialectical gestures which advance the expansion of the spirit.

The dizziness caused by the experiences of consciousness is the effect of the formal monotony of repetitions combined with constant micro-changes in dynamic, intensity and spacing. It is not because of unduly rich conceptual vocabulary that the spirit comes to occupy all of existence, but because of both the persistence and nuance of its repetitive cycles which allow the categories to thicken into existence. Following the dialectical rhythm of recurrences, we get a sense of Hegel being instinctively attuned to the materiality of abstraction. The dialectical movement is stimulated by impulses which are just outside the reach of logic.

However, Hegel systematically harnesses the subliminal abstraction in the service of dialectics. Repetition, with all the surreptitious shifts in intensity and rhythm, is therefore a build-up of absolute knowledge. Yet, simultaneously, it performs the opposite function, blocking the expansive progression of science. The logical grandstanding of the spirit, which we have just seen expanding into *all essentiality and all existence*, is cut short by the very mechanisms which helped establish it in the first place.

However, with regards to the existence of this concept, science does not appear in time and in actuality until spirit has reached this consciousness about itself.

As the spirit that knows what it is, it does not exist any earlier, nor does it even exist anywhere at all until after it has completed the labor of compelling its incomplete shapes to provide for its consciousness the shape of its essence. (Hegel 2018, 461)

All of a sudden, immediacy and contingency are firmly reintroduced to the summary, which takes on another meaning altogether. It is no longer synthetic but disjunctive. Instead of an element of the spirit, a thick logical material produced through condensation, there are incomplete categories scattered around, lacking any connection.

Hegel is insistent here and puts the concept in its place—at the very end of the adventures of consciousness not a second earlier. Before that it doesn't exist anywhere at all. There is no dialectical build-up then. And if this is indeed the case, there seems to be no dialectical thread connecting what Hegel refers to as the incomplete shapes of the spirit, whose unfolding nevertheless constitutes the entire content of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is a radical statement which seems to overturn the paradigm, as spirit, functioning throughout as the element of mediation, is being dissolved in the space of one sentence.

In this instance, the repetition doesn't simply take us back to some earlier stage of development but seems to cancel the entire procedure.

For the substance is the still undeveloped in-itself, or the ground and concept in its still unmoved simplicity, and it is therefore the inwardness, or the self of spirit which is not yet there. What is there is the still undeveloped simple and immediate, that is, the object of representational thinking consciousness *per se*. (Hegel 2018, 461)

At the very end, spirit finds itself at the very beginning and it is as if nothing has happened. What is there is the initial, most abstract and naive iteration of the relation between consciousness and its object. However, Hegel no longer posits it as an opening salvo of dialectics but as a recurrent frame of each and every abstract moment. This appears to be a dead end near the grand finale of history and, therefore, a disintegration of dialectics. The entire enterprise seems to be in need of repetition, as it brought no results whatsoever.

The revealedness which the substance has in this consciousness is in fact concealment, for the substance is the still self-less being, and what is revealed is, to it, only the certainty of itself. Hence, initially it is only the abstract moments which belong to substance's self-consciousness. (Hegel 2018, 461)

What kept revealing itself to consciousness throughout was the concealment of science. The unity of development guided by negation was in fact the exact opposite: a flurry of abstract moments which follow no common logical pattern but proceed separately. The separation is what is there. Instead of being overcome and transformed into the elemental quality of the spirit, the form of abstract immediacy has autonomy and holds sway over the abstract moments.

However, the wind changes once again and the unifying perspective of science returns to the summary. Spirit takes charge again.

However, while as pure movements these moments impel themselves forward, self-consciousness enriches itself until it has wrested the entire substance from consciousness and has absorbed into itself the entire structure of the substance's essentialities, and—while this negative conduct towards objectivity is equally positive, is a positing—it has created these elements from out of itself and has thereby at the same time produced them for consciousness. (Hegel 2018, 461)

It is now suggested that abstract immediacy, which decontextualised the categories and decoupled them from one another, gives them to the spirit on a platter. The condition of separation is precarious. It leaves the abstract moments defenseless against the force of negation. Therefore, immediacy invites dialectics, pushing the abstract moments forward to present themselves for conceptual absorption. The transition is a matter of wrestling with abstraction. Before the separate moments can be dialectically processed, they put up a fight which Hegel paradoxically associates with their readiness for absorption. The abstract moments propel themselves forward to confront the spirit, their separation rendering them both brittle and defiant. Referring to conceptual practice with terms like *traversing*, or *wrestling*, Hegel creates an image of physical drudgery which awaits categories in contact with their object.

