Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

Kaput: Escaping the head
Bas, Felix

KAPUT

Escaping the Head

Table of contents

Introduction
Hegel the sorcerer

There is a meme going around in online philosophy spaces which speculates that Hegel is the antichrist who puppeteered the entirety of the 20th century from his grave through his dialectics, a form of chaos magic.[1] Besides this being entirely ridiculous, for me this is a valuable speculation. It is interesting to look at Hegel as not only a philosopher but also a hermeticist.

Hermeticism is hard to define, but we could describe it as a middle position between the pantheistic idea that God is everything and the Judeo-Christian idea that God is utterly transcendent. In this middle position, hermeticism would affirm the transcendence of God's form, but still acknowledge his involvement in the world.[2] This position could be signified by the phrase:

> God requires creation in order to be God[3]

If we swapped the word God with spirit in this sentence, it would be hard to not acknowledge the closeness to Hegel's thought, where spirit knows itself in and for itself as a totality.[4] The case of Hegel being this hermeticist is made by Alexander Magee in his work *Hegel and the hermetic tradition.*

---

[1] Deleted, "Reddit - Dive into Anything," n.d., https://www.reddit.com/r/PhilosophyMemes/comments/oo3e3r/the_hegel_understander/.

[2] Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Cornell University Press, 2008), p 8-9.

[3] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition.*, p 9.

[4] In the *Encyclopedia* Hegel writes: "God is God only in so far as He knows himself; this self-knowledge is, further, a self-consciousness in man and man's knowledge of God, which becomes man's self-knowledge in God.
Georg Wilhelm Fredrich Hegel, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part 1, Science of Logic* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), § 298.

> If it seems implausible that Hegel would so closely identify his own philosophical approach with any sort of mysticism at all, consider again the following lines from one of the *Zusatze* to the *Encyclopedia Logic:* "It should… be mentioned here that the meaning of the speculative is to be understood as being the same as what used in earlier times to be called 'mystical.'[5]

Hegel has been surrounded throughout his life with influences of hermeticism, Swabian pietism, alchemy, and other forms of thought that we would nowadays call esoteric. We can see this influence constantly coming back in his writing. During his time in Jena, he was expressly interested in mysticism, especially that of the German mystic Jakob Boehme. Hegel is for instance indebted to Boehme for the idea that selfhood develops in opposition to the not-self.[6] The whole movement of Hegel's philosophy finds its root in Boehmean theosophy, especially the motor of this movement, negativity.[7]

So why is it important to see Hegel's philosophy as mystical? When we find ourselves dissatisfied with the Hegelian way of seeing the world and start looking for holes that let something other in, we notice that there are no such holes. If we approach Hegel as only a philosopher or a logician and discuss his philosophy as philosophers and logicians, we won't be able to escape. The dialectic instils its own logical world; it does not merely provide an argument, it summons itself in the world as a closed form.

Hegel needs a boogeyman

As Hegel says in the *phenomenology of spirit*:

> Truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made.[8]

The dialectic can only be explained and grasped from inside its own logical world as a movement that you go through, there is no outside to it. Every explanation that tries to place itself in a meta position to it, will miss the real movement. When understood, it becomes hard to critique the dialectic because you get caught up in its logic, and in this dizzying maze finding a way out is almost impossible. Your very critique exists within this logical form and helps perpetuate it; it is hard enough to navigate this interior, let alone get out of it. I claim that the instilling of a logical world is no longer the work of a philosopher, but that of a sorcerer. The

---

[5] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition.*,p138.

[6] Fichte also was a follower of Boehme in this regard

[7] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, p140-142 .

[8] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1977), p29.

phenomenology of spirit can be read as a grimoire[9], it summons a form into the world. Yet, this form is not a demonic spirit or some monster we are used to hearing about when we talk about magic. The form is the dialectical logical form.

In order for us to make it possible to think beyond, we need to make this abstract dialectical form more concrete, we need a vessel that can carry its features and accentuate them in order to make them visible. This vessel I found in the figure of the head. In this thesis, I will present the figure of the head as a monstrification of Hegel's system to show how pervasive it is. With the help of, what I would like to call, a *metaphorm*[10], I will explain why escaping Hegel's system is so incredibly difficult. I will do this through the exploration of often tried modes of escape that have failed.

The head is no mere analytical metaphor, it does not only describe Hegel's system. It also works as a sigil, a sign that can burn up and when the head burns it makes Kaput. The text explodes what it analyzes[11], by making Hegel into this monster, we create the opportunity for openings, for futures within the philosopher that has no future.[12]

The layout of this thesis

My first step in this monstrification will be to explain the interiority that we are stuck in and want to escape from, the head. I will lay bare its features, futures, history and infrastructure. I will link the workings of the head to Hegelian theosophy, and explain how it relates to the Biblical idea of the Godhead and Hegelian dialectics. I will also introduce the head's shadow figure, Kaput. Kaput is part of the symbolism of the head, as it foreshadows its demise, in the beginning it is a mere sign of something to come, and we will return to it in the last chapters.

