

**ON THE SYMBOLIC ORDER OF CAPITAL: OVERCODING DESIRING-
PRODUCTION AND THE SEMIOTIZATION OF THE REAL**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to highlight how the various symbolic regimes of signs that function under the broad mosaic of capitalist activity overcode and artificially reterritorialize unconscious desires (desiring-production). Through engaging with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis, this work explores the extent to which psychoanalytic concepts have shifted from the therapist's couch to the sphere of social production, both in micro and macropolitics.

Through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's model of capital developed throughout their two-volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, this thesis explores possible modes of resistance to the semiotic overcoding capacities of semiocapital, such as the temporal-based religious asceticism. This culminates in what I call "machinic withdrawal", as the practice allows for a subject to essentially wean off of the technical and abstract machines of semiocapital that perform reterritorializations of desire for a brief period of time.

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Introduction

Michel Foucault, perhaps as a joke between friends, remarked that one day the 20th century might come to be remembered as “Deleuzian”. For his part, Deleuze was sure that this was in jest, either to give his admirers a laugh, or to enrage those who hated him. Despite whatever intention Foucault had, over which there is little consensus, Deleuze was sure of one thing: “He was a terrible joker.” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 88)

I, on the other hand, have always interpreted Foucault’s remark as a sincere gesture of recognition. Deleuze, even prior to his collaborative works with Guattari, had managed to do in the 20th century what he claims Leibniz had done for the Baroque: “He makes philosophy the production of harmonies.” (p. 163) Deleuze’s work embodied what Walter Benjamin (2019) saw as the ideal goal of philosophical inquiry: “Research should [instead] always be guided by the assumption that, when adequately conceived, what is disparate and diffuse appears bound together as elements of a synthesis.” (p. 40) Perhaps Benjamin’s language here borders too closely on the Hegelian for a direct comparison to Deleuze, and certainly so for Guattari. Nonetheless, Benjamin’s comment highlights the constellated nature of his research, something that Deleuze and Guattari will later begin referring to as assemblages. This thesis too, is an assemblage.

An assemblage is a complex constellation of qualities and territories “that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning.” (Parr, 2010, p. 18) This research project is centered around the broad issue of capital and the semiotic systems which permeate and reproduce it, and as such requires a fluid and dynamic structure. The topic for this thesis arose out of a desire to critique Mark Fisher’s

theory of capitalist realism, which is developed in his book *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009). Fisher's depressive vision of the neoliberal era occupies a space which seems to oscillate between the baseless hope that surely something new must be on its way, if only eventually and the "morose conviction that nothing new can ever happen". (Fisher, 2009, p. 3) This waning of affect was observed by Marx and Engels in the manifesto nearly a century before Fisher was born. They write:

“[Capital] has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless infeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.”

(Marx & Engels, 2011, p. 62)

Creativity and “heavenly ecstasies” are not fostered under the semiological and physical regimes of capital. Fisher believes that this marks a turn from true belief (what Fredric Jameson might call affect) invariably towards the realm of aesthetics. The secular age ushered in by industrial capital claims to have freed us from the abstractions and fatal ideologies of the past. As Fisher notes, the realism being discussed here “is analogous to the deflationary perspective of a depressive who believes that any positive state, any hope, is a dangerous illusion.” (Fisher, 2009, pp. 9) This is, as Fisher will later argue, how ethical critiques of capital might themselves be critiqued as coming from a place of naive utopian impulse.

The question that arises then is how does this system manage to perpetuate itself? Fisher is light on suggestions. The answer for this is not found in the aesthetic and symbolic realm or its degradation, as Fisher had thought, but rather in a philosophical historicism of the state and its abstract technical machines. It is here that my research turned to the collaborative works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, specifically, their two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980).

The two volumes differ so greatly in their tone, composition, and content that upon first reading them they hardly seem connected at all, save for a few key concepts such as deterritorialization and reterritorialization. One of the major concepts that emerged from *Anti-Oedipus* that was key for the development of the present research project was that of synthesis, and more specifically, conjunctive synthesis. Synthesis can be broadly summed up by “the joining of separate elements through chance encounters into an enduring, apparently stable, more or less reproducible conglomerate capable of being taken in its own objective illusion of identity.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 47) The term synthesis all but disappears by the time *A Thousand Plateaus* is released, but only because conjunctive synthesis has become ubiquitous at this point, and is woven into the fabric of the work’s composition.

Another term and key concept that permeates both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis, the inversion of psychoanalysis introduced in *Anti-Oedipus*, leads us to the consideration of desire, or desiring-production. Deleuze (1995) credits Freudian psychoanalysis with the discovery of desiring-production, noting that this was the true innovation of the field: “Indeed, that’s

what psychoanalysis discovered, desire, machineries of desire. They're constantly whirring, grinding away, churning stuff out, in any analysis." (p. 15-6) The issue with this discovery, however, is that the role of psychoanalysis is to give a sometimes-artificial meaning to these fundamentally asignifying desires. In other words, the goal of psychoanalysis is to transform the unconscious into a theatre of representation.

This brings about another invaluable concept: the movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These terms appear in both volumes, but are perhaps most commonly associated in Deleuze-Guattarian studies with their applications in *A Thousand Plateaus*, given the final chapter of that text. Simply put, deterritorialization is escape. This is why certain cyberneticists and proto-accelerationists, such as Nick Land, had latched onto the concept, as it appeared to be the only exit from the state machine's effects of territorialization. This is not a misreading, as Deleuze and Guattari (2011) do write explicitly "[deterritorialization] is the movement by which 'one' leaves the territory." (p. 591) The problem with the typical accelerationist perspective on Deleuze and Guattari's theory of deterritorialization is that they all but abandon the concept of reterritorialization, which is just as fundamental and serious as the initial deterritorializing movement. When certain state apparatuses deterritorialize particular dimensions of the socius, these flows are "immediately overlaid by reterritorializations on property, work, and money (clearly, that land ownership, public or private, is not territorial but reterritorializing)." (p. 591)

Deterritorialization essentially indicates the "creative potential of assemblage." (Parr, 2010, p. 69) Deterritorializing can be thought of simply as freeing up fixed relations (one might be compelled to think of Chomsky's arborescent schema) in a

structure or assemblage in order to “expose it to new organizations.” (p. 69) There are different forms of deterritorialization, each contingent on the territory of the phenomenon. By way of example, consider the geopolitical and cultural term “the West”, used broadly to indicate parts of Europe and North America. The broad application of the term speaks to a geographical deterritorialization. As Jean-Luc Nancy (2020) remarks, “it [the West] is broadly deterritorialized on the surface of the earth and even outside of it.” (p. 101) There are corporeal deterritorializations, perhaps most vividly articulated in the first pages of *Anti-Oedipus* wherein Deleuze and Guattari (2008) note the unfortunate semiological nature of the anorexic. (see: p. 5) With regards to the relationship between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, it must be remembered that a major part of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical project is concerned with overcoming the dualistic underpinnings of the western philosophical tradition. This relationship is not congruous with philosophical binary systems (being and non-being come to mind), and the relationship must not be construed as necessarily negative.

Reterritorialization should not be mistaken as the opposite of deterritorialization. The relationship between the two terms can be best understood in the social dynamics in the nascence of industrial capitalism. The serf-landowner relationship was deterritorialized and this line of flight or creative potential was, depending on the locality, quickly severed by a reterritorialization of the labourer-factory owner dynamic. Reterritorialization, whether social, corporeal, spiritual, and so on, can be said to be negative when this compensatory movement is “... obstructing the line of flight.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 591) A reterritorialization might be thought of simply as a

recoding or restructuring, or better yet, the imposition of new patterns of connection on a given system.

Relative deterritorializations are always coupled with simultaneous reterritorializations. While the deterritorializing movement may be seen as the line of flight escaping the territory or secure system, these movements are also representative of the territory constituting and extending itself, hence the coupled reterritorializing movement. These reterritorializations are the compensatory flows of capital accounting for that which might have escaped from its overcoding capabilities. As such movements require an analysis of the macro and micropolitical aspects of semicapital, this thesis often draws from Félix Guattari's solo writings on psychoanalysis, schizoanalysis and group subjectivity. For Guattari (2009), group subjectivity is the "capitalist totalitarian subjectivity". (p. 132) It will come as no surprise for anyone familiar with *Anti-Oedipus* that for Guattari, subjectivity is a matter of production. Capitalism and psychoanalysis form a symbiotic relationship here: "The institutional machine that we positioned didn't simply remodel the existing subjectivities, but endeavoured, instead, to produce a new type of subjectivity." (p. 180) The simple reason why Guattari focuses almost exclusively on group subjectivity, and posits that general subjectivity is fundamentally a group subjectivity, is that "Individual subjectivity, whether that of the patient or the medical staff, cannot be separated from the collective arrangements of subjectivity-production; these arrangements of subjectivity-production; these arrangements involve microsocial dimensions, but also material and unconscious dimensions." (p. 193-4)

In simpler language, what Guattari is getting at is that individual and collective behaviour are essentially governed by the same multitude of external and institutional

variables. There are apparently rational orders of power, such as economics and finance, macro-politics, and the law. There are also seemingly nonrational orders and influences “whose ends are difficult to decipher and which can sometimes even lead individuals or groups to act in ways that are contrary to their obvious interests.” (Guattari, 2009, p. 195) To discover why one might discover their own oppression is one of the scientific goals of Freudian psychoanalysis.

There is another Deleuze-Guattarian term of significance on the subject of repression and identity: micropolitics. In the current age of capitalism, all that has been formerly considered private has been aggressively incorporated into newer and shifting structures of accumulation. These larger societal institutions, the superstructure, are “based on rigid stratifications or codings which leave no room for all that is flexible and contingent”. (Parr, 2010, p. 164) This is what Deleuze and Guattari would call a molar configuration, or macropolitics. (see: Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 249) Micropolitics, on the other hand, while forming a reciprocal relationship with the macropolitical, allows “for connections that are local and singular.” (Parr, 2010, p. 164) An excellent example of this relationship between the macro and micropolitical can be found in Klaus Theweleit’s analysis of the roots of the German fascist movement in *Male Fantasies*. Personal wartime journals (the micropolitical) and proto-fascist literature are psychoanalyzed in order to further develop an understanding of how fascist movements (the macropolitical) might come to be desired by a mass.

This issue of desire and its perpetual manipulation and stunted manifestation is at the heart of the schizoanalytic project. This is why Lacan’s sixth seminar, published as *Desire and Its Interpretation* (2019) is a fundamental source for this thesis. *Anti-Oedipus*

levels various critiques against the Lacanian school of psychoanalysis. However, Lacan, Deleuze, and Guattari seem to be in agreement on at least one point: the function of desire is not biological. Desire is a productive unconscious force, and as such, is itself asignifying, and is subject to semiotic overcoding. This is the Deleuze-Guattarian perspective, at least. For Lacan (2019), desire and its production is a part of the fabric of the Real, noting that “desires are exiled from the field proper to man”. (p. 7) This is the chief difference in the Deleuze-Guattarian model of desire and the Lacanian: for Deleuze and Guattari, desire is an unconscious productive force that might be reterritorialized and semiotized into desiring its own oppression (i.e. the rise of fascism through democratic elections), whereas the Lacanian desire almost uses this semiotized unconscious production (a prop or fantasy in Lacanian vernacular) as the starting point. Lacan holds a privileged place in psychoanalysis for desire and its potentialities, likely to a fault. As Guattari (2009) writes, “it seems to me that Lacan has always tried to extricate the object of desire from all the totalizing references that could threaten it... the theory of the ‘a’ object [*objet petit a*] perhaps contains the seed that allows to liquidate the totalitarianism of the signifier.” (p. 79)

While occasionally continuing the Deleuze-Guattarian criticisms of Lacanian psychoanalysis in this thesis, it was nonetheless important to incorporate his work into the analysis, as without Lacan’s profound return to Freud, there would be no Deleuze and Guattari to begin with. It was Lacan who endeavoured to save psychoanalysis from becoming an endless narrative built through “endless treatment that leads nowhere.” (p. 57) Despite Lacan’s efforts to problematize the master, psychoanalysis continued to

revolve around the symbolic Oedipal family triangle. Though psychoanalysis had changed its methods, “it still must follow the lines of the most classic psychiatry.” (p. 57)

This thesis is not just a critique of psychoanalysis. The critique of psychoanalysis present is in service of another issue, which is the broader critique of a capitalist culture that has successfully subsumed the language and habits of psychoanalysis. Rather than having subjectivities remolded around certain symbolic functions on the therapist’s couch, subjectivity and desire is overcoded and molded through the socially productive forces of capital. For Mark Fisher, these are the forces that make up the pervasive aura of capitalist realism. However, Fisher is concerned mainly with enunciations of the capitalist elite class (general popular culture, music, and film, for example) that belong better to the Symbolic register rather than “the Real”. In my pursuit of critiquing Fisher’s capitalist realism, I introduce the term “the casino of the real”, which will be elaborated on in depth and specificity in chapter 2. It is important to acknowledge here that this term and its application has been greatly inspired and influenced by Ivan Ascher’s text *Portfolio Society: On the Capitalist Mode of Prediction* (2016).

Ascher’s work tracks the rise of what he calls the portfolio society, which has to do with the financialization of the economy and economic production. This text is an important addition to the neo-marxian perspective, as it outlines how society and its productive forces are no longer organized around commodity production. The portfolio society refers to a stock portfolio, the content of which the capitalist might “constantly modify in order to achieve a desired rate of risk and return.” (Ascher, 2016, p. 73) What develops out of general portfolio theory is a financialization of the general economy that prioritizes risk and its management. Because of this dimension of risk, mathematical

apparatuses have been constructed to predict the movements of the market and potential assets.

The actual fluxes and movements of the market are then largely out of human control, which leads to a situation wherein high finance resorts to probability calculus in order to proceed. On Wall Street, the individuals who specialize in this predictive math are known as “quants”, short for quantitative finance. (Ascher, 2016, p. 17) Math, data, and numbers in general emerge in the post-industrial age as having an almost mystical quality given their privileged place in the world of finance. It is supposedly the most secular epoch in human history. It is the contention of this paper that through the reterritorializing capabilities of semiocapital explored in the first chapter, genuine religious spirit has been deterritorialized and overcoded resulting in the rationalization of enchantment: in short, the mystification of mathematics has usurped the throne of God in the post-industrial era.

A recent and mammoth work on this topic has recently been published by Eugene McCarragher titled *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* (2019). McCarragher does not cite from Deleuze and Guattari, nor does he ever use the terms deterritorialization or reterritorialization. His text is, however, about this exact symbolic exchange. The impetus for this text grew out of a need to push back against the myth of western disenchantment. To be sure, the world is no longer as it once was: There was a day when “Rocks, trees, rivers, and rain pulsated with invisible forces, powers that enlivened and determined the affairs of tribes and empires as well.” (McCarragher, 2019, p. 1) This spirit has not simply evaporated. Rather, it has been

reterritorialized into a new kind of faith: one that holds the free market as the kingdom of Heaven, and the capitalist elites as new prophets of wealth and prosperity.

It is important to note that McCarragher is not the first to suggest that capital had taken on a certain religious dimension. In a famous essay fragment, Walter Benjamin makes a similar point, and an English translation of Giorgio Agamben's *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism* was published in 2019.

McCarragher's contribution to this crowded field is notable in its insistence that semiocapital had effectively rationalized the enchanted spirit of the world, rather than erasing or dissolving it. The "re-enchantment" of the world is impossible, and would "amount to little more than a tenuous and self-defeating therapy of consolation." (p. 9) This is because the only path to deterritorializing the rationalized enchantment of the modern world must begin "in a dissent from the prevailing wisdom about disenchantment." (p. 9) It is at this point that my research pivots to a weekly holy day in Judaism: the Sabbath.

Shabbat, or the Sabbath, is a weekly holy day (beginning on Friday evening and ending Saturday, following the Hebrew calendar) where people must, as a requirement, "lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil." (Heschel, 2005, p. 13) Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote what is likely the definitive tract on the Sabbath for the contemporary age, simply titled *The Sabbath*. In it he outlines certain fundamental concepts related to the observance of the Sabbath, and reminds his readers why observing Shabbat is spiritually important enough to be immortalized in Mosaic law.

The Sabbath holds other properties beyond the spiritual that are of concern for this research project. Heschel (2005) himself notes that "Unlike the Day of Atonement

[Yom Kippur], the Sabbath is not dedicated exclusively to spiritual goals. It is a day of the soul as well as of the body; comfort and pleasure are an integral part of the Sabbath observance.” (p. 19) This restful experience for both body and soul leads to what I take to calling “machinic withdrawal” in chapter 2. Machinic withdrawal represents a periodic withdrawal from the technical and abstract machines employed by semicapital in its pursuit of reterritorializing possible creative deterritorializations. The Sabbath is an event that persists from the forgotten days of formal enchantment, and is itself something that stands outside of the diurnal temporal rhythms of western capitalist society.

This is not a thesis on the philosophical conception of time and it does not purport to be such a thing at any moment. There is, however, no way to write on the subject of the Sabbath without at least mentioning that “the Sabbath is entirely independent of the month and unrelated to the moon.” (Heschel, 2005, p. 10) To observe Shabbat is to take part in an event outside of organized time, further increasing its potentiality for deterritorialization and machinic withdrawal.

The work of Henri Lefebvre highlighted the collision between the sociological, architectural, and biological rhythms that capitalist timescales introduced. As Sarit Kattan Gribetz notes in her book *Time and Difference in Rabbinic Judaism* (2020), this technique of control is nothing new, and surely not unique to the modern urban sprawl, as “Rabbinic sources sought to synchronize a set of embodied daily rituals with the natural rhythms of the sun’s daily rise and set...” (p. 187) The Sabbath, however, is conceived as a day of “special significance” that stands “apart from quotidian time.” (p. 186) This is what grants the Sabbath day its particular qualities. In order to observe and truly participate in it, one must spiritually deterritorialize working hours and reterritorialize

them as divine hours. That is, to bridge the gap of enchantment and labour “through the division and organization of time.” (p. 250) The keeping of the Sabbath day is an effort to sanctify time, rather than to master and conquer space, as is one of the latent effects of industrial and financial capital. Heschel (2005) notes that, in our ongoing war with nature, “our victories have come to resemble defeats”. (p. 27) In the Judaic tradition, it is believed that the Sabbath represents humanity’s greatest potential for progress — what other day does one consciously resist the stimulating bombardments of technological civilization, resolve to use no money, and free themselves from any external obligations? (see: 28) While time is not a main philosophical concern for this thesis, I would be remiss to not highlight this particular quality of the Sabbath.