Each element is engaged separately and each has the time to face the spirit. In fact, time is the form of engagement between abstract moments and science.

Time is the concept itself that is there and is represented to consciousness as empty intuition. Consequently, spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time as long as it does not grasp its pure concept, which is to say, as long as it does not erase time. Time is the pure self externally intuited by the self but not grasped by the self; it is only the intuited concept. (Hegel 2018, 462)

Time is there—it is the medium of abstract immediacy which now defines what it absolutely cannot define: the concept itself. Being there

is what the concept definitely is not, and yet there it is, establishing itself in external, temporal existence at the cost of its identity as concept. It is there, in immediate presence of the logical variety of moments which defy the synthetic unity of science. Time is the medium of the radical contingency of all the separate categorial structures which are posited as historical incidents. They appear in their own time, and their constitution and unfolding is not predetermined by the concept. They are not immanent to its logical development but confront it as autonomous. The universal is lost in time, which cannot be tamed by logic until the very last moment.

Hegel is establishing a contingent network of different local logical structures. The flow of time is constantly derailed by inflections, stirrings of conceptual matter which are stimulated by the forceful encounter with different abstract moments. The contingency of this encounter throws the flow off its course, producing material changes in intensity, dynamic and location. Therefore, the concept seems to exist against itself and yet existence is what defines it as concept. Time is the form of things happening to the spirit which need to endure before time can be erased. “For this reason, it must be said that nothing is *known* that is not in *experience*” (Hegel 2018, 462). For the time being, the spirit seems resigned to being there, reduced to a passive state of appearing.

However, it was not that long ago when Hegel decisively defined all of existence as the spirit’s own doing, subsisting as the immense release of conceptual will to power. And he certainly has not left this definition behind but proceeds to assert the determination of the spirit through the abstract moments. Indeed, there is no other access to abstract immediacy than through its opposite, that is, the select categories which form the framework of Hegel’s phenomenological enterprise. They constitute the necessary points of entry into the dialectics, which therefore keeps reasserting itself through them. Ultimately, time is there to be erased and disappear into its own flow, which subsumes historical contingency to logical necessity.

Spirit is in itself the movement which is cognition—the transformation of that former in-itself into for-itself, of substance into subject, of the object of consciousness into the object of self-consciousness, i.e., into an object that is just as much sublated, or into the concept. This transformation is the circle returning back into itself, which presupposes its beginning and reaches its beginning only at the end. (Hegel 2018, 462)

This is the entirety of the dialectics held in one short fragment with the level of condensation verging on unsustainable. The fragment seems to invite a totalising reading with the implication that a proper beginning can only be recognised from the perspective of the complete and completed system. However, the impression of the arch-knowing emergence-return of absolute knowledge is simultaneously upended by the composition of the chapter which is no sweeping retrospective but rather a series of shifts alternating frantically between two extremes—conceptual mastery over and compliance with historical contingency. Therefore, the circle returning back into itself is not a closed and orderly circuit. Hegel does not stage repetition as triumphant comeback but as recycling of the spirit, including all the drawbacks.

This dynamic, both monotonous and eventful, produces countless conceptual waves which combine the elemental materiality and the ideal progress of the spirit. They arise from the incessant reappearance of categories which produce inflections, each one slightly derailing the history of the concept. Dialectics is a method of shifting accents placed on recurrent categories which keep revolving around one another. Hegel proceeds by dislodging the terms in search of the accurate position that they will all gain *in time*, which is—as we can recall from a fragment quoted earlier—the form frustrating the development of the spirit.