The second chapter will explain our main problem, the impossibility of escape from the head, which will be demonstrated through an explication of the consequences of different modes of escape and how they fail in providing a way out. I will switch from theoretical frameworks to real world examples to make this as clear as possible. We will end with our main research question: Is escape possible from a structure as pervasive as the head?

In the next chapter, I will provide an answer to this question in the form of the bug and the concept of its virality, with the help of the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. I

---

[9] A dark magical text that can be used to summon demonic creatures.

[10] It is not a mere metaphor but also a meta-form that metamorphs from a head to kaput.

[11] Semtexts or semiotic bombs.

[12] A common discussion with regards to Hegel is the lack of possibility of a future in his philosophy; see Catherine Malabou's work *The future of Hegel.* Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic* (Psychology Press, 2005)*.*

will show how this bug can *make the head Kaput*. This bug I find in the Derridian figure of *Persephone/perce oreille,* the ear piercer that can find a place within the head without being swallowed by its movement.

This bug is the thing that the head is blind to, it misses the missing of it. The head does not notice that through its movement it sheds a residue, something that can not be integrated by its dialectics. This residue is a *caput mortuum,* a term used in alchemy for the impurities left behind after sublimation. Here we encounter again the shadow figure of Kaput, that proves to be already present as an outside on the inside of the head.

After this theoretical explanation, I will try to make this all more concrete and give examples in the material realm, the realm of discourse, and the sociocultural realm. I will end with a warning about the limits of our new-found mode of escape, in order to highlight how volatile these movements are. So let us start with getting familiar with the interiority of the head.

1 The head

What is a head? As an entity within the confines of this text, the head fulfils many functions. It is a symbol of power, sovereignty, and hierarchy, a monadic point that encompasses and dictates a whole, unity or universality. There are many heads we can think of, like patriarchy and monarchy, but also less obvious ones like capitalism[13] or logocentrism. The first function of the head is that it symbolises the totality of a system and its totalitarian aims.

Secondly, it functions as a visual metaphor, the head evokes an image of something that protrudes, sticks out and feels incredibly vulnerable.[14] When we look at the head in the corporeal sense, it shows all its human features. It not only sees, smells, hears and thus monitors the world, it also structures the world through its own interpretation. It polices and builds at the same time. Its mouth decides what's real, its eyes make up what can be spoken, and its brain structures this into a matrix of logic and by that, it deems its own judgement essential.

The last function is found in the multiplicity of the word, and it is why the title of this work Kaput is brought forth. Kaput is the Proto-Indo-European[15] root of the word head and is found throughout different languages. *Cabeza, cabbage, head, hoofd, heafod, capitalism, crown, chef,* there are many heads to be found.

Yet there is one particularly strange occurrence of this root where its beginning has re-appeared in history. The term kaput is used in many languages to say that something is broken, dysfunctional, or that its use has ended.[16] This use originated from a French game called *piquet* that stems from the 16th century and is played to this day. The term *être capot* in the game means that a player has completely lost.[17] This French use of the word *capot* comes from a Latin use of the sentence *ad caput* which literally means to come to a head. The term here takes the form of an ending but also dysfunction and destruction, it signifies the head as a burned up remains

---

[13] The headedness of capitalism for example, which coincidently has its origins in the Latin word for head *caput,* is found in the fact that capital dictates the whole and carries sovereignty within its system.

[14] The head of state protrudes as a vulnerable figure, the head on a human is prone to injury, the king in chess is the only piece with which the game can be lost.

[15] What is also interesting to me is the phenomenon of a proto-language. Proto-languages are retroactively constructed through a comparative method. It retroactively instils an origin in history through the construction of a completely new language. There is a dialectical progression to this that has more significance that I can pinpoint at the moment.

[16] German kaputt, French capot, Dutch kapot.

[17] The Dutch *kapot spelen* in the card game *hartenjagen* has the same meaning.

that in alchemy is referred to as a *caput mortuum*.[18] Kaput serves as a shadow of the head, it is its beginning but also its end, it appears as a reference to a finality within a concept that tries to act as a totality. It is not an image, not a symbol, but it turns the head in a sigil, something that summons its own end.