As small as it may initially seem, the idea of the Sabbath presents us with one of the few ways to naturally detach from the vulgarity inherent to the machinic enslavement of semicapital and its various regimes of signs. To participate in observing such a day is but one way that an individual might resist the symbolic order of capital without ever moving outside of it themselves. It is worth noting that this research project would not have been able to develop if not for the freedom of creativity inherent in the interdisciplinary programme. At every step of my research, I was able to truly let my research question guide my next steps without having to first consult a road map of academic silos. I started with capitalist realism and worked rhizomatically from that point on, mapping lines of flight as I went. Semicapital is a social crisis, and there is nary a crisis that is not multidimensional. With this in mind, it seems imperative to me as a researcher to break the confines of traditionally rigid academic research in pursuit of radical proposals resulting from interdisciplinary analysis.

Methodology: Building the Rhizome

As this thesis will be submitted in partial completion of an interdisciplinary degree, I thought it would only be appropriate to adopt a truly interdisciplinary methodology: rhizomatics. A rhizomatic methodology (or schizoanalytic, which has on occasion functioned as a synonym for rhizomatic given their penchant for invoking “schizoanalytic lines of flight”), follows on a particular utopian impulse, prompting the researcher to map out the multitudes of discursive semiotic systems functioning in any given text at any given time. For instance, there is a kernel of the theological in Deleuze, given his reappropriation of the word immanence which he derives from his reading of Spinoza’s *Ethics*. A victim of the machinic unconscious, that is, one who has given their mind and power of expression over entirely to the various modes of machinic enslavement, may be prone to ignoring this for a variety of reasons seemingly innate to the model of research encouraged by the traditional academy - theology and post-structuralism do not normally mix, Deleuze does not write on theology, let alone Judaic theology, and so on. As such, the rhizome (what D & G refer to as an image of thought) acts as more of a bibliographic snapshot of a field in flux rather than a definitive cartographic map.

The rhizome is developed in opposition to the arborescent schema associated with thinkers and linguists such as Noam Chomsky. If the arborescent schema is hierarchical, static, and, at its top, immutable, then the rhizome is an exercise in dynamic and creative thought. Put simply, the rhizome is “any of things brought into contact with one another, functioning as an assemblage machine for new affects, new concepts, new bodies, new thoughts; the rhizomatic network is a mapping of the forces that move and/or immobilise

bodies.” (Parr, 2010, p. 233) Rhizomatics are fundamentally open-ended configurations of thought, where productive associations “propel... and abstract relations between components.” (p. 234) As such, rhizomatic writing is not simply an exercise in assimilation. The rhizome is the intensive “image of thought” allowing for any topic to be broached from multiple ways and methods.

Another way to think of this “image of thought” is as the synthesis of interdisciplinary thought. My concepts of the symbolic order of capital and the Casino of the Real seek to both critique and expand Fisher’s notion of capitalist realism through a rhizomatic reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s model of capital developed out of their seminal work *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). *Anti-Oedipus* is also, as it stands, a prolonged attack on Freud’s notion of the Oedipal complex, and in several moments hesitantly endorses Jacques Lacan’s method of psychoanalysis (though his methods are also to blame for the mommy-daddy-me triangle that D & G attempt to tear down). There is, then, in my rhizome, a fairly direct link between Deleuze, Guattari, Lacan, and their key concepts. It should be noted that as Deleuze’s philosophy provides much of my theoretical inclinations, my reading of Lacan is critical in the same way that Deleuze and Guattari’s engagement with Lacan is, in that it rejects the Oedipal structure that permeates his seminars following his return to Freud.

The structuring of my chapters uses the concept of the rhizome as a methodology. As such it is worth briefly elaborating the Deleuze-Guattarian relationship between rhizomes and plateaus. The plateau is necessarily a Deleuzian idea springing from his later collaborative work with Guattari titled *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), though originating in Gregory Bateson’s sociological work. (see: Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 1-

27) Each chapter, and its interior subchapters, as they would be traditionally called (and I do retain this nomenclature within the work), is a plateau. A plateau is a “region of intensities” that houses rhizomatic connections spanning across the chapters/plateaus. (p. 7) Rhizomatic connections are made in an effort to “break between regimes of signs and their objects.” (p. 6) Rhizomatics are then an important part of my critique of psychoanalysis and its Oedipal triangulations, and have guided my research and readings against universal semiotization.

In this thesis, there are two main chapters (plateaus) of analysis. The first, titled “The Symbolic Order of Capital; or, Semiotization of the Real”, contains within it five subchapters organized around five different semiotic and psychoanalytic crises in capital: there is a section on stratification, individuation, and multiplicity, a section on the rhetoric of the so-called workplace family, there is a section on the desiring-production that becomes fascist, and there is a section on the micropolitics of that desiring-fascism. Finally, there is a subchapter on apparatuses of capture and “machinic enslavement” in the capitalist system of social production, with a special focus on the semiotics of debt. This approach was chosen as it highlights the broad range of activity and experience that is captured in the broad mosaic of capital. The binding feature of these subchapters, or in other words, where these regions of intensities form rhizomatic connections, is primarily in their relation to what I take to calling the symbolic order of capital. This term was developed in pursuit of critiquing Mark Fisher’s *Capitalist Realism* (2009), and refers to the specific activities and techniques of producing subjectivity in the regime of signs known as semicapital. Semicapital, popularized by Franco “Bifo” Berardi, describes the form of capitalist social production that is focused on signs. This differentiates it from

simple or complex capitalist production. The construction of a mansion is not necessarily semiological, its purchase does not necessarily signify anything. Bifo popularized this term, however, to draw attention to how every aspect of social production is increasingly semiotized through reterritorialization and the overcoding capacities of semiotics.

Chapter two, titled "Postscript of Societies of Disenchantment ", deals with the same overcoding capacities of semiocapital, albeit in the context of religious deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The three subchapters therein focus on the myth of the disenchantment of the secular world, the rationalization of enchantment through deterritorialized religious spirit and the reification of mathematics, with the final subchapter focusing on possible methods of resistance to machinic enslavement of subjectivity in the form of religious deterritorialization. A methodology that allows for and actively encourages conjunctive synthesis and creative avenues for discovery is needed when writing on the topic of semiocapital and the ways in which psychoanalysis is a tool for the symbolic order of capital.

The two main influences on the form of this thesis were Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and Walter Benjamin's famously unfinished *Arcades Project* (1982). The influence of Deleuze and Guattari is perhaps obvious, as they are the first to articulate rhizomatics as a methodology. Benjamin, however, built textual rhizomes *avant la lettre*. *The Arcades Project*, in its daunting incompleteness, is fairly difficult to read but very easy to idealize. *The Arcades Project* is not simply an unfinished collection of notes; on the contrary, it is a "system which can alone guide formal analysis..." (Jameson, 2020, p. 9)

On occasion, I quote from literature rather than strictly philosophical works. This is because, as Deleuze (1997) writes, what we are after is not a new theory of reading, but rather “What we look for in a book is the way it transmits something that resists coding: flows, revolutionary active lines of flight, lines of absolute decoding rather than any intellectual culture.” (p. 22) Literature’s prescriptive abilities (rather than philosophy and theory’s largely descriptive capacities) allows us to glimpse a line of flight in the zeitgeist, so to speak. This is the primary reason why the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* are highly literary in their resources. As Jameson (2016) writes, “The literary texts might also be taken to form some personal canon, if not indeed a constellation of more universal validity.” (p. IX)

A Rhizomatic methodology serves to make creative connections between different systems, regimes of signs, and modes of thought. As there are a number of discursive systems and regimes of signs at work in any given text, discourse analysis must become more agile, more interdisciplinary. Writing this thesis was in effect building a rhizome. When dealing with the nature of the symbolic order of capital, there are multiple dimensions to any given crisis. The “rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, social sciences, and social struggles”, thus allowing for a mode of non-hierarchical analysis (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 7) Interdisciplinarity itself can appear monstrous. At any rate, it is not always the goal of worthwhile research to appear palatable.

Chapter 1. Symbolic Order of Capital; Or, Semiotization of the Real

“Who of us is Oedipus here?” - Friedrich Nietzsche

“Economics are the method; the object is to change the soul.” - Margaret Thatcher

1.1 Machines of Control

From the well-intentioned social democratic reformists to militant Maoists, rigorous theological thinkers to the most vulgar of Marxists, there is a common, binding ideological refrain: it is, and will be possible to escape from capital, that is, to move outside of it. This assumption and theoretical dogma is shakily predicated upon Marx’s dialectical image of a system thriving on its implicit contradictions. But what of the subsumption of life under capitalist relations? Ordinarily, this mythical “outside” is thought of as a place - a place at the end of the Marxist teleology, for example - but how might a place become a method? In short, it does not. Contemporary discourse is rife with covertly sentimental rituals of critique and progressively futile attempts at meaningful forms of collectivity through protest. It appears as though social autonomy and subjectivity are beholden to the strange aura of capitalist (social) production or, as Deleuze and Guattari might say, “desiring-production”. The reality of sociality and the production of subjectivity in the epoch of Really Existing Capital is one of diagrammatic processes of deterritorialization, through which the elusive “outside” is forever displaced via systems of unlimited semiosis (what is for Lacan represented by the “sliding signified”) and endlessly reproducible limitations.

The late cultural theorist Mark Fisher attempted to deal with this seemingly impenetrable regime of signs in his brief but influential work *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009), the subtitle alluding to Thatcher's infamous quote that there is no alternative to capitalist modes of production, liberal democracy, and free-market economics. The thesis pivots around a piece of rhetoric often attributed to either Slavoj Žižek and/or Fredric Jameson: "that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of capitalism." (Fisher, 2009, p. 2) This phrase is, as Fisher notes, a skeleton key to his concept of capitalist realism (which is itself an essence and not a method). The order of capitalist realism is that not only was neoliberal hegemony an inevitability, "but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it." (p. 2) This kind of psycho-social project is not, however, original to Fisher or even our stage of capital's historical development. There are traces of this in Marx's "The German Ideology", where he gestures towards this, albeit implicitly through his mode of historical materialism: "Civil Society as such only develops with the bourgeoisie. The social organization, however, which evolves directly from production and commerce and in all ages, forms the basis of the state and the rest of the idealistic superstructure, has always been designated by the same name." (Marx, 1994, p. 153)

Marx attempts to account then for the material interaction among individuals at given stages of productive forces. This is perhaps why one of the more welcome contributions of Foucault's thought to Marxists is his notion of the disciplinary society (at least when it is employed as a supplement to Marxist theory). Foucault located the rise of the disciplinary society in the 18th and 19th centuries, coinciding

with the rise of industrial capital and depending on modes of confinement. Thus, it follows that the prime example of Foucault's *dispositif* of discipline might be found in the factory. Deleuze remarks on how the individual who finds themselves in the disciplinary society is always passing from one "closed environment" to another, each with its own rules and regulations: "... first, the family; then, the school ("you are no longer in your family"); then, the factory, from time to time the hospital..." (Deleuze, 1992, p. 3) Deleuze was not interested in declaring that contemporary society was "disciplinary". Rather, for his piece on societies of control articulated in the 1990s, Deleuze sought out the *actual* in Foucault's historicism — that is, the process that contemporary society had inherited but is differing from. The human being is a segmentary animal, as Deleuze would say. "Segmentarity is inherent to all the strata composing us... we are segmented in *binary* fashion... social classes, but also men-women, adults-children, and so on... we are segmented in *linear* fashion, along a straight line or a number of straight lines, of which each segment represents an episode or 'proceeding': as soon as we finish one proceeding we begin another, forever proceduring or procedured, in the family, in school, in the army, on the job." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 244) Perhaps Foucault was correct when he, in jest, predicted that our century would be Deleuzian, meaning that the traditional disciplinary model would be complete, and a new form would emerge in its place: the control society.

To understand the severity and methodology of the control society, we must briefly return to Marx. While the disciplinary society can function as a supplement to Marxist thought, and Foucault is clearly indebted to Marx's ideas about the

organization of space and time in the factory, Foucault (and later Deleuze) understood the confinement of the labourers in the factory according to a different logic than Marx. As Lazzarato writes: “The capital – labour relation is not the fundamental social relation on to which the ensemble of other social relations is aligned. The school, the prison and the hospital, along with law, science and knowledge – in short, everything that Foucault defines as what can be stated [*l’énonçable*] must be understood without entertaining a structure – superstructure relation to production.” (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 172) For ontological reasons, Marxist theory will often obfuscate or downright ignore power relations that do not pertain to the labour exploitation dynamic. Thus, other stringent modalities of power have been made easier to ignore - men/women relations, doctor/patient relations, and so on. The issue of control then might appear to lie in these binary segments. This means that when dealing with the implications of power and capital, it is not enough to only consider economic relations.

The crisis of capital is not a singular drama. Today it is generally understood that social, ecological, political, and financial dilemmas are inextricably bound by capital. As such, it is not sufficient to look at the immense external forces of Marx’s dialectic (capital/labour). The totality of capital - and more specifically, capitalism as a relatively new and amorphous global system - is not where the point of analysis should terminate, but rather begin. This means that an exploration of the libidinal engines (*à la* Lyotard) powering the force of Fisher’s capitalist realism (something, it should be said, that Fisher has little interest in exploring beyond the reductive Marxist

logic of contradiction) is required. This has been a slight digression for the sake of exposition, and it is time to return to the realm of control.

Societies of control refer to the subject, and thus the individual. On occasion, Deleuze and Guattari have been accused of a kind of anti-humanist callousness. Indeed, when one first encounters *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), they may get the sense that there is not a single recognizable human being in sight. This intuition is, in part, correct. For Deleuze and Guattari, the notional sense of humanity is “to us as a plane is to a fractal: an objective illusion.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 47) Their philosophy is bodily yet inhuman, with accountable intensities lying well beyond the framework of personal intentionality. It should come as no surprise then, that one of the more cohesive accounts of identity found in their collaborative oeuvre proposes that identity, and furthermore the argument that the multiplicity is encountered in the individuated, is analogous to the sedimentary process.

That the individual contains a multiplicity is a notion which evades certain prescriptive genres of logic. The notion is not original to Deleuze, however eccentric a writer he had been. In fact, one can look as far back as antiquity. There exists a story¹ of how Protagoras once sought his fee from Euathlus, a pupil of his. Euathlus refused to pay, given the fact that he has yet to achieve a victory in litigation. Protagoras has been a poor teacher. Protagoras’ response, true to his sophistry, sets up a now famous linguistic paradox embodying an impossible incorporeal

¹ This version is as recounted by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (1988), p. 6.

transformation. Protagoras, set on collecting his fee for tutelage, proposes to Euathlus that the former will only be paid should the latter be able to achieve victory - “if Euathlus has won at least once, he pays; if not, he is absolved.” (Lyotard, 1988, p. 6) As victory has eluded Euathlus, he is not required to pay, however, “in the case against Protagoras who maintains that he won one time, he triumphs by ascertaining that he never won. But, if he thereby prevails in a litigation against Protagoras, he has indeed won at least once.” (p. 6) Through language a simple litigation transforms into a dilemma.

The phrasing of this litigation can be, perhaps more simply, expressed mathematically. For instance, the totality of litigations may be represented as n . Protagoras’s argument which sets forth the dilemma treats the totality functionally as $n + 1$. As such, the initial n is subject to a temporal shift, taking on a new heuristic value of $n = n + 1$. Effectively, the latter linguistic event subsumes the former. However, as the mathematically inclined may have intuited, we cannot simply finish with $n = n + 1$. Truly, there is another act required to reach this stasis: $(n + 1) + 1$, and so on. This allows for a truly remarkable piece of sophistry which might illuminate part of Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of the multiplicity: effectively, Protagoras can say, “if you win, then I’m the winner.” (Lyotard, 1988, p. 6-7)

In light of this paradox of multiplicity, Deleuze’s approach to individuation, stasis, and multiplicity can be further explored. The third plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), titled “10,000 BC: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think it is?)” is where Deleuze and Guattari take up the issue of stratification, as well

as the importance of the sedimentary process inherent to stratification. On the matter of stratification, Deleuze and Guattari are worth quoting at length:

“A surface of stratification is a more compact plane of consistency lying between two layers. The layers are the strata. They come at least in pairs, one serving as *substratum* for the other. The surface of stratification is a machinic assemblage distinct from the strata. The assemblage is between two layers, between two strata; on one side, it faces the strata (in this direction, the assemblage is an *interstratum*), but the other side faces something else, the body without organs or plane of consistency (here, it is a *metastratum*). In effect, the body without organs is itself the plane of consistency, which becomes compact or thickens at the level of the strata.”

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 46)

Stratification is highly processural, with certain preordained orders, much like the act of natural sedimentation:

“The first articulation chooses or deducts, from unstable particle-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*). The second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable structures (*forms*), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*)... The second articulation is the ‘folding’ that sets up a stable functional structure and effects the passage from sediment to sedimentary rock.”

(p. 47)

Deleuze and Guattari have gained a reputation for difficulty, both in their ideas and their expression as such. However, their difficulty lies mainly in the necessity that “at every point of blockage there is some belief to be scrapped, glaciations of transcendence to be dissolved...” (Land, 2011, p. 323) Through geological vernacular, Deleuze and Guattari outline how the individuated subjectivity (through Guattari’s insistence on a micropolitics) and a group subjectivity (more in line with the notions of the multiplicity and assemblage) might be constructed via processes akin to stratification.