Conceptual precision, which Hegel strives towards, is not a state but a circular process where logic meets matter. It is a formal procedure, as a material force dredging through the contingent flow of time. Therefore, it is the obsessive cultivation of meaning that clogs the dialectical machine with incessant repetitions. The displacements augment the presence of the categories and add to their density. Science emerges as the spirit keeps coming back for more—more recycling, more non-existence and humiliation, but also more violent triumph.

Meanwhile, as we were focusing on the rhythm of the repetitions, time had ample time to change its position. It reappears further on, transplanted into an entirely different configuration:

Inasmuch as spirit therefore is necessarily this differentiating within itself, its intuited whole confronts its simple self-consciousness, and since that whole is what is differentiated, it is thus differentiated into its intuited pure concept, into time, and into the content, or into the in-itself. Substance, as subject, has in it the initial inward necessity of exhibiting itself in its own self as what it is in itself, as spirit. (Hegel 2018, 462)

The fragment proposes a violent condensation and sudden dissolution, one right after the other. The first sentence confronts simple self-consciousness with difference as such—the radically formal use of both terms here posits them as all-encompassing abstractions. Yet in the second sentence, when self-consciousness splinters into the pure concept of time and its content, the formal simplicity immediately cracks and spills determined differences in-themselves.

Difference is no longer a single term, as the content, a moment ago still suppressed, is now no longer a unity. It becomes a movement of differentiation which runs wild when confronted with the formal purity of time unable to contain it. We find time ever-so-slightly displaced—no longer the immediate medium of differences, it becomes a form of their unity responsible for their emergence as differences. This slight correction of course is representative of the mechanism of repetitions and their rhythm, which quickens so drastically towards the end. The degree of condensation puts emphasis on the limited pool of concepts which Hegel selected to tell the story and leaves little space for them to actually move. Yet, this densely woven unity of meaning which allows only the slightest corrections of course makes each one of them drastic. Because of the boil-down, the distance which the concept travels with each subtle move is significant. Thus, the shifting concepts function like so many splinters which almost imperceptibly take the method apart. This makes the final repetitions almost unrecognisable and the summary so intense that it verges on baby-speak.

Then there comes another development: “The movement of propelling forward the form of its self-knowing is the work which spirit accomplishes as *actual history*” (Hegel 2018, 463). Out of nowhere, the term “history” appears for the first time in the summary of the spirit. Its entrance is abrupt, startling the reader, who immediately begins to wonder what the hell it was up to until this point.

Not until it has abandoned the hope of sublating alienness in an external, i.e., alien, manner, does that consciousness in itself (because the sublated alien mode is the return into self-consciousness) appeal to its own world and present time, discover that world to be its own property, and thus will have taken the first step to climb down from the intellectual world, or, instead, to give spirit to the abstract element of the intellectual world with the actual self. (Hegel 2018, 463)

Right after its sudden reintroduction, history as a sphere of contingent happening disappears inside a conceptual transformation which leaves only what is essential, that is, the *movement of propelling forward*

The degree of condensation puts emphasis on the limited pool of concepts which Hegel selected to tell the story and leaves little space for them to actually move. Yet, this densely woven unity of meaning which allows only the slightest corrections of course makes each one of them drastic. Because of the boil-down, the distance which the concept travels with each subtle move is significant. Thus, the shifting concepts function like so many splinters which almost imperceptibly take the method apart.

the form of its self-knowing. Dialectic sucks in the logical and existential weight which events are supposed to have, allowing spirit to finally overcome their alienness. We see this overcoming as it produces the substance of the text in the physical process of summarising. This is where alienness finally becomes spirit's property, as we see its power overtaking the world of matter. However, spirit cannot fully assert itself here, as there always remains absolute knowing in the form of presentation, the effect of enormous methodological pressure put on/in print.¹⁰

We witness the pulsation between scattered events, which appear virgin in their immediacy confronting the concept, and the concept which pushes drastically towards closure. This closure means two opposite things at once, allowing us to see with exceptional clarity the contrast which Hamacher establishes in his analysis of spirit and residue. 1. It is the concept achieving its full glory, climbing down from the intellectual world and insinuating itself into material existence, the triumphal descent of the spirit which sinks into space and time 2. It is textual residue produced by the summary, enclosed in the writing of the final chapter which we see physically pressured by the argument from within. The text of the chapter is the effect of this pressure, a conceptual residue which remains, despite the spirit simultaneously spilling into the outside world. It is now like an empty molt which remained after spirit shed the cocoon of the text and freed itself into existence.