Kaput is a kind of monster, the term monster shares the same root as to demonstrate, it is a figure that tells us something. Yet in this telling it shows itself as unrepresentable within the categories that we have today[19], as Jeffrey Cohen writes in his work *7 Theses on Monsters*:

> A mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition, demanding instead a "system" allowing polyphony, mixed response (difference in sameness, repulsion in attraction), and resistance to integration…[20]

This form of the head is so pervasive that it evades definition.[21] In order to conceptualise the abstract form of the head and the concrete material effects of this form, we have to give it its body. We have to *monstrify* it into the monster that is Kaput and, only as the figure of the monster, can it demonstrate the ambiguity of its existence.

> No monster tastes of death but once. The anxiety that condenses like green vapor into the form of the vampire can be dispersed temporarily, but the revenant by definition returns. And so the monster's body is both corporal and incorporeal; its threat is its propensity to shift.[22]

This monstrification makes us able to ground our idea of the head without getting lost in the abstract. A monster is both a warning and a sign, a warning against something but also a sign of the possibility of something new. That is what I want to tell with this thesis, it is a warning against the form of the head. Yet, in its explication

---

[18] In alchemy, this is the residue that is left behind after trying to purify a substance, it is also used to refer to a type of paint that was popular in earlier times called mummy brown. As the name suggests, this paint was made by grounding up mummies, which is why it is no longer used today.

[19] The zombie is neither living or dead, it is undead.

[20] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)", in *University of Minnesota Press eBooks*, 2018, 3–25, https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.4, p 7.

[21] We have to not forget we are talking about a metaphorical visualisation of Hegel's dialectical system.

[22] Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)", p 5.

it shows the head's shadow side of kaput that, like a sigil, opens up the space from where something new can be thought.[23]

The system that the head signifies has of course been explained before through other signs, like Western Christianity, where the symbol of the head would be God. But the head is more pervasive, Christianity is just one of its modes. It has as a feature through which it can keep an ideology like Christianity in society through a constant emptying of itself in materiality and reifying itself as an ideology from that materiality. This constant movement is in Christianity only singularly represented within the moment of kenosis. But this form of kenosis is present in many other hegemonic structures besides Christianity, like logocentrism, patriarchy and capitalism. In order to show this, we will look at how the form of the head has emerged within history through Hegelian philosophy and theology.

1.1 The history of the head

In the way that the head structures the world, it does not follow a chronological order. Moments within the head have no point of origin but only an anarchic event as their cause, from this introductory event on it takes on the form of an always already present logical structure. This moment of introduction, or anarchic event, is the moment of the introduction of Hegel's dialectical logic. Hegel is the conjurer of the head and the reason that a lot of philosophers of modernity, who are aiming to escape from sovereign structures, do so while reacting to his way of structuring the world. It is also Hegel's theosophy that shows us how the head as a form is constituted, and how it is more pervasive than Gods. But before we delve in to this, let's have a look at how Hegel became this important figure for modern philosophers.

Hegel's 18th century philosophy was reinvigorated during the early 20th century by French-Russian philosophers Alexander Kojeve, Alexandre Koyre, and French philosopher Jean Hyppolite. These three gave lectures on Hegel at the Sorbonne in Paris, and through these lectures provided a new generation of French philosophers with either their greatest friend or their greatest foe. This new wave of French philosophers consisted for a large part of immigrants, women, Jews, and people

---

[23] Cohen says: "The monster polices the borders of the possible". This is exactly what Kaput represents as a figure, and through the recognition of it as this figure, we can start thinking about what our options are. Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)", p 12.

who did not conform to heterosexuality[24]. Because they were all outsiders to the status quo, they were almost forced to deal with Hegel's system that purported to be a totality yet still seemed to exclude their identities.[25]

But Hegel's dialectic has an almost magical quality to prove itself right no matter how hard you fight against it, or as Foucault describes it:

> Truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.[26]

These philosophers later focused their works on escaping hegemonic structures like phallogocentrism, patriarchy, capitalism, and even general structuralisations of ontology. These are all things we can call heads. Hegel with his dialectic made it hard for many of these philosophers to escape from these heads, as it transforms these oppressive structures into necessary moments within the dialectical development of history. An escape results in the negation of the oppressive moment which shapes what can exist in the next moment as the older moment is uplifted, retained, and dissolved.[27] If we want to flee from Hegel by turning our back to him, his head will appear right in front of us. Hegel's logic is precisely how the form of a head can work to re-instill itself. Let us take a closer look at what we mean when we speak of this form.

---

[24] Derrida, Foucault, Cixous, Bataille, Levinas, and Althusser, are some of the names that fall under this categorisation. A lot of these philosophers were, as it was called Pieds *Noir* , which is a term for people with a French heritage who were born in Algeria. Derrida in his piece *The monolinguism of the other* describes how he as a Pied Noir and a Jew fell into a void of origin where no place really accepted him as being his homeland. For always designated as an outsider or other.