It is true that, in the age of accelerated techno-capital, where even the imagined tranquility of the domestic is disrupted and mutated into a “non-place”². Consider how media such as Facebook, Youtube, and Twitter have become undeniably ingrained into the existential territories of the general population. In this regard, Deleuze is correct to deem that the disciplinary model of society has been replaced by a more discrete network of power and subjection. If we are to retain something of Foucault’s discourse, however, it should be the notion that the individual is the result of a production process.

² “Non-place” here refers to Marc Augé’s (2008) theory of the abstract production of space in the age of what he refers to as “super-modernity”. The non-place marks the triumph of “system over history” and the “global over the local”. (p. XV) It refers to the abstract and actual space produced and reproduced given certain trends in global capitalism; for instance, skyscrapers produce a certain edifice, one that stands as a monument to capital and its abilities to function at its own limits while endlessly reproducing them, as Deleuze might say. The skyscraper exists to announce “its presence in the world, in the sense of being wired into the system.” (p. XV)

Individuation through stratification is a part in the process of capital producing a group subjectivity. Gregor von Rezzori's novel *The Death of my Brother Abel* (1976) includes extended passages which gesture, in the abstracted way that such a novel can, at this precise phenomenon. Consider this passage:

“I am seeking *myself* in the European cities where I am cast away by my flimsy profession, as if they were not the cities and sites of my past but the cities and sites of my present. I seek myself in airports, the highways, gas stations, Hilton hotels, supermarkets, movie studios, office high-rises of Madrid, Rome, Munich, Copenhagen, Milan, West Berlin, Paris. In seeking my self I seek a European continuity.”

(von Rezzori, 2019, p. 26-7)

There is a realization within the novel which precedes this passage, wherein the narrator proclaims that “I will never reach my self completely. And this is all the more agonizing, as everywhere I go I am always on the verge of some kind of identification.” (p. 24) The self is an endless project in becoming, as Deleuze might say. The question then might turn to how an always becoming (as opposed to a fixed state of “being”) subjectivity might be semiotized and captured by capital and its various regimes of signs.

Foucault's notion of disciplinary conditioning on the individual, which is articulated most clearly in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), sees that the individual is produced through “specific technique[s] of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise.” (Foucault, 1995, p. 170) The individual, and their intersubjective relations, are defined then by capital's modes of social

production. Guattari sees the production of subjectivity as the central project of capital. What this means is that is that the central project of semicapital (capital as a semiotic regime of signs) is not simply to condition or position the subjectivity of the subject, but rather to produce it in its conceptualization of itself.

This line of thinking is not exclusive to psychoanalysts (or schizoanalysts, in the case of Félix Guattari). Marxists and anarchists have also been keenly aware of the subjectivization powers of capital. Jacques Camatte notes in his most influential essay, "The Wandering of Humanity":

"Capital penetrates thought, consciousness, and thus destroys human beings such as they have been produced by centuries of class society. Their loss of substance is the loss of their former being, which capital has pumped out of them. Since this process is almost over, capital is now turning from its attack against the past dimension of humanity to an attack against its future dimension: it must now conquer imagination."

(Camatte, 1995, p. 62)

This attack on imagination is what Mark Fisher identifies as a major factor in the prevalence and proliferation of mental health issues in our stage of capitalist development (or what Fisher would likely call stagnation), as well as the affectation that there can be no alternative to global capital. For Fisher, the imagination has already been "conquered", as he notes that any notion of cultural stagnation is intrinsically linked to capitalist development and semicapital:

"...the affects that predominate in late capitalism are fear and cynicism. These emotions do not inspire bold thinking or entrepreneurial leaps, they breed

conformity and the cult of minimal variation, the turning out of products which very closely resemble those that are already successful.”

(Fisher, 2009, p. 76)

Fisher’s insistence on rarely looking beyond the products of popular culture and consumer politics fundamentally limits his breadth of analysis here, as this passage prompts a particularly fascinating problematic with regards to notions of growth and production more generally. The fundamental issue with capital is not that the Star Wars franchise will outlive everyone currently alive, this is merely a symptom of a larger illness.

One could extrapolate that Fisher’s main concern here is that the Marxist dialectical materialist refrain no longer functions, a claim already made and elaborated by Jacques Camatte, however by different means. Camatte (1995) speaks to the “despotism of capital” through the “negation of classes” realized by capital. (p. 60) This is not to say that there are no longer vastly different economic castes, but rather that through the means of mystification (for Deleuze and Guattari, semiotization or Oedipalization) semiocapital “retains the conflicts and collisions that characterize the existence of classes.” (p. 60) Camatte, who at the time of writing “The Wandering of Humanity” had not yet broken from Marxism and Marxist analysis, had not made advocated for leaving beyond dialectical materialism explicitly, however there is a trace of this thinking in statements such as “It is capital we must now face, not the past.” (p. 60)

Guattari (2011), similarly, sees the dialectical materialist framework as fundamentally limiting in its analytical application: “... it is advisable to banish at the

same time any idea of dialectical progress as well as any unfavourable moral connotation in the appreciation of these successive movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, especially in the domain of historical transformations.” (p. 119-20) The popular concept of linear social progress is precisely a technique of control; one of the many discursive rhetorical methods of controlled reterritorialization. This effect of reterritorialization will be examined with closer scrutiny in chapter 2 of this thesis.

1.12 Overcoding Machines and Reterritorializing the Family; Or, Oedipus Rex Clocks In

There is a spectre haunting the familial unit in this stage of capitalist development and it is a simulacrum of the familial unit. In Foucault’s ideal of the disciplinary society, the family sphere played its role (symbolic function) in regulating a certain regime of signs. You are at home; you are with your family. You are at school; you are no longer in your family. You are at work, and so on. This order shatters for a number of reasons, most succinctly captured in Deleuze’s “Postscript on the Societies of Control” (1992), and this subchapter does not seek to be exhaustive in its exploration of this deterioration. Instead, this subchapter will explore a piece of particularly sinister rhetoric which has disseminated into the mosaic of activity which occurs under the banner of capital. The seemingly innocuous piece of rhetoric is the near inescapable refrain of the “workplace family”.

Most broadly leftist (liberal or Marxist and those bastardized denominations in between) critiques of the workplace family culture tend to focus entirely on the manifest

function of the rhetoric: it is an obvious, lazy but effective, union-busting tactic. The piece of rhetoric revolves mainly around implicit *mots d'ordre*, effectively demanding a (potentially) unearned feeling of loyalty and comradeship between workers and management. The truth is that this rhetoric serves another symbolic function beyond immediate workplace expectations. To paraphrase a Lacanian refrain, the symbolic writes upon the Real. During an open seminar titled “Discourse to Catholics” (1960), Lacan notes that if we are inclined to engage with phenomenological reality, then we must train our focus on rhetoric, as “what we see are effects of rhetoric. Clinical work confirms this, for it shows us these effects creeping into concrete discourse and into everything that can be discerned regarding our behaviour as marked by the stamp of the signifier.” (Lacan, 2013, p. 14)

The issue that arises here is when an individual is “marked by the stamp of the signifier” in a way which is designed to Oedipalize the social machines and desiring forces at work. To Oedipalize is to birth and foster the neurotic, in Deleuzian terms. The person subjected to such conditioning is left with relatively few options: “becoming the person it is said to be: the slow death of stable equilibrium. Opting out of that path, into its opposite: neurosis and eventual breakdown.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 92) For Deleuze and Guattari, “a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst’s couch.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 2) It should be noted here that Deleuze and Guattari are not necessarily speaking of clinical schizophrenia, which might be treated in a variety of methods and with various medications. Their model of schizophrenia, which may be more accurately described and translated as schizo-affective, is a positive philosophical project. The clinical, pathological condition with

which schizophrenia is mainly associated with is instead understood as a “quelled attempt” to engage with the world “in unimagined ways.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 1)

Schizophrenia, in the Deleuzian sense, is positive development which seeks to shatter the confines of the Oedipal triangle, the overcoding mechanism. The Oedipal triangle is a technical machine, always overcoding and recorded in the process of social production.

Antonin Artaud’s writings were Deleuze and Guattari’s favourite model of productive schizophrenia. As such, there is little left to gain from a retreat. Instead we will afford an oft forgotten writer, Scott Zwiren, some much deserved attention. Plagued his whole life by bouts of severe mental illness and the occasional violent schizophrenic episode, Zwiren managed to produce several books of poetry, and most notably his novel *God Head* (1996). He survived multiple suicide attempts in spite of himself, losing two limbs in the process, only to succumb to COVID-19 in a long-term care home in New York.

Zwiren’s work does not need to be made subject to psychoanalysis. In fact, this would be a catastrophic misstep. *God Head*, like Artaud’s poetry before it, short circuits the Oedipal machine, disrupting its overcoding abilities. The brief novel centers around a formerly gifted student whose life begins to dissolve into a series of stints in psychiatric hospitals and similarly cloistered living arrangements in an apartment in New York’s upper West Side. The protagonist is nameless, and known only to the reader through his use of personal pronouns. It is worth recalling Nietzsche’s infamous proclamation that “I am all the names in history”, a triumphant bit of rhetoric which forms from the common ground where all individuals emerge as individuated.

“The world and I are on good terms and everything is peaceful”, the nameless protagonist writes. (Zwiren, 1996, p. 113) The schizophrenic delusions, when negative, are the byproduct of an intense cosmic dysphoria. In “peaceful” moments the protagonist is experiencing a particular harmony with the world and the things in it. Oedipalization in the workplace through an insistence on a “work family” takes aim directly at this harmonious flow of desiring-production. “Rather a society of neurotics than one successful schizophrenic” is the *modus operandi* of the oedipal overcoding machine. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 112) The oedipal machine, which seeks endlessly to sever creative lines of flight, stands then works as the handmaiden of the “capitalist totalitarian machine”, as Guattari might refer to the regime of semiocapital. (Guattari, 2008, p. 96)

Zwiren’s protagonist resists easy Oedipalization through his productive schizophrenic language that what he is experiencing must negate the process of overcoding. Reflecting on a suicide attempt which mirrors one of the author’s own, the nameless protagonist remarks that “I try to understand why I jumped in front of the train and the only answer I can come up with is that I couldn’t take it anymore. Understanding what *it* is becomes the problem...” (Zwiren, 1996, p. 97) The Freudian psychoanalyst will have a bevy of answers prepared to answer this question, all of which will be filtered through the appropriate triangulations allowed by the Oedipal code. Oedipus, to the structuralist, is not even just a triangle. The Oedipal overcoding machine “performs all the possible triangulations by distributing in a given domain desire, its object, and the law.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 59) This transforms Oedipus into a universal signifier, beyond “all the imaginary modalities.” (p. 59) When the protagonist of *God Head* is sure that the presiding psychotherapist, Dr. Natis, is actually Satan incarnate, the

reader immediately jumps to Oedipalization, or rather, to put the nameless character in the chair, so to speak. The protagonist is deftly aware of Oedipal overcoding of schizophrenic lines of flight, as he makes clear while observing Dr. Natis analyzing another patient, whom he sees as an archangel: “He is analyzing her problems and giving her free will as a tool to get his way. He says that she can leave her house and come live with him if she hates her father, and the archangel seems to be swayed.” (Zwiren, 1996, p. 38) Oedipal triangulation is presented to the schizoid as a way out, an escape. The disjunctive synthesis of productive schizophrenia must always be called into question.³

The psychoanalyst must insist on uncovering the symbolic father beneath the protagonist’s delusions of Satan. As Deleuze and Guattari (2008) note, “At times the schizophrenic loses his patience and wants to be left alone. Other times he goes along with the whole game and even invents a few tricks of his own...” (p. 15) At a point, the Oedipalized subject may be compelled to say, “yes of course, this figure or object is really my mother or father” and so on. Zwiren’s nameless protagonist negotiates what he thinks are the terms of his dismissal from the psych unit, triumphantly relating to the reader that he has “beaten the devil at every step...”, but a few pages later it becomes clear that the Oedipalization has not stuck. (Zwiren, 1996, p. 39) In Deleuzian terms, the protagonist’s schizophrenic lines of flight resisted Oedipal overcoding. Released from the hospital and once more on his own, the nameless protagonist tries to sleep, and cycles through images in his head, beginning with an administrative building, but then: “the

³ Deleuze and Guattari highlight in this instance Samuel Beckett’s titular character and literary schizophrenic Molloy, who is cross examined by a policeman, and ends up saying that his mother’s name is also Molloy. (see: Beckett, 2015, p. 30-1)

image fades because it doesn't matter, because nothing matters, not school, not my job, not my mother, brother, or father, not me. This feels safe and good." (p. 41) Captured here is a complete rejection of Oedipal triangulation.

Deleuze and Guattari have been criticized in the past for their analysis relying too heavily on literature. But "What we're after isn't a return to Freud or Marx. Nor a theory of reading. What we look for in a book is the way it transmits something that resists coding: flows, revolutionary active lines of flight, lines of absolute decoding rather than any intellectual culture." (Deleuze, 1997, p. 22) Zwiren's work does just this. What it lacks in intellectual sophistication, it gains in the force of its "revolutionary active lines of flight".

The question still remains: would your father dock your pay? Would your mother promote your sibling before yourself? Even this is far too structural to be productive. The symbolic function of the "workplace family" is to Oedipalize. There is a latent function as well, which is to induce a particular strain of neurosis intrinsic to capital's regime of signs. The old "territories of Ego, family, profession, religion, ethnicity, etc. , have been undone and deterritorialized." (Guattari, 2008, p. 197) What is left is the process of reterritorializing these existential territories. In other words, overcoding and semiotizing potentially asignifying lines of flight. Oedipal triangulations existed for Freud in order to help psychoanalysis restore the totality of the Symbolic order, yet its application (to Oedipalize) appears fundamentally schizoaffective. It is worth quoting Deleuze and Guattari at length on this matter:

"In a word, the family is never a microcosm in the sense of an autonomous figure, even when inscribed in a larger circle that it is said to mediate and express. The

family is by nature eccentric, decentered. We are told of fusional, divisive, tubular, and foreclosing families. But what produces the hiatuses (*coupures*) and their distribution that indeed keep the family from being an ‘interior’? There is always an uncle from America; a brother who went bad; an aunt who took off with a military man; a cousin out of work, bankrupt, or a victim of the crash; an anarchist grandfather; a grandmother in the hospital, crazy or senile.”

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 107)

Capital, and specifically semiocapital, never operates as a code (similar to how for Marx, capital represents a process). Rather, it functions on codes: “capitalism is now more processual than it is productive... quantum rather than quantitative or qualitative.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 134) To the extent that the overcoding mechanisms of capital have assigned the family unit as the microcosm of social reality, the Oedipal triangulations functionally collapse other categories of being and becoming into the universal structural levels of organization of the family. In other words, the boss becomes the father, and as such the semiotic process treats one as the signification of the other.

There is then a total failure of symbolic exchange, resulting in the simulacra of the family in the workplace. (see: Baudrillard, 2017) This rhetorical development is an example of what Baudrillard means when he writes that “symbolic exchange is no longer the organising principle of modern society.” (p. 22) Psychoanalysis, through its dogged commitment to circumscribing an individualized unconscious under the law of the father and its Oedipal triangulations which result in an all-pervasive castration anxiety, has worked in tandem with semiocapital to ensure that there is “no more ideology, only simulacra.” (p. 23) Baudrillard here mirrors one aspect of the Deleuze-Guattarian critique

of psychoanalysis, noting that “the unconscious... becomes a model of simulation.” (p. 24) In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari take the Freudians to task for reducing the unconscious to a theatre: “a classical theatre was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; representation was substituted for the units of production of the unconscious; and an unconscious that was capable of nothing but expressing itself - in myth, tragedy, dreams - was substituted for the productive unconscious.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 25)

This failure of symbolic exchange inherent to the rhetoric of the “workplace family” can perhaps be thought of less as a failure per se and more as a triumph of semicapital’s ability to overcode deterritorialized flows of desire. Any process of reterritorialization is the result of a “movement of deterritorialization that is ensured by the machine...” (Guattari, 2009, p. 94) What this means is that there are aspects of the *socius* which are constructed on the basis of the superimposition of an objective desiring-machine (in psychoanalysis, the Oedipal triangle will suffice). What is true of the symbolic order of capital, semicapital, Integrated World Capital (IWC), whatever the preferred taxonomic designation is employed, is that it functions by way of axiom (much like systematic philosophy) rather than pure rationality. Psychoanalysis’ idealism found in the introduction and employment of the Signifier enforces the semiological axioms of capital. This is perhaps a latent function of psychoanalysis, but it exists nonetheless. It is worth bearing in mind here what Lyotard (1977) wrote regarding capital’s intertwined history with democratic freedoms: “In no way is capitalism the reign of freedom, for it too is the mapping back of the flows of production onto the *socius*... capitalism offers

nothing to believe in, cynicism is its morality.” (p. 14) It does not need to offer anything to be believed, as it itself is the axiom *par excellence*.

Guattari (2009) notes that the capitalist mode of production, and the sociality that it thereby reproduces, does not function simply “by putting a flux of slaves to work.” (p. 237) Marx (1990) was right in noting that “the transformation of the mode of production in one sphere of industry necessitates a similar transformation in other spheres”, however, he is reducing the breadth of his analysis strictly to industrial production. (p. 505) As IWC expands and the post-industrial world settles in, psychoanalysis and its rhetoric (the workplace family, in this case) is what necessitates these productive transformations of subjectivity. “Individuals are modelled to adapt”, Guattari (2009) writes, “like a cog, to the capitalist machine.” (p. 237) The superstructure of capital (institutions, psychoanalysis, mass media, schools, and so on) launch new subjective models, always maintaining compatibility with the fundamental axiomatic of capital: “the object of love should always be an exclusive object participating in the system of private ownership.” (p. 237)

It is not difficult, and perhaps it is entirely self-evident, that this production of subjectivity under semicapital is rife with opportunity for misappropriation and mutation. The “presentation of desire as something *supported* by needs” allows for desiring-production to be exploited “to the fullest [of] the idealist principle”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 28) The society of control, along with its dispersed techniques of control, which launches overcoded rhetoric like the workplace family, plays a fundamental role in the manipulation of desiring-production, and more specifically, how desiring-production might come to desire its own repression, whether that be as abstract

as through various regimes of signs, or as concrete and libidinal as the desire for a fascist territoriality.