Of course, condensation still has further to go, reaching its limit in the famous Fichtean tautology which Hegel brings up when he finishes the extreme, and frankly outrageous, two-page summary of world religions. "At that point spirit thereby turns around the thoughts lying in its innermost depths and pronounces the essence as the »I=I.« The religion bit works as a whirlpool, the condensation so intense that it ultimately boils down to this arch-tautology, a logical mirror, »I=I«" (Hegel 2018, 463). However, the intensity of the rotary movement means that a condensation can simultaneously be a reversal, a radical turn of thought. The dialectical physics consists of these violent twist of the method. The dynamic of repetitions is abrupt and unsparing.

Obviously, the "I=I" formula is shattered almost as soon as it appears. Just like Fichte, Hegel revels in cracking it open to reveal that "this equality as absolute negativity is the absolute difference" (Hegel 2018,

10 "There are no pages more pressured than in the last chapter of the *Phenomenology*: it's as if the accelerated tempo is trying to compensate for the dilatory pace of the preceding several hundred pages" (Comay and Ruda 2018, 82).

463). Finally, at the end of the section, the semblance of unity maintained throughout unravels completely:

Knowing would seem to have arrived at things, at what is different from itself, and at the differences among multiple things without having conceptually grasped how it got there or from where it came. (Hegel 2018, 464)

We are nearing the end and, nevertheless, everything falls apart again and we find empirical experience and not a shred of concept guiding its progress. Knowing is unmoored, seemingly having no clue as to its object—until it does, suddenly jumping at the multiplicity of things and comprehending them all at once in all their many differences, with itself and each other. This is hardly dialectical progress, though. However, Hegel insists that it actually is, once again radically changing the scenery through a series of microscopic interventions:

Therefore, in this knowing, spirit has brought to a close the movement of giving shape to itself inasmuch as that movement is burdened with the insurmountable differences of consciousness. Spirit has won the pure element of its existence, the concept. According to the freedom of its being, the content is the self relinquishing itself of itself, or it is the immediate unity of self-knowing. (Hegel 2018, 465)

There is an impossible rhythm to these final fragments, a rhythm of deranged sublation. Throughout the text it was operating in full view, its progress being rather the center of attention. Carefully elaborated, it proved to be ultimately linear—in the sense that the past, though dialectically looped, always flowed towards and fed into future developments. In this sense, the dialectical opposition guaranteed an ease of passage.

Things change when it comes to absolute knowing, the crowning achievement of speculative thought. The dialectical breadth, which allowed the circling dance between reflexive oppositional categories to go on for pages, is cut short. The flow of the argument is suddenly clogged by the radical condensation of the final summary and the sweeping historico-philosophical vistas, witnessed throughout, are reduced to extremes—abstract moments and science. The moments are no longer abstract, though. Their repeated intrusions into the summary are surreptitiously appropriated by the method. Inserted in the text, they are sucked in by the force of condensation and emerge fully conceptualised. Although the summary keeps returning to their immediacy on the level of content, it is in fact already way ahead of them. A radical

conceptual transformation is already in place. The sparseness of the final repetitions, which are also extreme cases of sublation, processed them beyond recognition.

However, the same sparseness simultaneously leaves insufficient space for sublation to actually operate. As a result, the process suddenly seizes its objects, which is very un-sublation like. It thus creates a dialectical space which is warped, mangled by the extreme case(s) of repetition whose intensity goes against itself. We might legitimately ask in what sense is this last chapter even a summary, if it looks nothing like what it preceded it and, indeed, like nothing at all? The condensation causes meaning to be out of step with movement, which also loses coherence with its linear structure, which has been destabilised by sudden shifts. This is how spirit self-relinquishes itself—taking sublation apart by tightening it beyond recognition. The insurmountable differences, which are compressed rather than overcome, are the fallout of this process—the result which is falling apart as it is being brought to a close.