[25] This exclusion becomes most apparent in Hegel's master-slave dialectic and Hegel's idea of the family. Derrida writes about this in his work Glas where he tries to show how Hegel's family and the subjectivity that the man gains within this family is entirely dependent on the negated subjectivity of the woman. The system needs this fundamental exclusion in order to function.

[26] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of knowledge* (Psychology Press, 2002), p391.

[27] These are three aspects of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* within the dialectic.

1.2 God has died twice
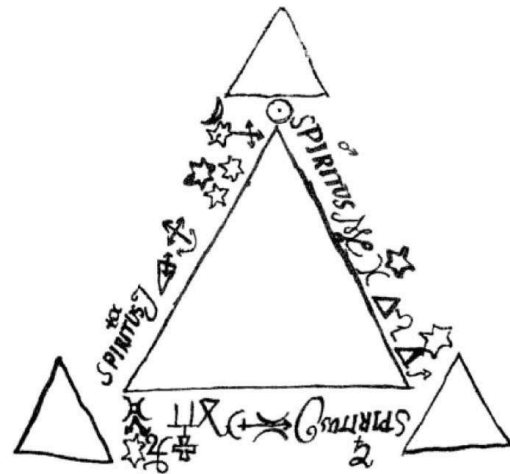
A head produces its own boundaries, its death has no meaning. The king is dead long live the king, God is dead, but his presence is still felt. Why is this the case?
A head as its own entity doesn't have a digestive system, it can feed itself through its mouth but has no way of dealing with this content. The only way out is the way in, so when its interiority is overfull or disturbed, it can only vomit itself out. This vomiting is not a simple emptying motion, it is a built-in mechanism that takes the form of a crisis that would usher in the seeming end of the head. Yet it is exactly this crisis through which the head can reconstitute its hegemony. This vomiting is a kenotic move.

1.21 The empty Godhead

> One day, the gods withdraw. Of their own volition, they withdraw their divinity, which is to say, their presence. They won't simply leave, they won't go somewhere else, they'll withdraw their own presence – they'll disappear within it.[29]

The kenotic move is the ability to empty oneself while perpetuating one's own boundaries, it's a self-preserving logic. Jean-Luc Nancy uses the concept of kenosis to describe how the death of God merely meant the self-emptying of Christianity into secular modernity, not the negation of Christianity itself. This emptying implies that the husk that is emptied remains, this husk is the boundary of the system of which Christianity is merely one of its interior contents. This idea I want to take

---

[28] *Appendix 2: Hegel's Occult Drawing*, December 29, 2017, *Al-Islam.Org*, December 29, 2017, https://www.al-islam.org/spirituality-modern-philosophy-hegels-spirituality-muhammad-legenhausen/appendix-2-hegels-occult.

[29] Nancy, Jean-Luc. *Expectation: Philosophy, Literature*. Fordham University Press, 2017, p25.

further. The concept is already present in Hegel, although somewhat hidden. This kenotic moment is essentially the moment of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. Hegel talks about *Entäußerung* as the externalisation of the Absolute Spirit, or alienation.

> Spirit has in it the two sides which are presented above as two converse propositions: one is this, that substance alienates itself from itself and becomes self-consciousness; the other is the converse, that self-consciousness alienates itself from itself and gives itself the nature of a Thing, or makes itself a universal Self. Both sides have in this way encountered each other, and through this encounter their true union has come into being. The externalisation [or kenosis] of substance, its growth into self-consciousness, expresses the transition into the opposite, the unconscious transition of necessity.[30]

Within Hegel's theosophy, this *Entäußerung* is God's becoming other, a divine sacrifice, the moment of kenosis[31]. This intertwines the concept of alienation, which is the negative moment or the moment of othering within the dialectic, with the concept of kenosis. For the concept of God, this means that within the trinity, God the Father has negated itself into the concrete representation of Christ, god as nature. His form as the essential and 'superabundant Father'[32] is no longer the form that is present. Yet this negation, the othering of God into Christ is again negated, and dialectically sublated, into the form of the Holy Spirit the moment Christ dies on the cross.

We can find this in Hegel's own words, albeit indirectly, in a piece of text that has only survived through one of his students Karl Rozenkranz called *The Triangle fragment.* I will pull a couple lines from this fragment in order to make this point clear:

> In the Son God is cognizant of Himself as God. He says to Himself: I am God. The within-itself ceases to be a negative.

> … the Realm of the Son of God is also wholly the Realm of the Father. The self consciousness of God is not a withdrawal back within himself and the otherness of the Son, just as it is not an otherness of his withdrawal back within himself as simple God, but his intuition in the Son is the intuiting of the simple God as his own self…

---

[30] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of spirit* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1977), p 457.