1.2 Territorializing Desiring-Machines; Or, Who Wants to be a Fascist?

It is not a satisfactory explanation to assert that the German citizens who democratically supported the Nazis in 1930 were simply duped or under the spell of an occult political hypnosis. There is a mysticism, not to mention condescension, innate to the explanation of so-called “Hitler Hysteria” which serves only to obfuscate the social production of fascism and fascistic flows of desire. In the embryonic phases of the 20th century, the socialist revolutionary moment reared its head only briefly before being “outstripped” by “fascism, the most extreme representative of political and economic reaction in both its goals and its nature...” (Reich, 1980, p. 3) In the rise and triumph of Nazism is the formula for how an ideological distributive factor gives rise to pure materialistic result, thus, cutting off the point of analysis at the declaration of hysteria fundamentally ignores the necessity to “elucidate the ‘Hitler psychosis’.” (p. 17)

Taking the roots of the fascist movement seriously is not a novel concept: both Walter Benjamin and Wilhelm Reich have, nearly a century ago, warned against treating the rise of fascism as the product of mass delusions. For Benjamin, the fascist impulse was not based in delusion, but rather a latent potentiality of secularization inherent to industrial capital (a concept which will be further explored in chapter 2). Secularization, in the Benjaminian reading, requires that, incrementally the “world is colonized, its dark places explored and mapped... its energies reinvested in advertising and fascism.” (Jameson, 2020, p. 15) In Benjamin’s unfinished opus *The Arcades Project* (1982), he, perhaps a bit

hastily, announces the “superstructure is the expression of the infrastructure”. (Benjamin, 2002, p. 392, [K2,5]) Here capital begins to take shape as a totality: the superstructure, and its various cultural happenings, is not determined by economic and material conditions, but rather, it is its expression. This is precisely what Camatte means when he dictates that “capital can only live by particularizing itself, by differentiating itself into a large number of capital-quanta.” (Camatte, 2020, p. 3) This still fails to address the explanatory gap between ideological distribution experienced by the masses and the desiring-production of fascism.

Centuries before Mussolini’s *camicie nere* marched on Rome, Spinoza articulated one of the most fundamental questions of political philosophy: why do we (the *socius*) desire our own repression? This question has been taken up in a number of ways, most recently in reckoning with the violent fervor of the Trump movement. Pundits throughout the Western World continue to ask - *why do they vote against their own interest?* This is an axiomatic question, however, in ways that Spinoza’s query is not. The political class intones “why does the little man (to borrow Reich’s endearing and simultaneously condescending lexicon) hate himself? Why does he ignore his interests?”, in effect positing that these interests are universal, not to mention positing that these interests are even knowable at all. It is Lacan, in his sixth seminar titled *Desire and its Interpretation*, who says that “Desires are exiled from the field proper to man, assuming man identifies with the master’s reality... This is almost tantamount to saying, in our vocabulary, that he cannot be responsible [for his desires].” (Lacan, 2019, p. 7) To further explore this notion, we will return to the issue of ideological distribution and desiring-production following the collapse of Weimar democracy.

The Weimar coalition was never a particularly healthy machine. By the spring of 1920 it had already suffered its first major defeat in the name of the Kapp Putsch. The embryonic democracy's response in the wake of the coup attempt was to suppress strikes, workers' militias, and "political demands for an all-workers' government", costing much of its left-wing support. (Weitz, 2018, p. 101) There was also the issue of inflation, an economic condition now made synonymous with the plight of the short-lived Weimar democracy. Inflation had begun not after the war, but during, as in 1914 the German government had made the decision to finance the war effort "largely via loans" with the expectation that "conquered territories and vanquished foes would provide the resources to pay off the debt." (p. 101) Needless to say, this did not occur.

Normal rates of inflation accelerated into a level of hyperinflation rarely seen in the age of industrial capital. Convinced that the Germans were dodging its reparations payments, France and Belgium mobilized troops and forcibly seized assets in January of 1923. By the end of the year, "a single U.S. dollar bought 4.2 trillion marks, a barely comprehensible exchange rate." (p. 102) The situation was predictably dire: within the year there would be multiple attempted armed insurrections from across the political spectrum, perhaps most notably the Nazis' failed march on Berlin. As Benjamin notes in his brief exploration of the semiotics of the late-1920s Weimar culture, "mass instincts have become confused and estranged from life more than ever." (Benjamin, 2016, p. 34) Benjamin seems keenly aware that while the individualist impulse, much like the "insensate intuition of animals", bends towards self-preservation, the behaviour of the masses often hurdles towards annihilation. (p. 34)

Reich observed this as well, noting that the “cleavage between the social situation of the working masses and their consciousness of this situation implies that, instead of improving their social position, the working masses worsen it.” (Reich, 1980, p. 10) During the period of hyperinflation previously noted, the NSDAP vote share jumped from “800,000 votes in 1928 to 6,400,000 in the fall of 1930, to 13,000,000 in the summer of 1932 and 17,000,000 in January of 1933.” (p. 13) Interestingly enough, nearly half of the votes the NSDAP received in the fall of 1930 were cast by low-wage workers. This poses a problem for Marxist orthodoxy. In a perverse sense, it was precisely the working masses who helped install fascism, “extreme political reaction”, into power democratically. (p. 10)

The material wretchedness of the working class failed to produce the “revolutionary resolution of the contradictions between the forces of production of monopolistic capitalism and its methods of production.” (p. 10) It is worth invoking Deleuze and Guattari’s general critique of the Marxist *Weltanschauung* here:

“Basically, a Marxist is recognized by his assertion that a society contradicts itself, that it is defined by its contradictions. We say rather that in a society everything flees, and that a society is defined by its lines of flight, which affect masses of every kind... A society, or any collective arrangement, is defined first by its points or flows (*flux*) of deterritorialization.”

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 91)

With regards to the rise of Nazism, or rather, the rise in desiring production for fascism, it is precisely a matter of flows of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The question of ideological distribution ultimately becomes one of desire. More specifically, how do

the technical machines of a given locality crystallize the flows of deterritorialized desires of the masses and produce a fascist sociality? More concretely, we might ask, why did Hitler succeed where others had failed in Germany? For instance, General Von Schleicher, the last chancellor of Weimar Germany who was one of the assassinated political figures on the Night of the Long Knives, had ample opportunity to install a simple military dictatorship. But this would not suffice.

It also does not suffice to say that Hitler himself performed a role which could not have been fulfilled by another leader. As an individual, “the role of Hitler... was negligible”, yet his symbolic function as leader “remains fundamental inasmuch as he caused a new form of this totalitarian machine to crystallize.” (Guattari, 2008, p. 94) This is not to say the character of Hitler can be discarded, but rather, it is important to consider him as the “conjunction” of a number of intersecting libidinal investments on behalf of a particular group subjectivity. (p. 94) To deem that the individual is totally negligible in this sort of historical analysis is to be the useful idiot of the fascist impulse which beats in every heart. Guattari (2008) remarks upon this when he writes that: “By pretending that the individual has a negligible role in history, they would like to make us think that we can do nothing but stand with [our] hands tied in the face of the hysterical gesticulations or paranoiac manipulations of local tyrants and bureaucrats of every color.” (p. 94-5)

The worker, to employ a Marxist vernacular, is more likely to be the agent of reactionary reterritorialization than the vanguard of the revolution. This was not always necessarily the case, as:

“An example of the non-reactionary use of signifying semiotics is that of the workers’ movement. In the nineteenth century, the latter was able to invent a

revolutionary reterritorialization that, rather than simply defending those whom capital was destroying, went beyond capitalist deterritorialization: proletarian internationalism, mutualization, and transnational class solidarity went beyond man in the singular.”

(Lazzarato, 2014, p. 124)

The capitalist abstract machines “endeavour to divide, particularize, and molecularize the workers, meanwhile tapping their potentiality for desire.” (Guattari, 2008, p. 96) In other terms, it can be observed how, rather than Marx’s historical dialectic of class conflict being the engine of historical change, periods of upheaval and change are rather the result of this biunivocal movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Capital, as it represents itself in its governing of particular regimes of signs, is the only system which secures rational social progress. This line of thinking can be traced in the dialectic, and, depending on ideological disposition, could signal the eventual collapse of the capitalist mode of production Marxists deem inevitable. Of course, “capitalism produces crises”, which may be seen as antithetical to this conceptualization of rational social progress. (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 125) As previously noted, this is one of the reasons why the old guard of dialectical materialism should be abandoned in favour of a rhizomatic model, one which resembles “a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 27)

This has been a slight digression. It is important now to return to the issue at hand: that of desire, of repression, and that of desiring repression and in the case of fascism, desiring annihilation. We return now to Spinoza’s revolutionary question of desire, and his assertion that “desire is the essence of man”. (quoted in Lacan, 2019, p. 9)

To be is, in the Spinozist perspective, to be a desiring-being. This model informs the Deleuze-Guattarian factory model of machinic desiring, of desiring production: “It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 1) There is perhaps a self-evident connection here between assemblages of desire and Spinoza’s notion of the *conatus*, which is the effort by which “each thing, as far as it can by its own power, strives to persevere in its own being.” (Spinoza, 2018, III, prop. 6) The *conatus* can then most simply be understood as the “principle of the mobilisation of bodies.” (Lordon, 2010, p. 12) In this way, the *conatus* can also be understood as a parallelism to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of desiring-production.

The issue that arises then is that desire itself does not signify anything in particular. Deleuze and Guattari (2008) note that while the unconscious “does not mean anything”, it also “constructs machines, which are machines of desire... the unconscious does not speak, it engineers.” (p. 197) There are cases, especially those in which desire creates its own obstacles and barriers — one of Lacan’s favourite examples of this being the rituals of courtship — where desire corresponds to object lack, as the Freudians and Lacanians would suggest. But things such as the object exist external to the body, and are hyper-capitalistic. Consider how in the rituals of desire intrinsic to courtly love, the woman is completely emptied of any notion of individuation, any personal qualities, so that “all lovers seem to be praising one and the same woman.” (Schuster, 2016, p. 139) This can also be observed to a degree in the *blazon*, or language of itemization in the traditional sonnet. This, however, is not the kind of desire that Hitler and Mussolini, the elder statesmen of historical fascism, were able to mobilize and semiotize so effectively.

1.21 A Micropolitics of Desire

German sociologist Klaus Theweleit's two-volume *Male Fantasies* proposed a fairly novel reading of the fascist phenomenon, and more particularly, the phenomenon of desiring-fascism. What is fascinating about Theweleit's approach is that, following in the footsteps of Reich but without the baggage of his orgone theory, he centres desiring production in his analysis. For Theweleit, fascism is the social-becoming of an inner experience, a micropolitics successfully projected onto the macropolitical. Theweleit's main focus is the literature of the *Freikorps*, a rightist militant organization that many contemporary scholars view as a precursor to the Nazi party (there is much empirical evidence to bolster this claim. As many as three officers - General Paul Lettow-Vorbeck, Heinrich Ehrhardt, and Gerhard Rossbach all participated in the doomed Kapp Putsch in 1923, and entire *Freikorps* units joined the SA *en masse* and participated in Hitler's Beerhall Putsch of the same year).

Criticism of Theweleit's methodology typically stems from this fixation on *Freikorps* and right-wing literature. Anti-semitism, one of the pillars of Nazi ideology, plays a relatively small role in this literature. Rather, it is the hatred and fear of women and female sexuality that dominates this genre, and upon that which Theweleit fixes his analytic gaze. This framework is limiting, perhaps conveniently for Theweleit, and as a result there are a few significant explanatory gaps left unexplored over the thousand pages of both volumes. For instance, by focusing primarily on the experiences of the soldierly German men of the *Freikorps*, Theweleit ignores the "annihilating violence in the German colonies in Africa during the 1890s and 1900s and in the German imperialist intervention in China during 1900-1901, after the so-called Boxer Rebellion." (Amidon

& Krier, 2009, p. 489) There is yet another gap, as Amidon and Krier (2009) note, in that Theweleit “fails to analyze the question of the reality of rape as a weapon in the arsenal of the Freikorps men.” (p. 490) These textual and analytical shortcomings have prompted some to discard *Male Fantasies*, and others to approach the text with some level of caution. If there is something necessary that must be retained from Theweleit's analysis, it is the reintroduction of micropolitics into the consideration of desire.

Micropolitics, in the Deleuze-Guattarian sense of the term, refers broadly to three different and rhizomatically connected phenomena:

“(i) the scrutiny of the lines and the systems of reference that can then be applied as hermeneutic to a field of enquiry and action; (ii) a focus upon the rupturing practices that one kind of line or segmentation - the molecular - and one kind of assemblage - the abstract machine of mutation - are peculiarly capable of; (iii) a style of intervention that Deleuze and Guattari consider to be distinct from, and more adequate than, what is called the ‘macropolitical’.”

(Stivale, 2014, p. 105)

Concrete examples of what can be considered “macropolitical” can be found in large scale democratic humanitarian intervention, such as forced democratization and regime change in the Middle East. The micropolitical is “not excluded from, but neither is it limited to, the operational theatre of what is normally considered ‘the political’.” (p. 105) In fact, there is a “reciprocal dependency” between the binary aggregates. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 249) For our purposes, these aggregates are the micro and macro (sometimes referred to as molar by Deleuze and Guattari), though it should be noted here that binary segmentarity is a feature of the abstract machines that produce certain degrees

of the socius. For instance, there are the “great binary aggregates such as the sexes or classes”. (p. 249) This should not be misinterpreted, however, as deeming that there are only two genders. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari note that “the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes.” (p. 249)

There is, evidently, an underdeveloped kernel of queer theory in the works of Deleuze and Guattari, which given Guattari’s interest in the budding academic movement and their association with Guy Hocquenghem is not the least bit surprising and is fairly easy to map. Desiring-machines are exempt from social production, but rather, “social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate conditions.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 31) The realm of social production is “the historically determined product of desire”. (p. 31) We have already seen how this transformational libidinal investment in the social field might be reterritorialized into catastrophically oppressive regimes such as the Third Reich, and as such it is important to bear in mind that “even the most repressive and the most deadly forms of social reproduction are produced by desire...” (p. 31)

Therein lies the relationship between the desiring-production of the individual and the reproduction of the socius through the symbolic order of capital. Subjectivity, which in the works of Deleuze and Guattari (though most notably Guattari’s solo endeavours), is fundamentally a group subjectivity. What does this mean practically? That any notion of subjectivity is itself enslaved by micropolitical segmentarities, that it is “completely deindividuated and depersonalized and ecologized, a consequence of foregrounding the

social environment of the institution.” (Guattari, 2020, p. 55) The strength with which capital conducts its various regimes of power “lies in its articulation of processes of social subjection and machinic enslavement as well as in the effects of their respective signifying and asignifying semiotics.” (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 66) There is then a stabilization, or territorialization, of subjectivity at play.

The question then returns to that of Spinoza, and later Reich, and still later Deleuze and Guattari: is there not some desire for the territorialization of subjectivity? Even Marx, albeit briefly in his posthumously published second volume of *Das Kapital*, shows glimpses of being a libidinal economist, as Lyotard might say, when he observed that “capitalism is already essentially abolished once we assume that it is enjoyment that is the driving motive and not enrichment itself.” (Marx, 1993, p. 199) Exploitation occurs, surely, but perhaps not in the dogmatically Marxian sense. Exploitation for Marx is the “name of the capitalist appropriation of surplus-value, measured by the difference between the total product and the value-equivalent assigned to the reproduction of labour power – what is paid out in wages.” (Lordon, 2010, p. 82) When traditional Marxists discuss exploitation, it only makes sense to consider it in the light of a substantialist labour theory of value. But what is excluded by this is the issue of exploiting a certain kind of perverse desire. Jean-François Lyotard (2004) captured this perversity in a passage which is worth quoting in full:

“The English unemployed did not become workers to survive, they - hang on tight and spit on me - enjoyed the hysterical, masochistic, whatever exhaustion it was hanging on in the mines, in the foundries, in the factories, in hell, they enjoyed it, enjoyed the mad destruction of their organic body which was indeed imposed

upon them, they enjoyed the decomposition of their personal identity, the identity that the peasant tradition had constructed for them, enjoyed the dissolution of their families and villages, and enjoyed the new monstrous anonymity of the suburbs and the pubs in the morning and evening.”

(p. 109-110)

Capital, in its tendencies to operate at its very limits while tilting towards endless growth, infinite accumulation, and ceaseless development, includes a “*dispositif of the regulation of conquest, a dispositif of permanent conquest.*” (p. 150) These techniques have been gestured at in Foucault’s work on disciplinary societies, and further elaborated yet in Deleuze’s notion of the control society. It must be stressed that what is being conquered, and what the techniques and various *dispositifs* of conquest are trained on, is the existential terrain of subjectivity. Guattari and Negri (1990) were right to sound the alarm in the late 20th century that human subjectivity is becoming effectively endangered like a species hunted into extinction, through IWC’s “penetration of people’s attitudes, sensibility, and minds.” (p. 53)

It is worth briefly reintroducing the Deleuze-Guattarian concepts of drive and desire, which can be traced directly to Pierre Klossowski’s work *Living Currency* (1970). Despite being regarded as typically incongruous with Kant⁴, Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of desire is nonetheless indebted to the Enlightenment thinker, as they follow Kant in defining desire as a drive which is capable of producing its own object. For

⁴ Deleuze himself noted that he only wrote his book *Kant’s Critical Philosophy* (1967) as “an enemy that tries to show how his system works, its various cogs...” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 6)

Deleuze and Guattari (2008), this means that “desire desires its own repression”, as the object is governed by the signifier introduced by psychoanalysis, and is often the subject of reterritorialization and semiotization. (p. 346)

Dealing with desire and psychoanalysis more directly, there is the issue of lack (*manque*) introduced by the Freudians and rigorously employed by the Lacanians. This fundamental notion of psychoanalysis might be considered the cornerstone in the foundation of the free market consumer culture. There is a brief glimpse of this in Lacan’s session titled “The Dialectic of Desire in Neurosis” (1959), wherein he notes that “fantasy is the prop and index of a certain position of the subject in desire.” (Lacan, 2019, p. 422) The role of psychoanalysis in this regard is to treat the prop as a box with contents inside of it, and to set off on determining (i.e. semiotizing) what these contents signify. The Deleuze-Guattarian model sees the unconscious - and by extension, desire - as fundamentally asignifying. The question is less “what could this mean?” and more along the lines of “how does this work?”.