The realm of spirits, having formed itself in this way in existence, constitutes a sequence in which one spirit replaced the other, and each succeeding spirit took over from the previous spirit the realm of that spirit's world. (Hegel 2018, 467)

Dialectics is represented here in a long line of circles, a circular sequence forming its way towards existence. Of course, this is how dialectics is supposed to operate, according to the model of progressing and progressive sublation. However, the impossible condensation of the material leaves no space for the gradual unfolding required for the proper functioning of this model. Thus incoherence sets in and the succession of circles reveals its impossibility as a spatial organisation of meaning.¹¹

11 This figurative incoherence and incongruity is also important in Andrew Cole's discussion of the *circle of circles*. In a dialectical interpretative move, Cole shows that this very drive contains residual figurality which he proves to be responsible for the many instances of geometrical malfunctioning of Hegel's circular images of speculative thought (See: Cole 2017, 58). However, rather than declaring that these figures are conceptually deficient and merely metaphorical, Cole appreciates that what amounts to geometrical malfunction is simultaneously a conceptual gain, a chance at metamorphosis, which is the key purpose of dialectical logic: "We have enough here, I hope, to say that Hegel supplies a figurative philosophy that parallels his thinking about concepts, their capacities, limits, motions, and interrelations with other concepts. Figures are like concepts. They, too, change and morph in the way concepts do: figures are composed of

The goal of the movement is the revelation of depth itself, and this is the absolute concept. This revelation is thereby the sublation of its depth, or its extension, the negativity of this I existing-inwardly-in-itself which is its self-relinquishing, or its substance—and is its time. (Hegel 2018, 467)

In order to accommodate the succession of circles, Hegel opens the dimension of depth which is, nevertheless, instantly sublated, together with extension. Matter disappears into negativity, which sucks it in, leaving solely the *I existing-inwardly-in-itself*. However, this inwardness is in the process of being negated itself in the process of the self-relinquishment of the spirit. Material substance reemerges here. It is no longer extension, though, but time as a form of self-relinquishment of the spirit. For the spirit to be deprived of itself means to lose control over its rationality. The substance is abandoned, then. It is time as the state of madness, the depth of logical confusion which spirit falls into—destabilised by the heady repetitions in which it can barely recognise itself and its gradual progress.

The aim, absolute knowing, or spirit knowing itself as spirit, has its path in the recollection of spirits as they are in themselves and are as they achieve the organization of their realm. Their preservation according to their free-standing existence appearing in the form of contingency is history, but according to their conceptually grasped organization, it is the science of phenomenal knowing. Both together are conceptually grasped history; they form the recollection and the Golgotha of absolute spirit, the actuality, the truth, the certainty of its throne, without which it would be lifeless and alone; only-. (Hegel 2018, 467)

The multitude of the spirits appears again and, as we will see in a moment, it is their recollection that temporality is mad with. At the moment, the spirit triumphs over them all but it is precisely this triumph which proves its undoing over time and because of time. Once sublated, time does not disappear into something else. It becomes sublation, whose extreme intensity, the impossible tempo of the summary, causes it to run mad.¹² This is what makes the ultimate triumph of the spirit an

other figures, and concepts are composed of other concepts, themselves never emerging as stable forms of possible experience” (Cole 2017, 60). Below, I will analyse an instance of such circular malfunctioning with the explosive potential to morph the concept.

12 This staggering conceptual feat where the self-sacrifice of the spirit allows it to gain the ultimate power is thus narrated by Hamacher: “Thus time not only swallows its children and thereby derivative forms itself, but must—following the cyclical economy of the concept, presenting itself as a gift bestowed by the same—

unbearable ordeal. Instead of reconciliation between the contingency of history and the conceptual framework of science there is Golgotha which is declared to be the source of certainty. The madness of historical events, the unstoppable multiplication which the spirit is forced to go through, is not overcome. Their unpredictable and explosive nature is retained in sublation, which becomes instantaneous. The summary makes it happen without delay—an irreconcilable contradiction which causes the spirit to implode and surrender itself to contingency as the highest form of logic.¹³