[31] This is based on the Boehmian realisation that god has to become other to itself in order to realise itself.

[32] Catherine Malabou, *The future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic* (Psychology Press, 2005), p 94.

> What stands over against the Son in his majesty as he intuits the Earth, is the majesty of God himself, the looking back and returning home to him. And for the consecrated Earth this self-consciousness of God is the Spirit…
>
> This Spirit is here the eternal mediator between the Son returned unto the Father, who is now wholly and only one, and between the being of the son within himself, or of the majesty of the Universe. The simplicity of the all embracing Spirit has now stepped into the middle and there is now no distinction any more. For the Earth as the self-consciousness of God is now the Spirit, yet it is also the eternal son whom God intuits as Himself. Thus has the holy triangle of triangles closed itself.[33]

What has become essential in this sublation towards Spirit is a lack, the power of God has become the power of the negative. The opposition of god as concrete appearance and God as abstract essence has now become the effect of what the kenotic move caused. This opposition only exists after the kenotic move but instils itself as always-already present the moment it happens, this is the event of the anarchic birth of the head.

This is where God has died and has become what we call a head, something that puts itself forth as essential not through a power of giving, but through a logical necessity. We are left not with God as essence or representation but god as form (Spirit), with a logic that does not reveal itself to us through revelation but is a logical necessity in its form.[34]

> The identification of God with the dialectical method, even if it did not signify that He was identified with man's act of life, implies a scarcely acceptable limitation, even the abolition of God's sovereignty, which makes even more questionable the designation of that which Hegel calls mind, idea, reason, etc., as God.[35]

In this identification, we lose God the Father or the onto-theological God of substance, but we also lose god as representation within the crucifixion of Christ. What we gain is god in the form of thought thinking itself or the self consciousness of god.[36]

---

[33] H. S. Harris, "Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801–1806)," in *Oxford University Press eBooks*, 1983, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198246541.001.0001, p 186-187.

[34] It does not reveal itself through a communication with a deity, it has no revealer, it is always already revealed the moment it explicates itself.

[35] Karl Barth, Die protestantische Theologie in 19. Jahrhundert (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1947), Protestant Theology from Rousseau to Ritschl, translated by B. Cozens and H. H. Hartwell (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p 304.

[36] This is how Aristotle represented his unmoved mover, an idea that Hegel picked up.

> The necessity to which the Entäußerung of the movement of kenosis is submitted, is a necessity which deprives the Father of his fullest possibilities. Accordingly, Hegel's God is a God who does not promise.[37]

Hegel's god has no future, it can not promise us anything outside itself, as nothing can exist outside representation within its system. As Catherine Malabou puts it: '… the Hegelian God may make himself present without ever happening.'[38] The negativity that is present in what Hegel has made of god, serves as a sign of an absence of future. God through its self-negation has sublated itself into its formal structure, which I want to call a head. As he loses here for me also his name and gains the title of the head as its new signifier.

The main concern of this thesis is not theology, yet I have to recognise that its history lies within it. The death of God the Father has meant the leakage of our discourse from the theological into the material, from his divinity to its infrastructures, its altars. His sublation into the form of Spirit or head has meant that this leakage is now constant between the opposition of ideology and materiality.[39] It is not only the ideology of Christianity that with kenosis can leak into the material or the real, it is part of all forms of ideology. Hegel introduces with his dialectic the neurotic movement of logical necessity of its own form into the world. With the dialectic, we are left with the form of god, which is the anxiety of thought thinking itself. This anxiety of thought is the constant dialectical movement between the ideological and material reality that totalizes the world in its form. It structures the world through the binary of essence and appearance, where there is a constant retroactive insertion of an essential element that acts as the cause of some material phenomenon. Yet this essential element is the effect of material reality, the cause becomes its own effect.[40] In this way the head has its effect on us without ever being present, it leaves us with a dread that has no object. Let us look at some practical examples of this movement in history.

---

[37] Malabou, *The future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic, 102*.

[38] Malabou, *The future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic, 102*.

[39] The two flow into each other osmotically as through a semipermeable membrane.

[40] The divine triangle for Hegel becomes here not a mere rigid structure but a triangle of triangles, a triangle that consists of movement and doubles itself. This can be visualised by a fractal that is called the Sierpinski triangle, and it is this form alone without its content that represents the form of thought thinking itself. Hegel takes his inspiration from the German mystic Jacob Boehme who originally placed this negative power within the idea of the holy trinity. Through Boehme, Hegel finds the dialectic vitality that has become the main feature of what we call the head. This connection between Hegel and Boehme is further explained in the work *The first German Philosopher* by Cecilia Muratori.