Lack, on the contrary, is necessarily signifying, and capitalistically so. To approach a paradigm of sublimation is to have revealed what is typically hidden or repressed by the object of desire. Lacan and Deleuze are, in some respects, speaking of different modes of desire in this regard. Deleuze (and Guattari, independently of their partnership) was interested in the ways that the drives are able to ostensibly invent their own repression and obstacles in desiring-production, whereas Lacan’s focus is trained on the object, or, the Thing. By naming the object the Thing, Lacan is knowingly enmeshing himself in a number of overdetermined philosophical terms: there is Kant’s *ding an sich*, Heidegger’s meditations on *das ding*, George Simmel’s Thing integral to his theory of

value, and so on. It is not worth getting bogged down in fleshing out each of these philosophical notions for the present analysis. It is worth, however, reminding ourselves of a particular innovation Lacan introduced in his seventh seminar to his famed mirror stage theory. The mirror's manifest purpose is known -- it is a reflective surface. Lacan adds, however, that it is not merely reflective, but it also fulfills "another role, a role as limit. It is that which cannot be crossed. And the only organization in which it participates is that of the inaccessibility of the object." (Lacan, 1997, p. 151) The surface of the mirror acts as a limit both physical and psychological in nature: the Thing, and the manifestation of the thing, is a practice in alienation and exclusion — "the Thing does not answer to my needs..." (Schuster, 2016, p. 140)

The traditional psychoanalytic logic of desire no longer works then, as it forces a binary segmentation onto the interpretation of desiring-production. The two categories become that of production or acquisition: production more closely associated with the Deleuze-Guattarian model of the unconscious, and acquisition the product of more customary Freudian psychoanalysis. This segmentarity is the product of overcoding mechanisms, as the abstract overcoding machine, as Deleuze and Guattari call it, "produces, or rather reproduces segments, opposing them two by two... laying out a divisible, homogeneous space striated in all directions." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 260) The psychoanalytic practice revels in the overcoding of desire, reproducing the macrosegmentarity of the state apparatus into the micropolitical sphere of consideration. With this in mind, it is worth briefly revisiting the micro and macropolitical desiring-production inherent to the rise of various fascisms.

The fascist machine is particularly adept at translating internal states into “massive, external monuments or ornaments as a canalization system, which large numbers of people flow into”. (Theweleit, 1987, p. 431) The fascist machine distorts the desiring-production felt through capitalist alienation (capitalism is fundamentally averse to masses both in spirit and in the division of labour) and mobilizes this sense of belonging in service of a death drive. As a brief aside, it should be remarked upon that the death drive is one of Freud’s most misunderstood concepts. It does not represent a craving for annihilation or death, but rather, is the first step towards indicating a psychic life beyond the Freudian pleasure principle, hence the title of the seminal essay “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”. The issue of the death drive arose organically for Freud through three key phenomena: the first being the nature of war trauma, the second revolving around patterns in childrens’ play, specifically a game played by Freud’s grandson, and the final instigator was his clinical practice, as he found patients dealing with trauma often felt “obliged to *repeat* the repressed material as a contemporary experience...” (Freud, 2001, p. 288) The death drive emerges in the post-war period as Freud is grappling with the destruction of the Great War, and a few years later his term *superego* appears in *The Ego and the Id* (1923). For our purposes, it is not worth spending too much time on this, but it is important to bring up as these concepts broadly constitute the structural model of the late Freudian technical approach to personality, political and cultural matters. More specifically, these concepts gave Freud a more productive lens through which to view regressive and repressive mass political movements.

If the death drive allowed Freud to view mass culture as something that operates beyond the impulse for self-preservation and pleasure, then it is not a concept that can be

easily dispensed with when inquiring into the micropolitics of fascism. The weleit's micropolitical consideration of fascism is indispensable here. While noting that Benjamin is correct in that fascism allows the masses to express themselves, The weleit insists that Benjamin does not go far enough, and should instead be asking "*what* is being expressed"? (p. 432) Fascism eludes allowing the masses to express class or economic interests, but it excels at expressing "suppressed drives, imprisoned desires." (p. 432)

What is the practical implication here, and what might be gleaned from this level of abstract discourse? Mainly that the success of fascism "demonstrates that masses who become fascist suffer more from their internal states of being than from hunger or unemployment." (p. 432) The Marxist-Leninist dialectic of revolution is problematized by this consideration. Rather than the material dialectic producing an "economic order that promises future generations full stomachs", the result of overcoding mechanisms and the semiotization of desiring-production leads almost inevitably to desiring-fascism. Molarity is mirrored onto the micropolitical, taking on an anthropomorphized form, as "every body becomes a legislating subject, at least in the privacy of its own home." (Massumi, 1992, p. 126) Fascism, this reactionary socio-political phenomenon, begins in the body.

1.3 Pure Capture

What has been laid out thus far constitutes some of the myriad of ways desire is mutated under semiocapital, and some of the points of control, such as seemingly innocuous yet deeply corrosive rhetoric about "workplace families". What we have been dealing with thus far then is the process of semiotization, as Guattari might say. As such,

it is also necessary to assert that what Mark Fisher deems “the Real” of capitalism is actually occurring on a different Lacanian register than the Real - that of the Symbolic.

For Lacan, social or phenomenological reality consists of signs and the process of signification. The Real, in the Lacanian sense, and what Fisher cites as directly influencing his term CR, is by virtue the unknowable, operating only on the periphery and the limits of semiotization. One of Fisher’s major missteps in his reading of Lacan is his attempt to overcode the Real and give it meaning, despite the fact that “the real is grounded in that it bears no meaning, in that it excludes meaning, or, more accurately, in that it settles in a deposit on account of being excluded from meaning.” (Lacan, 2016, p. 50-1) For Lacan, the Real is asignifying in a similar manner that the unconscious is to Deleuze and Guattari. It is asignifying, and yet it is productive. Fisher’s own definition of capitalist realism appears to describe the process of semiotization outlined by Guattari in *The Machinic Unconscious* (1979), as he writes that capitalist realism is more like “a pervasive *atmosphere*, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as an invisible barrier constraining thought and action.” (Fisher, 2009, p. 16) Thus far, we have explored “the regulation of work and education” as it pertains to Deleuze’s notion of societies of control, and have highlighted that what Fisher is describing here is more accurately described in Lacanian terminology as the Symbolic order of capital.

The Symbolic order of capital produces a state of semiotic capture. The free and unbarred flow of signs is as integral to the conditions of production as the flow of money and the divisions of labour. Marx had already argued, perhaps most clearly in the *Grundrisse*, that “social subjection is a process by which capital relations become

personified; the ‘capitalist’ acts as ‘personified capital’, that is, as a function derived from variable capital flows...” (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 25) However, this is only one way that industrial capital might capture subjectivity. There is a different process in semiocapital — machinic enslavement — which functions to effectively desubjectivize the subject “by mobilizing functional and operational, non-representational and asignifying, rather than linguistic and representational, semiotics.” (p. 25) It should be noted that the term enslavement here carries a slightly different connotation than the associated racial caste system, as it originates here from the work of Deleuze and Guattari, for whom the term is taken from the field of cybernetics. Here enslavement connotes a certain kind of territorializing management of various features of an assemblage. Machinic enslavement territorializes social machines, financial machines, media assemblages, and so on. This state of capture “replaces the ‘human slavery’ of ancient imperial systems and is thus a mode of command, regulation, and government ‘assisted by technology’, and, as such, represents a feature specific to capitalism.” (p. 26) Subjectivity becomes a reciprocal product of machinic enslavement. Flows and (partial) objects cannot escape, and if there is ever a “thing” which seems to escape, “the thing is identified, located on various abstract coordinates, grasped, prevented from fleeing or escaping the system of significations, and kept from threatening the socio-semiotic order.” (Guattari, 2011, p. 77)

What Fisher describes as capitalist realism is not so much the Real in this Lacanian sense but rather this perpetual state of capture, one that functions through assemblages and semiotic poles of reterritorialization. This is the symbolic order of capital, rather than the Real. There is a Real of capital, of course, and it is intimately tied

up and bound with its symbolic and imaginary functions.⁵ The Real of capital is concerned primarily with things like “universal dispersal, circulation, and absolute atomization.” (Badiou, 2020, p. 110) In more Deleuzian vernacular, this is absolute territorialization, of which cultural production (such as films, which were often Fisher’s favourite entrypoint into cultural criticism) is simply a symptom.

This is not to say that one might consider one register while discarding the other. The Imaginary order (perhaps most succinctly characterized as the formation of the ego and associated closely with Lacan’s famous “mirror stage”) is conditioned and structured by the Symbolic order. This is perhaps most easily observed on the semiotic level, where the Symbolic finds its foundation in the form of the signifier, with signification belonging to the realm of the Imaginary order. The Real also has a role in the semiotic capture of subjectivity. Deep into Lacan’s sixth seminar (*Desire and its Interpretation*), the psychoanalyst makes an important distinction between the Real and social or phenomenological reality, which by nature resists the Real: “I am saying ‘the real’ here, not ‘reality’, because reality is constituted by all the halts that human symbolism, more or less perspicaciously, throws around the neck of the real insofar as it fabricates the objects of its experience with it.” (Lacan, 2019, p. 479) As such, the process of semiotization, as Guattari describes it, concerns each register, or the entire knot.

The state of capture embodied by capitalist subjectification is, to be sure, a process of semiotic coding and overcoding: the semiotization of the subject. These terms

⁵ It is worth referring explicitly here to Lacan’s Borromean knot formation of the three registers presented in his 23rd seminar entitled *Le Sinthome*.

are fine in the abstract though perhaps a bit ineloquent. The techniques of control that have been discussed thus far are, contra the dogmatic Marxist perspective, not confined to the realm of monetary constraints and economic imperatives. The schizoanalytic approach, which has been the method of analysis thus far, sees the individual become something of a “terminal” for the “vectors of subjectification” that involve “human groups, socio-economic ensembles, data-processing machines, etc.” (Guattari, 2020, p. 23) It should come as no surprise then that one of Guattari’s most profound ideas was that there is a need to develop what he took to calling a “mental ecology”. This existential terrain is characterized by a grouping of four main semiotic regimes: economic semiotics, juridical semiotics, techno-scientific semiotics, and semiotics of subjectification. (see: p. 32)

What is notable about these categories suggested by Guattari is that economic semiotics are their own regime and operate with some autonomy (though there is of course some overlap throughout the regimes. For instance, semiotics of subjectification might include public facilities and their accessibility, which is undoubtedly bound to economic and juridical semiotics). It is worth remembering here what Herbert Marcuse told *The Listener Magazine* in 1978: “Not every problem someone has with his girlfriend is necessarily due to the capitalist mode of production.” This remains phenomenologically true, however, what cannot be denied is that capital is a phenomenal quasicause with nigh unlimited transformational power. Capital reproduces itself as a social force, as it “functions imminently, in a field of exteriority constituted by the dynamic in-between of bodies...” (Massumi, 1992, p. 131) The psychoanalytic treatment of lack, and more specifically the creation of lack, is a “function of market economy” and

belongs to a territorializing effort in the “art of the dominant class.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 30) To paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari, we are beginning to see how much exactly psychoanalysis belongs to the symbolic functions of capital.

The active role of semiotization and overcoding determine the stakes of desiring-production. But it is not as simple as drawing a 1:1 parallelism between the production of the socius under capital and desiring-production, or “the flows of money-capital and the shit-flows of desire.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 332) It is really a much more reciprocal relationship between the processes, as “desiring-machines are in social machines and nowhere else...” (p. 332) Psychoanalysis, in its more dogmatic iterations (it is important to remember that Guattari himself was a practicing psychotherapist), is content with ignoring how desire is intrinsically a part of the social infrastructure, and as a result continue the semiotization and overcoding of asignifying chains. Reich was correct in directing analysis of the rise of the Third Reich towards desire - turning the question to “why did the masses desire fascism?” - however he falters in his contentment to restrict himself to the ideological and, as per his technique, the subjective as defined by ideology. Deleuze and Guattari (2008) note this as an issue of biunivocalization, as desiring-machines are partial objects which undergo “two totalizations, one when the socius confers on them a structural unity under a symbolic signifier acting as absence and lack in an aggregate of departure”, and another when “the family imposes on them a personal unity with imaginary signifieds that distribute, that ‘vacuolize’ lack in an aggregate of destination...” (p. 339) Subsumption and semiotization under capital can then be thought of as a properly bipolar machinic endeavour which depends on and

revolves around two reciprocal Deleuzian concepts: machinic enslavement and social subjection.

Much of what has been discussed thus far with regards to semiotization and overcoding machines would fall under the umbrella of machinic enslavement. Social subjection may take other more concrete and immediately nefarious forms, however. Consider the banking credit system, which came into existence less than a century ago and is now recognized as one of the cornerstones of the consumer economy. Credit, to the Marxist thinker, likely categorizes the kind of monopolistic appropriation of labour value inherent to the capitalist mode of production. This is true enough, however there are other historical forces at work here. The role that credit (and the subsequent debt) plays in the apparatus of capture is that of a reterritorialized feudalism. Semiocapital functions as such, designating all human beings as subjects, but some “the ‘capitalists’, are subjects of enunciation that form the private subjectivity of capital, while the others, the ‘proletarians’, are subjects of the statement, subjected to the technical machines in which capital is effectuated.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 571) Financial capital becomes the “universal power relation” which precedes all other relations, including labour. (Lazzarato, 2012, p. 32) The strategy of capital is never simply economic. Whether manifestly or latently, the production of subjectivity is always included.

The capitalists, the great enunciators, are well aware of this indeed. Consider the epigraph to this chapter pulled from Baroness Thatcher, the Iron Lady. The reterritorialization of subjectivity is always at the threshold of economic shifts and experiments. In chapter 2 of this thesis, this phenomenon will be discussed specifically in relation to the deterritorialization and subsequent reterritorialization of religious

subjectivity. This can be easily observed in the case of the credit industry. As French sociologist Jacques Donzelot (1977) has noted, the debtor-creditor relationship is one of despotic overcoding:

“The territorial machine held its own through an interplay of actions and reactions articulated around debt. It fit together the filiations in themselves and among themselves, the producers and the non-producers according to a relationship of debtor and creditor which marked on the very body of each organ the place, the function and the use to which it was indebted.”

(p. 42)

To reiterate the point in different language, the financial institution of debt functions primarily as an instance of incorporeal violence. In this regard, it is phenomenal that the notion of debt barely appears in Fisher’s work *Capitalist Realism* (2009). He does hazard to indicate that for Deleuze “Control societies are based on debt rather than enclosure...”, but beyond this slight acknowledgement fails to engage in any meaningful way with this precise apparatus of capture. (Fisher, 2009, p. 26) Perhaps even worse is the fact that Fisher’s debt/enclosure paradigm operates almost exclusively on the level of abstract discourse with no consideration of the reality and universality of the applications of debt. To Fisher, debt and enclosure work almost reciprocally: “there is a way in which the current education system both indebts and encloses students. Pay for your own exploitation, the logic insists - get into debt so you can get the same ‘Mcjob’ you could have walked into if you'd left school at sixteen...” (p. 26) Fisher falls into a rather vulgar Marxian perspective here, overlooking the fact that creditors and debtors are often one and the same, in a way embodying a perverse kind of financial dialectic. Corporate debt,

for instance, has become an integral part of the global economy and the flow of IWC.⁶ The modern nation-state functions similarly: from 1950 to 1990, “Canada’s net foreign debt represented roughly 10 percent of its domestic capital.” (Piketty, 2017, p. 195) Canada’s domestic capital today is worth approximately 410% of its national income, and of this total, “assets owned by foreign investors... represent less than 10 percent of national income.” (p. 195) There is an element of economic capture at play here, as Canada is thus roughly 2% owned by foreign interests.

This is to say that the apparatus of subjection and capture that is the modern debt system does not only overcode relations between the capitalists (rich) and proletarians (poor). The exploitation inherent to debt is not of labour, but rather it is the exploitation of moral and social existence. One of the major differences in the North American economic systems between the so-called “neoliberal age” and the post-war era is, beyond the exorcising of Keynesianism, that these new welfare policies often encourage “risk taking by the individual.” (Lazzarato, 2021, p. 33) Despite Fisher’s far too simplistic and naïve categorization of debt’s ability to act as an apparatus of subjugation, he was right in one respect, albeit implicitly: debt, as a coding mechanism, formally completes the alienation of humanity under capital. The creditor/debtor relationship is a “technique making it possible to guide and control behaviours across the social groups, since it functions as well with the poor person as with the unemployed, the wage-earner, the retiree.” (p. 31) Everyone, even the capitalist enunciators, are placed in a posture of debt.

⁶ The reliance on corporate debt is part of what makes the cessation of the flow of abstract capital so catastrophic, like what was experienced in the markets early into the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overcoding machines such as debt (financial, or the more abstract ‘debt to society’) are never neutral. In fact, “codes are always power mechanisms associated with molar organization. They are never neutral or objective. Any science of codes is a science of domination, however subtly masked.” (Massumi, 1992, p. 188) Consider how, in the case of the welfare state, trust and solidarity has been transformed into a universal distrust. This overcodes the welfare system in such a way that “recipients of services are to feel guilty and for which they are to have their private lives examined in order to determine their validity and their conformity to the norms of the providing institution.” (Verbeeten, 2013, p. 269) The neoliberal attitude towards ‘inclusion through finance’ has effectively led to the itemization and financialization of entire lives.