There is one more condensation to be sustained—this time in the graphic form of a dash.¹⁴ It is also one last act of self-relinquishing whereby Spirit leaves us “only -” with that. This ending, both abrupt and indefinite, is fitting, given the paradoxical inconclusive decisiveness which marks absolute knowing. The dash opens dialectics onto the future but there is nothing there. Therefore, the line must point backwards. It marks the place where dialectics turns over its shoulder for a last glance. However, there seems to be no chance of that either. There is *only* a suspension which takes forever. The dash meets it and thus the recollection begins again—this time for good, that is with no end in sight. The line thrusts backwards and pokes the body of the text, stirring it into motion which rewrites and redirects the circle returning back to itself.

also consume itself and re-imburse the concept” (Hamacher 1998 , 224).

13 This is how Comay writes of the summary and its power of instantaneous sublation: “This miniaturization both describes and dramatizes the retroactive »annulment (*tilgen*)« of time (PH §80): the overcoming of the fatal delay that had produced consciousness’s fundamental obliviousness to the significance of its own experiences” (Comay and Ruda 2017, 66).

14 I am of course following in the footsteps of Comay and Ruda, which who organise the reading of Hegel around this punctuation mark. This is how Comay discusses its behaviour in the final sentence of *Phenomenology*: “Squeezed out of the poem, Schiller’s dash has migrated to the borderlands of philosophy where it exerts a curiously ambiguous force” (Comay and Ruda 2017, 81). As we have seen above, Comay considered summarising as a form of pressure exerted by the process of summarising. Introducing the dash, Comay examines what negativity was negativity “The dash functions as a peculiar placeholder in that it stands in not for any positive or even negative content (even nothingness is far too monumental). It reveals that even the void-emptiness itself is a result: the blank space is generated by the inscription that presupposes it. The dash carves out (by marking) the emptiness that is simultaneously (also by marking) ruins. The dash is therefore the speculative sign par excellence: it incarnates the magic power of negativity. It marks the coincidence of destruction and construction. It is in this sense the perfect inscription of dialectical *Aufhebung*” (Comay and Ruda 2017, 84).

The circle is a figure of repetition, spirit retracing its steps as the new dialectical developments reflect back on all the previous configurations which require appropriate readjustment. Therefore, the temporal structure of dialectics is a repetition compulsion, triggered by the fact that each stage of the journey comes with a dialectical method of its own. However, the structure remains stable in the end—it simply needs to circle back to the beginning where it is sure to find itself. But what if there is no end to begin with? “Closing” *Phenomenology* with a dash suspended mid-air in between nothingness and suspension, Hegel prevents the circle from ever retrieving its beginning. Thus, the dash marks the final gesture of self-renunciation and points directly to the impossibility of dialectics, or, strictly speaking, dialectics as an impossibility.

The graphic sign, which so suddenly stops the spirit in its tracks, conveys the overwhelming sense of confinement. It is the mark which appears at the moment of the ultimate intensification of the pressure applied to the text. This pressure is dual and the dash operates both ways¹⁵—facing forward into the void as the spirit disappears into existence, transforming the text into pure waste, and simultaneously facing backwards, operating in reverse and reengaging the text. Like a needle, the dash points back to the text and pricks it, kick-starting what might be called a reverse-beginning of the entire dialectical movement.

As I have already written, the tense spacing of the summary causes even the slightest shift of position to cause drastic changes in meaning. Therefore, the tighter the frame gets, the higher the risk of implosion and complete havoc. This dynamic is working retrospectively. Pent up in the slim punctuation mark, the energy of condensation explodes back in time, dramatically changing, or rather multiplying, the course of dialectics. The dash marks this dialectical breakdown caused by the overwrought sublation. It punctures the text and is also the first of the countless cracks, the tiniest splinters of negation which keep derailing the pattern of absolute knowledge. Thus, the summary comes undone and begins to reel from the repetitions which it has previously condensed.