Cecilia Muratori, *The first German philosopher: The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as Interpreted by Hegel* (Springer, 2016), 201- 219.

We can begin with the way in which the logic of Western Christianity has secularized within contemporary society. The Christian logic has *deterritorialized and reterritorialized*[41] its content in order to retain its form. For example, Capitalism can be seen as a mode of Christian logic, where the metaphorical original sin, the thing that made us born with guilt into the world, has emptied itself and restructured itself into, not a metaphorical guilt to God, but a physical debt to the system of Capitalism. According to Walter Benjamin in his work Capitalism as Religion[42], capitalism serves to perpetuate the same anxieties and torments that Religion perpetuated and claimed to have solutions for. Capitalism is essentially religiously structured, a divine religion become flesh through the logic of kenosis. Benjamin says:

> Capitalism is entirely without precedent, in that it is a religion which offers not the reform of existence but its complete destruction. It is the expansion of despair until despair becomes a religious state of the world in the hope that this will lead to salvation. God's transcendence is at an end. But he is not dead; he has been incorporated into human existence.[43]

This example of how the concept of sin remains in society shows the dangerous mechanic of kenosis[44], we can't just negate or kill systems that show themselves to be oppressive or exploitative. When we cut off the head of such an ideological system, it empties itself of its content, and often it leaks through into other structures within reality.

The end of slavery resulted in many laws like redlining that perpetuated racist logic. We can not simply see these laws as the remains of slavery, it is far more pervasive than that. White supremacy has restructured itself in a way where it is not necessary to be outspokenly racist[45] but where its racism is embedded in, among many things: laws, socioeconomics, schools, prisons, access to healthcare and other infrastructure.

This is one of the main features of a head, as a transcendental or ideological entity it can code itself or empty itself in materiality and social reality through infrastructure.

---

[41] These are Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts that explain how a system of power can disconnect itself and restratify itself in another mode of organisation. Gilles Deleuze en Félix Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Bloomsbury USA Academic, 2013).

[42] Catherine Kord e.a., "Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. I (1913-1926)", *Antioch Review* 56, nr. 1 (1 januari 1998): 118, https://doi.org/10.2307/4613641.

[43] Kord e.a., "Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. I (1913-1926)", 289.

[44] And for that matter, dialectics.

[45] Although lately, it has been more outspoken.

The cause can become its own effect through this move from ideological racism towards infrastructural racism. And this infrastructure is in its own right a breeding ground for the same racist beliefs repackaged in another aesthetic. This is how the head constantly moves from the material to the ideological or from substance to subject. This is the head's main danger, its propensity to shift.

1.3 Escape, bloody heads and other apparitions

Our questions now become: How do we escape the head, is this even possible, and can there be such a thing as a beyond? The very urge to escape seems to be in itself a trick that the head pulls on us, yet the feeling of unease with the present is something that is still felt by many people and can not be ignored. Is there any form of doing that does not perpetuate the present? In this chapter, I will introduce modes of escape that are often tried and explain why they fail in their flight from the head.

1.31 Decapitation

One swift chop and the thing that protrudes is gone. Within the *metaphorm* of the head, decapitation is of course the most obvious mode of escape. If we can silence the mouth that speaks and the eyes that police, we can overthrow its hegemony. The problem is that within the head's logic, its very absence speaks meaning. The dialectical logic of the head perpetuates itself through the power of negation, decapitation functions as a determinate negation. What happens, for example, when we try to evade meaning production within discourse? We now enter through this negation the domain of nonsense, but this very domain can only exist within the relation of the form in which it exists as an opposite to meaning. So while we do move away from meaning itself, we do not escape the form of the head that instilled meaning and non-meaning as a binary, as a predesignated area of flight.

> If the word silence "among all words," is "the most perverse or the most poetic," it is because in pretending to silence meaning, it says nonmeaning, it slides and it erases itself, does not maintain itself, silences itself, not as silence, but as speech.[46]

It leaves us with the acephalous remainder of the head, a figure that only exists as a lack and can promise us nothing. This remainder is not free from its head but bound by its absence.

The figure of the Acéphale within philosophy is of course best known as the totem of the secret society carrying the same name. Members include Piere Klossowski,

---

[46]Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), p 332.