Of course, it is not groundbreaking to say that the modern financial debt system is exploitative. Afterall, it is a system wherein a portion of the labour-value is necessarily extracted and owned before even having been produced. The point however, was not to simply plough through well-trodden ground, but rather highlight how an exceptionally mundane financial apparatus functions as one of the most deeply ingrained techniques of subjection under semiocapital. The machines of enslavement and capture are too numerous to list, and in their way, are intertwined, as “every abstract machine is linked to other abstract machines, not only because they are inseparably political, economic, scientific, artistic.... and semiotic -- but because their various types are as intertwined as their operations are convergent.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 597) Different abstract machines, such as the faciality machines which overcode the image and perception of the body, and the semiotizing machines which overcode language, all converge in their efforts in totalizing existential territories. The debt system, beyond having a very real

material effect on quotidian phenomenological reality, is one such abstract machine, one that tilts towards “homogenizations” and “conjunctions of closure.” (p. 597) Indebtedness resurrects the feudalist spectre which has always haunted the so-called free market and democratic representation, effectively overcoding free conjunctive relationships and lines of flight as closed and fixed systems.

This chapter, and its various subchapters, have focused on a number of issues on the surface: the role of debt in society, the rhetoric of the workplace family, the rise of various fascisms, productive Deleuze-Guattarian schizophrenia, and the role of stratification in individuation. A refrain throughout nearly every section has been the unfurling critique of Freudian psychoanalysis and its various universalizing concepts, such as the Oedipal triangle and the Signifier, and the extent to which psychoanalysis belongs to the symbolic order of capital. The topic of desire, in light of Spinoza, Reich, Lacan, and Deleuze’s contributions has also been fundamental in the formation of this chapter and its rhizomatic connections. But what has been absolutely key, and what is at the heart of all that has preceded this sentence, is raising the stakes of semiotization and the capitalist overcoding of subjectivity. The various apparatuses of capture, the “semiological operation[s] *par excellence*”, are what unites topics as varied as workplace rhetoric and the rise of fascism. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 517)

There are grave social stakes to semiotics. Additionally, we are unable to leave the field of semiotics behind. Deleuze (2000) sums this up quite simply when he writes that “what forces us to think is the sign.” (p. 97) There is no outside or primitive space we can retreat to. This chapter has been at times analytical, though mostly descriptive of certain issues which proliferate through a capitalist culture inundated with

psychoanalysis. The second chapter of this thesis will turn to a specific territorializing effect of industrial capital, that is, the supposed secularization of the modern world.

Chapter 2. Postscript on Societies of Disenchantment

“*Capitalism is profoundly illiterate*” - Gilles Deleuze, *Anti-Oedipus*

“*The bank is something more than men, I tell you. It’s the monster. Men made it, but they can’t control it.*” - John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

2.1 Exchange of Enchantment

In the previous chapter, we have outlined the various techniques of control and machinic processes which proliferate under the banner of global capital, and more specifically, capital as a semiotic regime of signification. Potentially revolutionary lines of flight and desiring production are routinely deterritorialized and subsequently reterritorialized, whether by Oedipalization or generic capitalist overcoding⁷, resulting in a mutation of desiring-production. This mutation can be as innocuous as a personal infatuation with pain or as historically catastrophic as the development and rise of fascism. If the first chapter of this thesis revolved around Deleuze-Guattarian critiques of psychoanalysis and capital’s overcoding tendencies, this chapter will focus largely on the territorializing effects of capital, and more specifically the reterritorialization of genuine religious spirit in the industrial and post-industrial era.

It is perhaps not worth spending much time on how, for Marx and Weber, industrial capitalism was the catalyst for a secular modernity, as this is well trodden territory. What is worthwhile, however, is considering Weber’s landmark work *The*

⁷ A good example of this kind of generic overcoding is the proliferation of the “business ontology” under neoliberalism, wherein each individual is encouraged to behave as no more than living currency, to borrow a term from Klossowski.

Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905) in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of territorialization. Deterritorialization, the process which has affected genuine religious spirit in the western world, can be surmised as the opening up of "new possibilities for desiring-production across the 'body without organs'". (Theweleit, 1987, p. 264) Deleuze and Guattari (2008), in one of their more lucid polemical moments, write of the reciprocal processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization:

"Marx termed the twofold movement of the tendency to a falling rate of profit, and the increase in the absolute quantity of surplus value, the law of the counteracted tendency. As a corollary of this law, there is the twofold movement of decoding or deterritorializing flows on the one hand, and their violent and artificial reterritorialization on the other."

(36)

This is complementary to Weber's approach to Marxism to a certain degree. Never a member but close by, Weber was one of the younger associates of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (Association for Social Policy). This group was formally involved in theorizing creative applications of Marxist theory, and for Weber this materialized in his development of the "spirit" or *Geist* of capital. The main difference between the Deleuzian framework and the Weberian *Geist* of capital is *telos*, in that Weber's interpretation of historical materialism operates in a more traditional Marxian perspective, whereas the Deleuzian model of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is always expanding the assumed limits of capital. This is not to say that Deleuze and Guattari do away with the teleological, or that it might be done away with at all. Rather,

their idea of capital's ability to self-perpetuate revolves around the idea that through deterritorialization and reterritorialization, capital can "institute or restore all sorts of residual and artificial, imaginary, or symbolic territorialities... Everything returns or recurs..." (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 36)

Weber (2005) notes early on in *The Protestant Ethic* that "magical and religious forces, and the ethical ideas of duty based upon them, have in the past always been among the most important formative influences on conduct." (p. xxxix) Weber is thinking back to the not-so-distant past when one of the chief social disciplinary techniques was invariably tied to the church. Famously, God died sometime during the Enlightenment, if one is to believe Nietzsche. Capital, during its gilded age of expansionism following the industrial revolution, fundamentally altered and decentred these disciplinary methods, leading eventually to what Deleuze called the control society. Weber (2005) sees the role that capital plays in the molding of both subjectivity and material sociality as he writes that "capitalism, at the time of its great expansion, has had a free hand to alter the social distribution of the population in accordance with its needs, and to determine its occupational structure." (p. 3) The death of God is permissible in a world which no longer needs to rely on theological fealty as a dominant technique of control.

Weber is correct in pursuing this line of thought, though Deleuze and Guattari's concept of reterritorialization can help round out his historical analysis even further. Weber's account is arguably the most well-known of the various tracts on the disenchantment of the world under the influence of capital. The idea that the world is less enchanted presents a bit of a problem when taking integrated world capital (IWC) as a subject, however. Even Weber (2005) concedes that it is unknowable "whether at the end

of this tremendous development entirely new prophets will arise, or there will be a great rebirth of old ideas and ideals” (p. 124) The issue is, once again, this imposed teleology onto the contours of capital. That is, it is not a matter of reaching the “end” of this social development, but rather enduring the loop of deterritorializing lines of flight and their simultaneous reterritorializations.

On this note, it is worth briefly engaging with a fairly mystical interpretation of capital, which is that capital has haunted every state and social system as a dark potentiality which required it to be “warded off in advance”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 132) Capital exists as an inevitability. This characterization of capitalism operates around the notion of the system’s malleability, its inherent plasticity, and its ability to artificially reproduce its own limits, which is perhaps best demonstrated by David Harvey’s notion of the spatio-temporal fix. This concept arises out of a critique of new imperialism and is fairly heterogeneous, but is understood to be concerned with spatial organization and geographical expansion as a consequence of capitalism. Harvey notes that Marx’s theory of accumulation was concerned mainly with “purely temporal terms”, which makes sense given Marx’s mission of unravelling the “nature of capitalism’s *inner dialectic*.” (Harvey, 2001, p. 308) The “fix” here refers to the shortsighted, almost improvisational nature of the reorganization of the global economy and production models, which has impoverished the so-called developing world in the process of expanding the territorializing logic of capitalist states.

This capitalist expansion and self-perpetuation brings us back to the idea that capital exists as an inevitability. This notion of capital as an earthly inevitability that has haunted all social formations has been highly influential for a number of prominent

contemporary thinkers, such as Mark Fisher (specifically in his theory of capitalist realism) but more interestingly philosophers such as Reza Negarestani and the early work of 90s cyberneticists like Nick Land and Sadie Plant. In his notoriously difficult book *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* (2008), Negarestani blends theory-fiction, Deleuzian philosophy, perceptual semiotics, Islamic theology, and anthropology (subjects coming to represent these eponymous “anonymous materials”) into a nightmarish vision of the capitalist machine. One of the most important ideas to emerge from this text is the notion of a sentient system of capital (which the aforementioned philosopher Land had already pointed to in his landmark cybernetic essay “Machinic Desire”, albeit in a more obscure context), and more specifically oil as an actor on the global stage. Consider the following passage, wherein Negarestani (2008) advances his theory of oil theology:

“An autonomous chemical weapon belonging to earth as both a sentient entity and an event. Petroleum poisons capital with absolute madness, a planetary plague bleeding into economies mobilized by the technological singularities of advanced civilizations. In the wake of oil as an autonomous terrestrial conspirator, capitalism is not a human symptom but rather a planetary inevitability. In other words, capitalism was here even before human existence, waiting for a host.”

(27)

Negarestani ordains oil with a theological dimension as well, noting that “with everything we produce with oil, we get a little closer to God”. (28) The raw materials and socially productive forces of capitalism existed long before the advent of the industrial age, which

is precisely what Deleuze and Guattari are referring to when they cryptically state that primitive societies were adept at warding off capitalism “in advance”.

Negarestani’s oil theology poses a problem for Weber’s reading of the capitalist spirit. Whether the specifics of Negarestani’s esoteric and elliptical texts are disputed, what they illustrate is that the world under industrial capital is no less enchanted than it was pre-Enlightenment. However, the symbolic potentiality for enchantment has been displaced and artificially reterritorialized. Marx (1973) was well aware of this reterritorializing power of capital, specifically in the realm of enchantment, as in the *Grundrisse* (1857) he makes reference to “the divine power of money” and its place as the “god among commodities.” (221) Eugene McCarraher (2019) phrases this in a slightly more severe way, declaring that “Under capitalism, money occupies the ontological throne from which God has been evicted.” (11)

This is significant in the context of Walter Benjamin’s observations on capital-as-religion, taken down in a posthumously published fragment.⁸ Benjamin (2019) observes that “capitalism serves essentially to allay the same anxieties, torments, and disturbances to which the so-called religions offered answers.” (288) In this case, Weber’s observation that the world has become fundamentally disenchanted through the secular religiosity of capital must be amended, as it appears that the world, officially secular as it may be, was never disenchanted to begin with.

⁸ It is worth noting that in this brief fragment, Benjamin, in the spirit of this thesis’ first chapter, identifies Freud’s psychoanalysis as “capitalist through and through.” (289)

This requires further elaboration. Of course, the intent of dispelling the myth of the disenchantment of the world is not to suggest that the world of Medieval Catholicism never collapsed. Instead, it is important to highlight how the domination of Protestantism “was a reformation of enchantment”, rather than an erasure. (McCarragher, 2019, 23) In other words, this represents one of the many artificial reterritorializations under capital. It is in this sense that capital is not an essence as Fisher would suggest, but rather a process, a tendency which tilts towards decoding and “market driven immanentization, progressively subordinating social reproduction to techno-commercial replication.” (Land, 2011, p. 340) For every problem, capital posits that there is a market-based solution: “the schema for an eradication of transcendent elements and their replacement by economically programmed circuits.” (p. 341) In other words, capital has found its new, secular prophets in the market.

It is perhaps time, in light of these new prophets, to introduce a figure that haunts the annals of American history: the Jeremiad. Societal collapse is imminent, the culture has lost its once noble way, and so on: these are the lamentations of the Jeremiad. The Jeremiad was an almost immediate byproduct of the American project, as Bercovitch (2012) notes that “Within the first decade of settlement, the clergy were already thundering denunciations of a backsliding people.” (p. 6) The Puritans saw that the church’s reformation was to finally reach its fulfillment in America. This was the mission of the early colonies, but as Bercovitch observes, “their yankee heirs felt relatively free of such constraints.” (p.6) As the American project bore on, the “divine plan lost its strict grounding in scripture; providence itself was shaken loose from its religious framework to become part of the belief in human progress.” (p. 93) Weber, and Weberian scholars,

would likely read this as evidence of their claims that the modern world has undergone a process of disenchantment, however for a Deleuzian, it is clear that what is described by Bercovitch is the process of deterritorialization.

Deterritorialization and its consequential reterritorializations are key to the continuation of the capitalist state. This is precisely how the capitalist state proceeds:

“it is produced by the conjunction of the decoded or deterritorialized flows, and is able to carry the becoming-immanent to its highest point only to the extent that it is party to the generalized breakdown of codes and overcodings, and evolves entirely within this new axiomatic that results from a hitherto unknown conjunction.”

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 274)

In this moment, it is worth recalling that Deleuze and Guattari referred to the prescriptive power of capital as being the conglomerate of “everything that has ever been believed.” (p. 37) To reiterate a point from the previous chapter, one that is key to understanding Deleuze and Guattari’s methods and direction in *Anti-Oedipus*, capital operates axiomatically, just as a rigorously systematic philosophical work might. What is the axiomatic of capital then? It is important not to presuppose the essence of its foundation, as Deleuze and Guattari note that the “axiomatic is not the invention of capitalism, since it is identical with capital itself.” (p. 274) The axiomatic is that which “fulfills its own immanence” and “pushes back or enlarges its limits”, while adding “still more axioms while preventing the system from becoming saturated...” (p. 273) The technical machine of the social axiom is then, in the abstract, what facilitates capital’s tendency to operate as a vector bent towards its own horizons.

The impetus for deterritorializing genuine religious spirit and artificially reterritorializing this enchantment into faith in the market is then broadly related to the continuation of capital itself, and more specifically to do with the dispersed techniques of the modern control society that Deleuze remarks upon. What is perhaps the most important insight of Deleuze's brief essay comes right at the very end when, predicting how certain long-standing institutions might alter their frameworks to allow for a more dispersed technique of control. Deleuze (1992) writes that in the "corporate system" there will be "new ways of handling money, profits, and humans that no longer pass through the old factory form." (p. 7) In the previous chapter, specifically in the subchapter titled "Pure Capture", the modern personal and corporate debt system is highlighted as an example of this kind of development. The old Marxian axioms, and more specifically their frequently dogmatic applications, no longer apply. As Deleuze (1992) notes, capitalist superpowers are now rarely directly involved in the modes of production, as they have been relegated "to the Third World... the factory has given way to the corporation." (p. 6) The aforementioned Puritan settlements and their burgeoning capitalism is perhaps one of the finest illustrations of this transition from a disciplinary society to one of control.

Alexis de Tocqueville (2004) surmised, with some detectable mirth, that the "entire destiny of America was embodied in the first Puritan to land on its shores." (p. 322) This is not necessarily because the French political philosopher foresaw the American future as one of astute moral righteousness and intense sexual repression, but rather because of the peculiar enchanted disposition the Puritans displayed towards capital (hence the proliferation of Jeremiads). As McCarragher (2019) remarks, "The

Puritan friendship with Mammon portended the course of American history.” (p. 123)

This is perhaps an outsized claim that presupposes the fact that American history is anything but a settled, quantifiable issue, however, it is illustrative of the enduring relationship between capital and religiosity.

In a social and spiritual reterritorialization, Fordism became the American religion. Europe had its own peculiar fealty to capital, but nonetheless did not abscond to Fordist production and social production. This resistance was not for any noble reason, rather, the European aversion to Fordism “was rooted in aristocratic, agrarian, or artisanal values” while “American criticism of mechanization and mass production had no such venerable foundations.” (McCaraher, 2019, p. 433) The rise in this particular method of capitalist production then was partly because of historicism: for the Deleuze-Guattarian, the comparisons of America as the BwO (Body without Organs) seem to write themselves. This thesis, particularly chapter 1, has already dealt with the overcoding of the desiring socius, and so will not dwell much on this issue here. What is of note, however, is the Fordist spurred infatuation with and ultimate mystification of numbers and technocracy.

When Max Weber (2005) identifies that “mysticism may indirectly even further the interests of rational conduct”, he is remarking upon the new primary form of enchantment in modern society: the mysticism of numbers. (p. 68) This can be regarded as an artificial “rationalization of enchantment.” (McCarraher, 2019, p. 434) The technocratic mysticism of numbers has become inescapable; it is a pleat in the fold of the metaphysics of capitalism itself. The ideology of capitalist progress, that is, the faith in unlimited economic expansion and technological development, is underwritten with the

myth of a new secular age. With the financialization of every aspect of the economy, both fiscal and social, it is increasingly clear that the application of mathematical processes has been given a role of outsized importance.

2.2 Casino of the Real

As per the last chapter, Mark Fisher's theory of capitalist realism (CR), as he outlines it, functions more as a description of the symbolic order of capital rather than the Lacanian conception of the Real. There is still the question of what mechanisms (or assemblages, as Deleuze and Guattari might say) are producing this symbolic order, or, in Lacanian terminology, what activity is occurring in the register beyond the limit of the symbolic? This question is obtuse, in that it presents the Lacanian registers as fixed stable systems, as though their creator was not constantly tinkering with their forms. What is "the Real" is not what Lacan says it is, however, by nature of the Real. He says as much in his eleventh seminar: "The Real is that which always lies beyond the automaton..." (Lacan, 1998, p. 54) The Real is that which does not depend on an opinion of it. It is no wonder then that late in Lacan's career of pure thought the psychoanalyst turns to mathematics.