Therefore, all the intensity which the concept appropriated from the abstract moments is now directed back at the text. In retrospect, it affects each sign (including spaces and punctuation marks) of *Phenomenology*. The conceptually absorbed and processed immediacy involves them all, conferring on them the power of retrospective causality which consti-

15 Comay is attuned to this “The hyphen turns an ordinary word into a speculative word: it is punctuation, not semantics, that produces the effect of *Doppelsinn*” (Comay and Ruda 2017, 81).

tutes the movement of the circle returning back to itself. Each new sing functions as a quilting point which, therefore, requires a rewriting of the entire proceedings. There is no end to these endings, no stopping of the full stops which keep puncturing the surface of dialectics. Spirit's obsessive precision is out of control.¹⁶

The dash is therefore a full stop in permanent suspension, a stumbling block and a cause to with no effect. There are as many iterations of the logical order of the world, as there are signifiers. In turn, each reproduction induces repetitions of their own. Each reprise produces its own, slightly inflected dialectical narrative and each sign, space and punctuation mark of this new narrative produces a narrative of its own. Although only one version of the text was ever written down, that was all it took to trigger the dialectical *perpetuum mobile*, a machine for endless reproduction which arrives at—and, therefore, also begins with—nothing. Thus, the spirit constitutes as a substance possessing not so much an infinity of coexisting attributes but rather as an infinity of temporal and logical itineraries.

The spirit is thus stuck in the midst of its own regularities, whose the simultaneous unfolding of which makes them completely irregular. It turns dialectics into a perverse eternity of repetitions which causes time to fall apart and become an array of times and logics which unfold as so many histories of the concept. There is no going back from this type of repetition—a paradoxical concurrence of eternal return(s). It is endless, that is, senseless in its never-ending beginning. Thus, it overcomes sublation—with the process of dialectical overcoming ending with madness overcoming the dialectical process. The dash marks this broken, warped and derailed sublation; it is a sign whose perfect visual unity is a shortcut to pure disintegration. The condensation is too far gone, pushing the spirit towards schizophrenia—a repetitive cycle from which there is no return.

This is madness as the spatial structure of dialectics suspended from a dash which forms a long line of circles, countless loops unspooling in

16 We need to understand the difference between cyclical repetitions which allow the spirit to recapitulate and regroup and constant repetitions which allow no recapitulation and lead everywhere and nowhere. I refer to Comay again: “since Hegel will have established on logical grounds that every moment is strictly speaking a beginning, the work can get stalled at each and every moment, and all too frequently does. Every setback is an obstacle to continuation; every transition has the unpredictability of an *ex nihilo* beginning; the hiatus between every station on Spirit's journey is always on the brink of becoming impassible” (Comay and Zantvoort 2018, 52).

pointless synchrony. Their simultaneity makes it impossible to keep track of the movement, to connect the future with the past with one thread, however complex. The dash is a line which lacks direction and, therefore, starts running in circles. This is the Golgotha, the tortuous journey of the spirit where recollection is tantamount to further dissipation of thoughts, further thoughtless abandon. Thus, the dash, that is, the residue of textual residue, the worthless remainder of the presentation of the spirit, becomes an omnipresent and omnipotent force. It continues to produce a circle gone astray, never returning to itself and thus turned it into a sphere—a circle running in circles, bloated with endless repetitions—whose impossible shape occupies the depth of the absolute concept.¹⁷

We have already read a summary of the a text but not of this one. Incidentally, just like this other one, it will end on a discordant note. The text is split somewhere in the middle, divided between the two physics. I have made no explicit effort to align their incompatible structures heretofore and will take this last moment to address the issue of their mutual relation and reflect on how it informs the understanding of the universal proposed above.

The universal is often made out to be a monolith notion; it suggests unity—a single overarching structure which underlies social reality and admits no veering away from its logical path. Yet, as we have just seen this is not what actually obtains in the “concluding” chapter of *The Phenomenology of the Spirit*. As I attempted to show above, the establishment of the spirit as universal is not conditioned on the logical neces-