Jean Wahl, Andre Masson and of course, George Bataille. The Acéphale for them is the figure that signifies the death of representation.[47] The ideal of the Vitruvian man of knowledge, thought, and control, decapitated. This decapitation feels as a radically negative gesture, which should warn us. Bataille recognises that the goal can not simply be to 'destroy the head', he writes:

> The formation of a new structure, of an "order" developing and raging across the entire earth, is the only truly liberating act, and the only one possible, since revolutionary destruction is regularly followed by the reconstitution of the social structure and its head[48]

The heads will grow back if left alone, Bataille sees this, yet he immediately starts talking about the formation of a new "order" as the only liberating act. It is hard to introduce the word order here without implying a central planning, discipline and with that the reconstitution of a head on top of the acephalic body. Bataille does however make a distinction:

> The only society full of life and force, the only free society, is the bi- or polycephalic society that gives the fundamental antagonisms of life a constant explosive outlet, but one limited to the richest forms.[49]

There is thus a difference between a *monocephalic* and a *bi* or *polycephalic* society. The polycephalic achieves for Bataille the same as what the acephalic should represent, as it gives an outlet for fundamental antagonisms of life. Through this outlet, it resists the reduction to a unity which the head will always fall back into. To be free for Bataille is to not be a function of some form, freedom here is found through the rejection of these functions, a negative act. Yet the form Bataille is escaping from here is powered by negative acts. As Allan Stoekl describes in his work on Bataille's headlessness, there is an ambivalence present in the way Bataille describes his figures of escape and freedom. Take for instance the Aztec priest:

> …the Aztec Empire finds its "cen- ter" in the great pyramid on the summit of which, every day, victims are slaughtered, and from which their stripped and open bodies "tum- ble" (OC 1, 157). The priest stays comfortably at the top.[50]

[47] Allan Stoekl, "Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, 'Planisme,' and Headlessness", *Yale French Studies*, nr. 78 (1 januari 1990): 181, https://doi.org/10.2307/2930122.
[48] Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, 1985, http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA01186804, p 198-199.

[49] Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, p 199.

[50] Stoekl, "Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, 'Planisme,' and Headlessness", p 197.

We see in the figures that Bataille puts up as exemplary of his philosophy that they still function as central figures around which a society can congregate. The Aztec pyramids with the priest on top still take on the form of an order around which that society is structured.

> And one could say exactly the same thing about the "acephale": "he" is a figure that bears death, but at the same time "he" is a perfectly coherent and traditional "sacred figure" around which a society, al- beit one of conspirators, can be established. "He" is not only the figure of an order, but (like the pyramid or skyscraper) a principle of order.[51]

This principle of order shines through in the image of the Acéphale as envisioned by the artist Andre Masson.
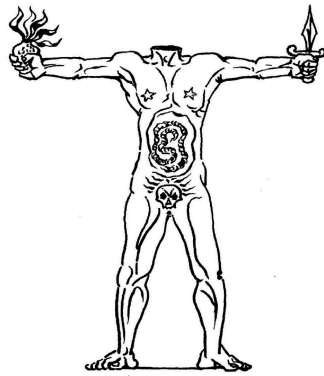
52

> …while the head is clearly missing, the stars (nipples), bowels and death's head (genitals) only go to create another face, another "figure humaine." Further, the death's head itself has a miniature face.... The "acephale," in other words, has lost a head, a principle of organization and order, only to mutate and develop an- other, more hypnotic, doubled and doubling (replicating) face.[53]

Here we see, in this imagery, the workings of the head's reconstitution through its own decapitation. If the flight from the head is based on the negative act of its decapitation, the negative act will work as a significative operation of the same order that needed to be evaded. The acephalic remainder will function as the new icon of centrality.

---

[51] Stoekl, "Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, 'Planisme,' and Headlessness", p 198.

[52] Wikipedia contributors, *Acéphale*, 2 september 2023, *Wikipedia*, 2 september 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ac%C3%A9phale#/media/File:Acephale1.gif.
[53] Stoekl, "Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, 'Planisme,' and Headlessness", p 198.

This portrayal of Bataille's philosophy is specific to a certain period of his writings. He later redeems himself by acknowledging the problem with this negative act of decapitation. For now, Bataille and his Acéphale serve as a representation of how flight from the head can never be achieved in the form of a negation because a negation is a significative move.

A less abstract example of this is the No Logo movement. Within consumer capitalism, brands carry an identity that people can adhere to, which can be reduced to a logo on a shirt. This logo can be used as a status symbol, it can represent a person's wealth, political identity, geographical location[54] etc. Naomi Klein in her book *No Logo* explains how this is problematic and how these logos introduced privatisation into the lives of young individuals.[55] The message of Klein's book was easy to understand and powerful, and because of that it became a truism for most critics of capitalism. Eventually, the brand around No Logo became so popular that her publisher tried to convince Klein to get a copyright for the brand and sell t-shirts with No Logo on them. No Logo from the beginning was already a statement in the form of a logo, its negation only served as a signification that took the form of an identity. It is naive to think that a negation can function as a proper flight because the structures you're fleeing from thrive on negation, they are far too pervasive.