Some of Lacan's follies in mathematics have been covered as fraudulent pseudoscience, most notably by physicists Sokal and Bricmont in their contribution to the science wars *Fashionable Nonsense* (1997). It is not worth delving into the scientific functionalist critique of Lacan proffered by this book, though it is perhaps necessary to concede a few points to the perspective: first, and arguably most importantly, is Lacan's metaphorical usage of imaginary numbers. Lacan's impulse here is sound. Essentially,

Lacan's application treats the complex numbers system (\mathbb{C}) as an extension of the real numbers system (\mathbb{R}), which is congruous with Leibniz's opinion that "From the irrationals are born the impossible or imaginary quantities whose nature is very strange but whose usefulness is not to be despised." (Leibniz as quoted in Plotnitsky, 2002, p. 145) However, there is a limit to this. For example, Lacan's privileging of the square root of -1, or $i^2 = -1$ as the *matheme* representative of the phallic member (and more specifically its potential dysfunction), which has also been expressed as $(L)\sqrt{-1}$, has been more or less accepted as cunning sophistry, even by his defenders such as Plotnitsky. (see: p. 147)

The scientific critique of Lacan is, however, misguided in a philosophical or even linguistic sense. The main issue that Sokal and Bricmont, as well as their supporters ranging from Richard Dawkins and Noam Chomsky, seem to have with the so-called postmodernists is that their forays into scientific method are actually deployed incompetently. This may well be true in a strictly literal sense, but to critique the theory on these grounds refuses to consider them on their own terms. Psychoanalysis can be considered under a myriad of labels: linguistic materialism, psychological empiricism, and so on. But the reality of the practice (and theory) lies somewhere in between these categories. That is to say, each categorical statement or act of noticing on behalf of the psychoanalyst is effectively a judgement. Lacan's introduction of *mathemes* to the realm of psychoanalysis is noble not just in its experimentation, but also in Lacan's recognition that mathematics might be employed in explorations of social reality. As Jean Cavallès

(2021) notes, “If mathematics is in the service of knowledge, it is a service that accepts several masters.” (p. 124)

Mathematics, though it may be applied (car wreck reconstruction forensics comes to mind), has no significant knowledge-content of its own. In this sense, mathematics can become a kind of tautology when extended to the field of logical positivism. For the Kantians, this tautological representation holds well in the application of mathematics, as they might come to serve as the abstract definitions of certain faculties, and as a mathematics function as a particular kind of transcendent logic (in pure mathesis), they might in turn be understood as “the unity of the action of ordering different representations under a common one.” (Kant, 1992, p. 527) This is the image of mathematics as a pure form, to speak of it platonically. This is the seduction of mathematics: a promise of a theory of pure rationality on one hand, and a relation to actually developed and recognized science on the other.

Mathematics are not mentioned once in Mark Fisher’s *Capitalist Realism*, and it seems preposterous to purport to outline capital’s conditioning of the Real without considering one of humankind’s most useful tools in evaluating and more importantly predicting the movements of capital. Ivan Asher has taken note of how IWC has managed to, in theological fashion, refashion the world in its image, thus altering what the very idea of wealth even looks like. Marx’s (1990) long nineteenth century in which capitalist societies presented themselves as “immense collections of commodities” is long gone. (p. 125) Capital is and has always been a process, rather than an object or a thing, and this process is “fundamentally about putting money into circulation to make more money.” (Harvey, 2010) One of Fisher’s main issues is refusing to leave the Marxian

considerations of commodity and consumption behind for what is truly the processural “real” of capital today in the 21st century: securities and futures.

The days of U.S. Treasury bonds are long gone. If one were to time travel back to the opening of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange in 1602, the scene would be altogether quite different from the daily pandemonium of the modern New York Stock Exchange, where instead of paper bonds, “we see three-letter ticker symbols and color-coded numbers flashing across computer screens; instead of aging docents recounting the early days of the American railroad”, we are confronted with images of “young men in front of their Bloomberg terminals hustling to make a trade.” (Ascher, 2016, p. 32) Marx’s monstrous collections of commodities should no longer be the starting point of analysis for the Real of capital, but rather the newly generated monstrous conglomerates of abstract financial contingencies.

Practically, this gives rise to what Ivan Ascher (2016) dubs the “portfolio society”, which differs slightly from the casino of the real proposed here. Ascher’s theory accounts for the advent of financial securities and futures becoming a “form of capital itself.” (15) The Marxian commodity fetishism extends now to totally abstract fixtures, as “financial securities seem to be considered less and less for their specific usefulness... and more and more for their value in exchange -- or more precisely, for their value as hedges in the construction of a properly diversified portfolio.” (p. 36) Ascher is effectively building off of Harry Markowitz’s portfolio theory, which outlined the basic rationale for investors to build a diversified portfolio as risk management. The casino of the real is not simply a portfolio society, as Ascher restricts himself and his analysis

mainly to economic considerations of financial risk management. The casino of the real precludes this, and as such is indebted to Ascher's work.

In recent history, most notably the 2008 financial collapse, the tools and models birthed by the portfolio society have presided over immense economic and social failures. This sort of catastrophe leads some Lacan-adjacent thinkers to proclaim, albeit somewhat tentatively, that capital itself might be a form of hole in the Real. (see: Badiou, 2020, p. 110) This is precisely how the abstract machines of the economy proceed: through the intensive financialization of abstract production. Franco "Bifo" Berardi (2019) notes that this process depends upon the "self-referentiality" of modern monetary systems. (p. 151) Key to this insight is that it is congruous with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of semiocapital operating by way of decoding and overcoding technical machines. Bifo (2018) rightly categorizes coding as a technique of control,⁹ writing that "Code is a tool for the submission of the future to language, enabled by the inscription of algorithms into the flux of language." (p. 28) Furthermore, and most importantly for the casino of the real, the "future is now being written by the algorithmic chain inscribed in technolinguistic automatisms." (p. 28) Semiotic overcoding, the very kind that the previous chapter has dealt with extensively, has the ability to prescribe the future, by "formatting linguistic relations and the pragmatic development of algorithmic signs." (p. 28) Here Bifo (2018) draws an important insight from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the technical overcoding: "Money and language have something in common: they are

⁹ A discursive, socially dispersed control mechanism inherent to Deleuze's notion of the society of control, rather than the Foucauldian disciplinary techniques most dominant in the 19th century.

nothing and yet affect everything.” (p. 29) Money is identified by Bifo as a kind of technical machine with the capacity to overcode asignifying desiring-production: “[money and language] are nothing but symbols, conventions, *flatus vocis*, yet they have the power to persuade human beings to act, to work, and to transform physical things.” (p. 29) This prophetic dimension inscribed onto currency is a necessary axiomatic of the casino of the real.

This is the property of the Real that Fisher did not confront in his work *Capitalist Realism*. It is the random generator that is immaterial and inaccessible to us. As such, what we engage with is not capitalist realism, but rather, the casino of the real. The average subject is essentially at the gaming table, and “bootstrap” ideology essentially criticizes the poorest and most vulnerable of the population for not playing with sufficient risk. Risk as such has long transcended the gaming table. Risk is central to contemporary global capital’s movement and proliferation, and the world’s social landscapes are routinely shaped by risk models and trading in speculative futures. The game of chance becomes a double bind: there are still the down-on-their-luck gamblers rolling the dice who with every punt are embarking on a potentially hazardous adventure, just as there are still the casino operators controlling the house money, and as such will never lose. There is a double articulation in the casino model then, a tension established and blurred between contingency and knowledge. (see: Mackay, 2014, p. 2-4)

With this in mind, it is worth returning briefly to the 2008 financial crisis. Specifically, it is worth looking at one man in particular: a French “quant” (what wall street experts in quantitative finance are called) named Fabrice Tourre. Tourre, only in his late 20s at the time of the collapse, had been “recruited for his mathematical talents

more than for his business savvy or social skills.” (Ascher, 2016, p. 17) Ivan Ascher (2016) sums up the economic system at the time Tourre began climbing up the ranks at Goldman Sachs rather succinctly:

“For several years... the market for synthetic CDOs [collateralized debt obligations] had grown at a rapid pace. A boom in the American real estate market, coupled with the development of new risk-management techniques and significant changes in the regulatory framework governing the use of so-called ‘derivative’ contracts, had made it possible for lenders to extend residential mortgages... to individuals whose credit history had once branded them as too risky. These subprime loans, as they were called, were then pooled together and sold to investors as duly rated slices or ‘tranches’ (a process known as securitization), which were then pooled together with other tranches and securitized anew.”

(p. 18)

Under this system of risk assessment and management, home ownership rates grew at unprecedented levels, topping at an all-time high of 69% in 2005.¹⁰ This of course did not last, and the reasons for such a downturn have been explicated in painstaking detail elsewhere, but what is necessary to articulate here is that it became increasingly clear that the world and social reality as a whole were increasingly at the mercy of institutions such as the Federal Reserve and wall street — the great enunciators of capital. In an email dated March 7th, 2007, Fabrice Tourre wrote to his girlfriend, also a French expat

¹⁰ Home ownership rates taken from the U.S. Census Bureau.

working for Goldman Sachs albeit in their London office, that it was “not looking good for the U.S. subprime business”, and furthermore that a superior had told him “that business is totally dead, and the poor little subprime borrowers aren’t going to live long!!!”¹¹ (quoted in Ascher, 2016, p. 20) This message was sent less than a month before New Century, a real estate trust dealing in subprime lending and securitization, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, which is widely considered the first major event of the subprime mortgage crisis.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Tourre’s emails that have been made public is how little control the financial elite seem to have over the system. That one of his superior’s predicts that the subprime loan business is set to collapse is evidence that the financialization of the economy did not lead to substantive control, but rather, more concentrated methods of prediction. This is one reason why Mark Fisher’s notion of capitalist realism is woefully inept at addressing the Real of capitalism. What is dealt with is not a depressive, Thatcherite aura, but rather, it is a game table at a casino.

This rise in the casino model coincides with the logic of the wager is beginning to transcend the gaming table. This financialization of the economy is essentially the ultimate reification of mathematics, specifically probability calculus. This financialization of the general and social economy that has taken place has resulted in the metaphysics of the gambler dominating and disorienting subjective modes of engaging

¹¹ Details of Tourre’s emails can be found at these two addresses:
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-goldman-emails-idUSTRE63O26E20100425>
https://lexpansion.lexpress.fr/entreprises/les-mails-etonnants-de-fabrice-tourre_1449864.html

with the economy. This was hinted at in an earlier chapter on the semiotic implications of debt, and the economic apparatuses of capture. In the case of financial debt in particular, we can see that what is being articulated by the enunciators of capital, those great capitalist elites, is not necessarily a traditional “bootstrap” ideology, but rather a chastisement of the indebted for not playing the game with enough risk, or the right kind of risk.

Probability calculus then acts as a kind of ontological analysis of the Real of capital. This is primarily the reason for the rise in what Ascher calls “portfolio societies”, but the issue with this, as with Mark Fisher’s theory of capitalist realism, is that it avoids seeking answers to the epistemological dimensions of the crisis of capital. Mathematics and the logic of calculus is entirely accessible to humanity, whereas direct knowledge and influence of the Real is not. The technical and abstract machines of semiocapital that have successfully overcoded (mathematics being inherently asignifying) the financial casino of the real and its social-subjective production induces the kinds of psychiatric stresses that Mark Fisher highlights in *Capitalist Realism*, rather than the symbolic cultural production that is essentially a by-product of a culture that has dethroned God for the sake of high-finance.

The casino metaphor accounts for desiring-production, that occasionally destructive unconscious force discussed in the previous chapter. The dopamine rush of rolling the dice or navigating a particularly risky parlay is recreated in financialization of social production, or what Fisher (2009) calls “business ontology”. (p. 17) The losses are duly felt as well. Like a real casino, there are no windows here, no glimpse of an outside where one’s actions and desires are not exploited and leveraged by various techniques of

control. Religious enchantment has been reterritorialized into the mysticism of numbers, and it seems as though the only resistant line of flight available is through a similar deterritorialization.

2.3 Machinic Withdrawal

In a world of mutated and overcoded enchantment, it is worth discussing one religious ritual which is nearly impossible to reterritorialize into the capitalist sphere (more on this later). There are very practical health benefits that can be accessed through routine observance of Shabbat, or the Sabbath, though this is only a fraction of what will be discussed through this subchapter, as the physical health benefits of a tempered withdrawal from technology and currency lay outside the scope of this research project. The aim in highlighting the observance of the Sabbath in this thesis is to put forth a theory of what I call “machinic withdrawal”. This refers both to a concrete and abstract process of weaning off of the picnolepsy-inducing networks of cyberspace as well as the Deleuze-Guattarian abstract machines which are semiotic in nature but no less real than a computer.

We will return to the abstract and technical machines in a moment, but for now it is perhaps necessary to outline what exactly is required of a person to observe the Sabbath, and what the Sabbath is in its relation to Judaic theology. It is best to follow in Gershom Scholem’s footsteps and avoid making any universal claims for Judaic theology or mysticism. One reason for this is that Judaism’s more theological dimensions are hotly contested. Such is the tradition of all things divine. One less contentious scriptural moment, which is also one of the most practical Talmudic rituals, is the Sabbath, for its

textual delivery is quite explicit and leaves little room for debate. HaShem rested, blessed, and hallowed the seventh day. (Genesis 2:2-3) Furthermore, in the full text of the commandments, it is written: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.” (Exodus 20: 8-9) Despite being generally agreed upon, this specific turn of phrase does contain what might at first appear to be in conflict with the actual observance of Shabbat. This contention exists in the tension found in the difference between labour or work and toil.

It is not redundant for biblical literature to follow intonations of labour with toil, as it does here in the commandments. Philo said this in defense of the Sabbath:

“On this day we are commanded to abstain from all work, not because the law inculcates slackness... Its object is rather to give man relaxation from continuous and unending toil and by refreshing their bodies with a regularly calculated system of remissions to send them out renewed to their old activities.”

(Philo, *On the Special Laws*, II, 60)

The Sabbath here is misunderstood as a rest in service of other work, but what is important in this passage is that Philo introduces the notion that there are different biblical orders of labour, such as “unending toil”. Labouring itself is a sanctified activity, always appearing in scriptural text as a means to an end which itself always climaxes in the observance of the Sabbath: “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest...” (Hebrews 4:11) Toil, what is typically experienced over the course of the six days preceding the Sabbath day, leaves the labouring human with “no mind for ethereal beauty.” (Heschel, 2005, 65)

The Sabbath, for all of its benefits and scriptural importance, has been viewed by some as more of a “temporal burden and even embarrassment.” (Gribetz, 2020, p. 28) As such, there is a plethora of rabbinic literature that seems to emphasize the pleasures of observance. For example, during the height of Roman pagan critiques of Christian claims to a weekly holy day, Rabbis went on the offensive, and “proactively promoted the Sabbath as a day with distinct qualities that were inherent to it and persuaded Jews of this dimension of the Sabbath precisely because they worried that Jews might be drawn to other weekly temporal rhythms...” (p. 27) The narratives that dominated these rabbinical works, Gribetz (2020) notes, often had “rabbinic outsiders confirm the constitutional singularity of the Sabbath day.” (p. 27) In one such narrative, which, it should be noted, still persists in certain shuls, a Roman emperor pays a visit to a rabbi for a Sabbath meal, and of his own accord comes to the conclusion that food is particularly delectable compared to meals prepared any other day of the week. The rabbi agrees with the emperor’s observation, claiming that it is the cosmically sacred qualities of the Sabbath day that give the food its special taste.

For an outside observer, there may be two conclusions drawn from the rabbinical literature on the Sabbath day: the first being that the Sabbath has an outsized importance in the Judaic tradition. Second, that this outsized importance may be the product of desperate rabbis producing an abundance of Sabbath-affirming literature so as to retain their weekly spiritual day through antiquity, early and high middle ages. While these perceptions may be empirically true, the Sabbath day is nonetheless deserving of its highly coveted place in the Judaic tradition. “There are”, Abraham Joshua Heschel (2005) writes, “few ideas in the world of thought which contain so much spiritual power as the

idea of the Sabbath.” (p. 101) In the context of this thesis, the Sabbath is a valuable ritual not only for its strictly spiritual value, but also its ability to access a plateau of machinic withdrawal.

To experience machinic withdrawal is to momentarily sever connections with the dromological and the abstract overcoding of semiocapital. In order for machinic withdrawal to occur, it must be ensured that the ritual observed is incapable of being overcoded. The Sabbath is one such ritual that actively resists the technical machines of semiocapital. Heschel (2005) remarks that:

“For all the idealization, there is no danger of the idea of the Sabbath becoming a fairy-tale. With all the romantic idealization, the Sabbath remains a concrete fact, a legal institution and a social order. There is no danger of its becoming a disembodied spirit, for the spirit of the Sabbath must always be in accord with actual deeds, with definite actions and absentions.”

(p. 16)

The Sabbath cannot be repackaged and sold, nor can it be abstractly overcoded into signifying something that it is not. Asceticism is fundamentally asignifying until the observance is coded. As for the Sabbath, this coding, its universal signification, comes from the Talmudic tradition (religion itself being a technique of control of course), and remains relatively unchanged in its modern iteration and observational requirements. There are, however, certain ritualistic practices that are culpable to semiocapital overcoding. A key example of this phenomenon being the mourner’s kaddish (קדיש – which translates from the Aramaic simply to “holy”).

The mourner's kaddish is traditionally recited for eleven Hebrew months after the death of a parent. In the modern era, most Jewish congregations have adapted to the Sephardic tradition, meaning that the duty of recitation falls to a minyan (מִנְיָן – translated literally to “quorum”). In the Ashkenazi tradition, however, the duty to recite the mourner's hymn typically falls to the first-born son. This is the very simple stipulation that Nathan Englander's novel *Kaddish.com* (2019) revolves around. In the novel, a modern and secular-son-to-Orthodox-parents named Larry bears the burden of reciting the mourner's kaddish for eleven months. From the very start of the novel, while Larry and his sister Dina are sitting Shiva, it is clear to the reader that Larry feels no reverence for his family and his people's traditions. Feeling himself “appraised” every time a visitor so much as looks in his direction, Larry privately tells his sister “I want them not to judge me just because I left their stupid world.” (Englander, 2020, p. 1-2) Englander's prose is terse in the way most monosyllabic dialogue feels, letting Larry's distaste for his own heritage and traditions feel harsh and ineloquent.