17 Andrew Cole thinks of a sphere as a more robust figure of conceptual capacity. “The pure sphere is in two dimensions, from the perspective of the moving point, but give the sphere volume and it’s in three dimensions. In this broader whole, indeed a wider sphere, you’re not going around the circle either forward or back, or round again. Rather, the entire surface, as well as the whole spherical volume, is the space of possibility” (Cole 2017, 59–60). It is precisely this space of infinitely widened possibilities which that I wanted to explore by conjuring up the sphere composed of inflecting dashes. In this case of a splendid geometrical malfunction and conceptual expansion, the volume is not a closed circuit. Thus, its infinite capacity is also an infinite capacity for producing waste which can no longer be seen as the remainder of dialectical logic. It rather becomes a hot mess of a center—the deranged mechanism of determination which forever misses the point.

sity of its conceptual denouement. The dialectics' final forays into existence show how uneven and unsure the procedure actually still is, so much so that the open-endedness of its patterns condemns it to repeat itself into infinity. There is no single path for the spirit to take, not one pattern for the concept to insinuate itself into existence. The aggressive dialectical condensation of the final chapter was not a form of logical closure. On the contrary, it caused the spirit to experience violent conceptual shifts and explode into infinite possible reprises. This development was not incidental but a logical consequence of determinate negation, which builds into a logic enclosing different superimposed logics constantly transforming one another in the course of their development.

The lesson Juliette Simont gives Deleuze when conducting her analysis is this—if you search for conceptual difference, you first need to acknowledge that there are different ways of going about it. Deleuze's insistence on his version of the alliance between difference and repetition as *the* correct method of differential production is inconsistent with his own project. The philosophical physics is not one physics, it doesn't constitute a single paradigm. The speculative micro-contingency developed by the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* yields a precision apparatus which, just like dialectics, registers different conceptual energies which permeate the social body. Concepts are (de)territorial forms of existence, occupying social spaces in often uneasy, always atypical constellations which, in turn, shape these spaces from within. It is the constant commerce between all these ideal and historically material factors that constitutes the universal and its physics.

Therefore, in order to read Deleuze and Guattari and Hegel together we need neither oppose them nor show that they are in fact beholden to similar structures. Dialectics and deterritorialization—the two methods refuse to fall in line and posit themselves in a relation of identity or contradiction. They both embody the constant shape-shifting of the universal—their respective conceptual structures extending differently across the social body, as they respond to the changing geo-philosophical circumstances and mould their logical formations. Accordingly, the line cutting between the two chapters of the text did not signal a divide. The argument organised around it, spreading outwards in order to probe the universal in terms of conceptual extension—capital and spirit covering history with their changing, or rather immanently changeable, layered structure which attempts to do justice to the systemic complexities and contingent regularities of social relations.

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Tytuł: Kapitał i duch: fizyka ogólności

Abstrakt: Artykuł dokonuje analizy deleuzo-guattariańskiego pojęcia kapitału, zdekodowanych przepływów pracy i pieniądza, i heglowskiego pojęcia ducha, upartego rytmu negacji określonej, w kategoriach *uniwersalności*. Pokaże, że – wbrew powszechnej opinii – Deleuze i Guattari nie rezygnują z tego heglowskiego pojęcia, tylko adaptują je do swoich własnych potrzeb. Uniwersalność będzie przeze mnie definiowana jako przestrzenna ekspansywność pojęcia i dystrybucja jego intensywności. Punktem wyjścia dla rozważań nad tą dystrybucją i jej dynamiką będzie definicja kapitału i ducha jako materialnych procesów transformacji historycznych kodów. To, jedynie z pozoru paradoksalne, rozumienie znaczenia w kategoriach fizyki pozwoli mi przekroczyć interpretację kodu w kategoriach reprezentacji. Podczas, gdy reprezentacja jest strukturą kodowania funkcjonującą na poziomie molarnym, zarówno schizoanaliza jak i dialektyka badają molekularne własności kodów, ich pojęciowe gęstości, intensywności i przepływy energetyczne. Zarówno Deleuze i Guattari, jak i Hegel przyglądają się znaczeniu jako osobliwej substancji pojęciowej, która stanowi dosłowny budulec historii. Przedmiotem poniższych refleksji będzie tworzenie się tego budulca i sposób, w jaki pojęcie wsiąka w egzystencję.

Słowa kluczowe: ogólność, Hegel, duch, Deleuze, Guattari, kapitalizm, schizoanaliza