This distaste, or perhaps more accurately apathy, towards his heritage leads to one of the most flagrant examples of machinic enslavement in recent fiction: Larry, struggling to reconcile his modern cosmopolitan atheism with his spiritual responsibilities, hires out a stranger on the internet to recite the mourner's kaddish for his father. Thus, *kaddish.com*. This presents a kind of end-of-history moment, not in the Fukuyama neoliberal sense of the term, but as in Kojève's initial philosophy of history. Kojève outlines a teleology of immanence that is to guide the dialectical movement of negativity. In other words, the abstract machine at the heart of any ideology of progress. Kojève's most lasting insight is that Hegel's philosophy of history operates on the axiom

that at some point, perhaps only abstractly, history's contradictions will be resolved, thus bringing the teleology to a close. Kojève (1980) believed that the Japanese embodied what it meant to live at the end of history. That is, to live in a position “according to totally *formalized* values — that is, values completely empty of all ‘human’ content in the ‘historical’ sense.” (p. 162) The material ritual observance of the Sabbath is not something that can be subsumed into the cybernetic capitalist landscape of today, as it resists these aspects by nature of its requirements. Even if emptied of its historical value, like the mourner's kaddish, its materiality (that is, the concrete steps that must be taken to observe the Sabbath),

The kaddish, among many others, is now one of these formalized values, emptied of much of its historical, spiritual, and cultural value. Kaddish.com is not just a wonderfully poignant conceit, it is a real website where one can arrange a techno-kaddish from a cybernetic minyan.¹² The website boasts that it is “the most upstanding and grand kaddish site around” on its homepage, which also features its payment plans and prayer tiers: 75 USD for a thrice daily recitation on the upcoming *yahrzeit* (יאָרצײַט – which translates from the Yiddish roughly to anniversary, but specifically connotes the anniversary of a loved one's death.), a 100 USD option to have the same recitation only annually, a 175 USD option to have the kaddish recited daily for eleven Hebrew months, and finally the top tier which is 250 USD and includes the preceding prayer tier, while also ensuring an annual recitation on the *yahrzeit*. For reference, the most expensive tier is what would be considered an Orthodox kaddish.

¹² The website may be found at this address: <https://www.kaddish.com/>.

There is also the issue of the website being a fundraising front for Yad Eleizer, an Israeli charity group. The issue is less that it is a charity, and more that one might receive a tax receipt for purchasing a kaddish recitation. The communal act of spiritual sanctification has been immersed into the dispersive bureaucratic state machine. Kaddish.com assuages their potential patrons who might need a bit more prodding before donating, informing them that “because the Jewish people are in essence one, with a common soul, when needed one Jew may say kaddish at the behest of another.”¹³ This perversion of Talmudic spiritualism bends towards technological automatism. This issue, however, lies outside the scope of the present research project.

The necessary insight to glean from both Nathan Englander’s novel *Kaddish.com* and the existing website of the same name is that even the most intimate and sacred ritual acts can be overcoded through the technical machines of semicapital. This is not to say that the recitation of the mourner’s kaddish is no longer a sanctified act. Rather, this example is simply illustrative of capital’s capacity to subsume certain sanctified activities. The corporate reconstruction of faith is tailor made for the modern neoliberal era.¹⁴

Of course, religious institutions have always been deeply intertwined with capital at its highest echelons. This has never been a secret, as it is well known that the Catholic church is still the largest non-governmental land-owner in the world, clocking in at

¹³ Text taken from the homepage of <https://www.kaddish.com/>.

¹⁴ See McCarragher, Eugene (2019) p. 243-254 for more on the communion of corporate liberalism and faith in the industrial and post-industrial age.

approximately 177 million acres.¹⁵ The complicity and authority of religious institutions in the perpetuation of disciplinary societies, and their continued discursive roles in societies of control must be acknowledged, however, this too is beyond the parameters of the current research. For now we must shift our attention back to the significance of the Sabbath day and the radical potentiality it holds for machinic withdrawal.

The Sabbath historically has led to possibly a Protestant style democratization of spiritual literacy (not to mention general literacy). First-century historian Josephus praised Moses, who he believed “caused the people to abandon all other employments and to assemble to hear the law and study it carefully every week.” (Josephus as quoted in Millgram, 2018). Millgram remarks on the significance of this for the historical development of Judaism as a whole, writing that “without the Sabbath, when the humble poor and the proud rich met in the synagogue for prayer and instruction, learning and piety might have become the domain of the rabbis and scholars instead of the heritage of the entire people.” (2018) Knowing the laws, or the scriptural instructions, is the first necessary step to creatively employing their radical potentialities. As Paul Virilio (2006) notes, “The West persists in repeating Plutarch’s lesson, ‘obeying a law that it doesn’t even know, but that it could recite in its sleep.’” (p. 89) In order to withstand the “West’s fearsome system of intensive growth”, this system’s axiomatic must be understood. Here Virilio (2006) is especially helpful: “*stasis is death* really seems to be *the general law of*

¹⁵ Estimate taken from University of Notre Dame’s Fitzgerald Institute for Real Estate: <https://realestate.nd.edu/research/church-properties/>.

the world.” (p. 89) The Sabbath, as it happens, manifests its properties primarily through its relationship to time.

Simply put, “Sabbaths and festivals are conceived as days of special significance that stand apart from quotidian time.” (Gribetz, 2020, p. 186) Heschel’s (2005) influential book on the Sabbath makes an important distinction between Shabbat and other major Jewish holidays:

“Passover and the Feast of Booths, for example, coincide with the full moon, and the date of all festivals is a day in the month, and the month is a reflection of what goes on periodically in the realm of nature, since the Jewish month begins with the new moon, with the reappearance of the lunar crescent in the evening sky. In contrast, the Sabbath is entirely independent of the month and unrelated to the moon. Its date is not determined by any event in nature... Thus the essence of the Sabbath is completely detached from the world of space.”

(p. 10)

The Sabbath then stands as the ultimate reprieve from technical civilization, which is simply “man’s conquest of space” in Heschel’s view. (p. 3) For a Deleuze-Guattarian thinker interested in modes of resistance against the production of subjectivity and coding of desires under semiocapital, the important takeaway from this early passage in Heschel’s book is that the Sabbath stands independent of abstract machines and overcoding mechanisms. For Deleuze and Guattari (2008), “representation is always a social and psychic repression of desiring-production” and this repression “is exercised in very diverse ways”. (p. 201) The Sabbath then passes the test of territorial representation, as it is one of the few major western religious rituals that is essentially anti-

representation. This is precisely what is meant by the term “machinic withdrawal”: an interior phenomenon wherein the principle factor is an earned detachment (*décollement*, for the Deleuze-Guattarians) from the picnoleptic landscape of semiocapital.¹⁶

Simply unplugging from the cybernetic matrix for a sustained period of time will likely have its benefits. Combined this with the ascetic rigour of the Sabbath, and this observance should surely amount to something: the natural question then is what? It is worth quickly reiterating the process of “territorialization” that Deleuze and Guattari set out in their two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Territorialization broadly refers to the machinic processes which function to ensure some state of stasis. In other words, this is a process that keeps some state of system in place. It is useful, as some cybernetic theorists have proposed, to imagine territorialization as a negative feedback system – by which negative feedback stabilizes a given process, and thus reproducing the initial horizon or limitations of the system. Deterritorialization, then, refers to the contrary trends and lines of flight that escape these systems. As Deleuze and Guattari (2011) write, “[deterritorialization] is the movement by which ‘one’ leaves the territory. It is the operation of the line of flight.” (p. 591)

The Sabbath, as a personal phenomenon, holds the radical potentiality of deterritorialization. To be sure, it represents not a total or absolute deterritorialization, which may or may not even be possible beyond abstract rhetorical posturing. Instead, the deterritorialization inherent in the potential of the Sabbath primarily affects the “regime

¹⁶ Picnolepsy being the subjective effect of consciousness produced by speed; that is, the dromological speed of technical civilization. For more on the picnoleptic, see: Virilio, Paul. (2009). *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e).

of subjective signs”, and is almost exclusively a “consciousness-related deterritorialization, which is positive but only in a relative sense.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2012, p. 591) A deterritorialization becomes negative only when it “operates either by principal reterritorializations that obstruct lines of flight, or by secondary reterritorializations that segment and work to curtail them.” (p. 592)

The goal of machinic withdrawal is not to wildly deterritorialize. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari (2011) warn against just that in the chapter “How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?”: “A BwO that shatters all the strata, turns immediately into a body of nothingness, pure self-destruction, whose only outcome is death.” (p. 162) This quote is reminiscent of the issue of desiring-fascism taken up in chapter 1. In any case, the warnings against precipitous deterritorialization should be heeded. Capital tends towards this terminal non-space, towards what is “not a promised and pre-existing land, but a world created in the process of its tendency, its coming undone, its deterritorialization.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2008, p. 322) This trend results in “ever more incomprehensible experiments in commodification, enveloping, dismantling, and circulating every subjective space.” (Land, 2011, p. 339) These “experiments” are the artificial reterritorializations spoken of by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*.

As such, the focus of intersubjective and personal deterritorialization through methods like the observance of the Sabbath should be on productive and creative conjunctive synthesis. Heschel (2005) notes the importance of this creative dimension of the Sabbath day when he writes: “It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.” (p. 10) It is through machinic withdrawal,

an effect achievable through routine spiritual introspection and short-term asceticism, that this creative synthesis opens up to us, who for six days of the week toil under picnoleptic circumstances.

The three subchapters in this chapter have precipitated in the proposal of machinic withdrawal as a form of resistance to semiocapital. It may seem minor, and perhaps totally inconsequential to some readers; however, it must be remembered that from minor subjective dissimilarities emerge radical divergencies, much in the same fashion that the slightest perturbations make a circuitous dynamic system completely erratic. As small as it seems, the idea of the Sabbath presents us with one of the few ways to detach from the vulgarity inherent to the machinic enslavement of the symbolic order of semiocapital.

Conclusion

Any serious engagement with and application of Deleuze and Guattari and their philosophy requires a reconciliation and coordination between contingency and theory. There is then a tension that arises. In fact, one might go as far as saying this tension is foreclosed in the relationship between the nature of experience and philosophical or theoretical meaning. The Hegelians among us, and perhaps the Marxists who have read Marx, will undoubtedly attempt to resolve this tension, whether by “philosophically confirming the aleatory nature of the experience” or by “subsuming the personal under a theoretical meaning.” (Jameson, 2016, p. IX) What I attempt to retain in this thesis is this inherent tension and its vitality to the discourse at large.

If there is one overarching message that emerges from this work, it is this: we must stop being universalizing, and start being specific. Deleuze (1995) helps us articulate this: “whenever we hear the words ‘nobody can deny...,’ ‘everyone would agree that...,’ we know a lie or slogan’s about to follow.” (p. 87) This message radiates through the works of Félix Guattari, for whom nothing should be taken as a universal, or in common parlance, a given. For these two thinkers, life is a work in progress, a project in becoming, rather than being. This labour of life means making a tireless commitment to exploring potentialities and possibilities, to examining random events, or what Guattari might call “singular points”, that proffer new directions and modes of thinking.

This embracing of singular points is what initially led me to critique the late Mark Fisher’s theory of capitalist realism. Fisher cannot see any singular points, rather, only recycled symbols and a culture that is in severe imaginative decline. There is some truth to this, which is likely why Fisher’s theory and writings are so tempting and have gained

the traction that they have. Fisher's main issue, beyond confusing the Symbolic for the Real, is his abandonment of Deleuze-Guattarian conjunctive synthesis, or at least his inability to recognize that the symbolic order of capital will perpetually include and produce new modes of subjectivity. Certain modes of resistance will with age become unfashionable, but capitalism "becoming ever more tightly identified with its own self-surpassing... will always, inevitably, be the latest thing." (Land, 2011, p. 625)

One of the aims of this thesis was to highlight certain ways that capital manages to perform these abstract movements, this Deleuzian "self-surpassing" nature. The answer, as far as the scope of this research is concerned, is a process that Guattari called semiotization. This is why psychoanalysis must be interrogated, or, at very least, inverted, just as Marx attempted to do with Hegel's dialectics and philosophy of spirit. As Guattari (2009) writes, psychoanalysis is "the best of all capitalist drugs." (p. 147) The therapist's couch, as Deleuze and Guattari saw it, was one of the sacred sites of semiotization. Their sustained critique of psychoanalytic practice found in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* inspired this thesis and my effort to shift the psychoanalytic critique into the realm of the socius. There are a number of critiques leveraged against the Oedipal structure in clinical and theoretical practice, but fewer that deal directly with the "social Oedipus". This is why one subchapter in this thesis took up the issue of the "workplace family" rhetoric, as it is as blatant an effort to Oedipalize the socius as semiocapital has to offer.

Schizoanalysis deals more with the concrete reality of these abstract concepts, "in other words, a political struggle on all fronts of desiring-production." (Guattari, 2009, p. 147) This is another key focus of the preceding study: desiring-production, and its

manipulation under the fluxes of semiocapital. The axiomatic of semiocapital is essentially that which reifies desire and its production. Theweleit, in his two volumes of *Male Fantasies*, offers an excellent example of how desiring-production can be artificially reterritorialized into militant and fascist desires. Authoritarianism is on the rise while states of exception are becoming the standard. Understanding the mechanisms and language by which desiring-production is overcoded and reterritorialized in the service of the eternal perpetuation of capital and its various regimes of signs is just as important as ever before.

What we are left with is a deceptively simple question: how does one go about resisting the flows and codings of semiocapital? Here it seems Mark Fisher was correct: ethical critiques of capital, which take aim at ideological and physical violence, poverty, and man-made famine can be dialectically crushed under the social force of capitalist realism as “naive utopianism” (20). Beyond the rhetorical, the repackaging and commodification of social justice movements is well documented elsewhere (in this Deleuze-Guattarian realm we would call this repackaging artificial reterritorialization). The second chapter of this thesis deals with this issue, which can essentially be thought of as the deterritorialization and subsequent reterritorialization of enchantment and faith, or the dethroning of God for the sake of data and mathematics.

This rationalization of faith is simply another effect produced by the flows and fluxes of semiocapital. There is nothing particularly special about this reterritorialization other than the fact that it is both a micro and macro political and subjective (applicable to both intersubjective and group subjectivity) development. This, the secular age of post-industrial capital, is just as enchanted as the high medieval era Kantorowicz wrote of in

The King's Two Bodies (1957). The issue is that the faith has been displaced. Certain sanctified rituals, such as the mourner's Kaddish, have been incorporated into the cybernetic landscape of the 21st century, effectively emptying them of their historical and cultural value. As I have shown, the rationalization of enchantment has allowed for the financial and technological dimensions of capitalist culture to subsume the sanctified.

It is in this light that the Sabbath emerges as an invaluable event. The Sabbath is one of humankind's only tools in the sanctification of time, and one of its only reprieves from the pursuit of conquering space. Beyond its religious and meditative dimensions, the observance of the Sabbath allows for a controlled deterritorialization, one where the resulting reterritorializations are free from the coding mechanisms of semicapital's flows and capitalists' enunciations. This is the first step in the liberation of desire, and by proxy the unconscious, from semiotization. The hope of this work is that we will begin to think hard and critically about our lines of flight, which are always at risk of abandoning their imaginative potential for conjunctive synthesis in favour of turning into simple lines of death.

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Glossary

Assemblage – A crucial term for engaging with the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. The assemblage is a constituted identity that is intrinsically bound to a multiplicity. The best Deleuze-Guattarian example of an assemblage is the construct of desire. For Deleuze and Guattari (2008), desire is key to the multiplicity that produces identities, rather than identity producing desire: “desiring-production is pure multiplicity, that is to say, an affirmation that is irreducible to any sort of unity”. (p. 43) This is why desire functions as an assemblage: it is the immanent cause (production of identity) while simultaneously producing transgressing lines of flight (desiring-production) that escape the limits proposed by the assemblage.

Capitalist Realism – The late Mark Fisher’s most enduring idea is that of capitalist realism, which can most easily be described as a nihilistic affect induced by the imposed realities of capital. To experience capitalist realism is to properly internalize Thatcher’s claim that “there is no alternative.” Capitalist Realism is, it should be mentioned, an essence and not a method, to paraphrase Fisher.

Casino of the Real – This is, to my knowledge, original terminology. The use of the term “Real” is Lacanian by intent. What is denoted by this term is the casino model transcending the gaming table; risk is central to contemporary global capital’s movement and proliferation, and the world’s social landscapes are routinely shaped by risk models and trading in speculative futures. The game of chance becomes a double bind; there are still the down-on-their-luck gamblers rolling the dice who with every punt are embarking on a potentially hazardous adventure, just as there are still the casino operators controlling the house money, and as such will never lose. There is a double articulation in

the casino model then, a tension established and blurred between contingency and knowledge.

Deterritorialization – There is a process outlined by Deleuze and Guattari called “territorialization”, which broadly refers to the machinic processes which function to ensure some state of stasis; that is, to keep some state of system in the same place. It is useful, as some cybernetic theorists have proposed, to imagine territorialization as a negative feedback system – by which negative feedback stabilizes a given process, and thus reproducing the initial horizon or limitations of the system. Deterritorialization, then, refers to the contrary trends and lines of flight that escape these systems.

Micropolitics – Micropolitics are effectively inseparable from macropolitics, and as Deleuze and Guattari (2012) write, “every politics is simultaneously a macro and a micro politics.” (p. 213) Guattari (2009) further elaborates this point by indicating that “the despotism which exists in conjugal or family relationships arises from the same kind of libidinal disposition that exists in the broadest social field.” (p. 156) The concept of micropolitics appears in this thesis largely in the context of fascism and the production of fascist desire found in the psychoanalytic work of Klaus Theweleit.

Semiocapital – This term, popularized by Franco “Bifo” Berardi, refers to the mode of cultural production largely centered around the production and diffusement of signs, hence the prefix “semio”. Simple economic and social production, such as the focus of Marx’s critique of the political economy of capitalism, is being supplanted by a semiotic form of production. The term semiocapital seeks to form a coherence around the new *gestalt* of the financialized economy; that is, a deterritorialized economic territory which is composed of semiotically charged recombinable fragments.

Curriculum Vitae

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Publications and Creative Output:

- Presented a collection of original poetry (since published in *Vox*, the UNBSJ literary journal) during the 2020 AAUE conference.
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Presentations:

- Presented (unpublished) paper on *Madame Bovary*, literature and the noumenon, and Arthur Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation* (2019, AAUE Conference).
- Submitted an undergraduate thesis on the limitations of adapting literature to the screen titled *Twice Told Tales: Twice-Told Tales: a Reappraisal of Textual Fidelity Through Alfred Hitchcock's Rebecca (1940)* (UNBSJ, April 2020).
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