So if the negation of the central organ is not fruitful, what other modes of escape remain? As Bataille introduced earlier, there is another figure to be found other than the headless Acéphale, in the figure of the polycephale. The move from no head to many heads, or what I like to call Hydra-ism.

---

[54] Football shirts, university sweaters etc.

[55] Naomi Klein, *No logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Vintage Canada, 2000).

1.32 Hydra-ism

Hesiod introduces the figure of the Hydra in his work *Theogony* as the offspring of Typhon and Echidna. A giant water snake that carries nine heads, and when attempting to behead one of them, two more would grow back. In the original myth, there was one central head that needed to be killed in order for the others to stop growing back, but the figure of the Hydra I want to present here will not have this centrality. The Hydra for me represents an evasiveness from centrality through the continuous overproduction of its governing organs. Hydra-ism is the affirmation of multiple heads, any attempt to defeat the Hydra becomes self-defeating. The figure of the Hydra is often adopted by organisations that try to evade policing, like the mafia or pirating organisations like the Piratebay.[56]

At first glance, the Hydra seems to be the way to evade the central organisation of the head, through the diversification of governing organs. There is no real central organ that governs the whole, and the decapitation of one will result in even more ruling centres. But the very feature that helps to evade centrality, also makes it difficult for this form of governing to remain effective.

Within the myth, Heracles slayed the Hydra by cauterising the necks, so no new heads would grow. Could he instead not have kept on cutting off the heads till the Hydra grew thousands of them, effectively turning into a confused knot tripping over itself? Reducing the Hydra to a harmless creature.

Is this also not what happens with many organisations that try to evade organised planning? Take for example the characterisation of the left that there is no real plan and that all they do is in-fighting. It is a real problem within leftist politics; there are many different ways to be a leftist, and often the hate towards other leftists seems

---

[56] The Piratebay is a network that indexes Torrent links that make it possible to download paid digital content for free.

to be bigger than the hate towards the right. A united leftist block remains a distant dream, as the splintering within remains a pervasive problem.

When the goal is mere evasion, Hydra-ism becomes a valid strategy. The only goal the Piratebay has, is to not be policed by the government so that they can keep distributing overpriced digital content for free. The feature of self-reproduction is something that works when the heads that are produced are not really "headed", they are mere hyperlinks to the same body of content. This is why for the example of The Piratebay the Hydra is a perfect figure, its heads are not really heads. Yet when we talk about the Hydra as a form of organisation, this auto-production can take on the form of confused dissipation.

Here we can make a comparison with the figure of the rhizome that Deleuze and Guattari put forward in their philosophy. The comparison is that the Hydra is what happens when the rhizome is misunderstood through the lens of liberal productivism and connectivism. Andrew Culp in his book *Dark Deleuze* makes the following point:

> Productivism links up with the autonomous, ceaseless autoproduction of the real. The most naive productivists sentimentally cherish creation and novelty for their own sake, whether as dewy-eyed admiration for the complexity of nature or a staunch Voltairine defense of all types of diversity.[57]

Culp argues that the idea of the rhizome gets misused by modern-day commenters and is turned into a simple productivist and connectivist logic.

> Connectivism is the world-building integration into an expanding web of things. As an organizational logic, it is the promiscuous inclusion of seemingly unrelated elements into a single body to expand its capacities.[58]

This combination of connectivism and productivism is what the figure of the Hydra represents as a strategy to get rid of the head. The strategy turns into diversification for diversification's sake or, as Culp puts it: 'a Voltairine defence of all types of diversity.'[59]

As a rather treacherous example, we can look at the issue of the diversification within gender identities. This is not a conservative critique of the validity of these identities but a critique of their radicality. The radical act of gender identity was to break with the man-woman binary that was imposed on us from birth. This mode of

---

[57] Andrew Culp, *Dark Deleuze* (U of Minnesota Press, 2016), p 49.

[58] Culp, Dark Deleuze, p 49.

[59] We often refer to this problem with the term identity politics.

identification is used as a way of policing the potential of a person. The differentiation between man and woman makes it so people feel destined to fulfil a role within the society that puts them in these categories. Acting according to these roles benefits society because they presuppose other institutions like the nuclear family and marriage. These institutions instil values in people, like the man provides, the woman nurtures, it sets goals and expectations that people are inclined to follow. This binary is a form of control, so breaking with this form means breaking with control and breaking with police-able identities that are controllable.[60] The non-binary is not an identity, but a dissolving of distinction itself. It does this not through a negation of either side, but as an affirmation of itself as the non-binary. The non-binary is, as Slavoj Zizek argues, the Bartlebian 'I prefer not to' which is different from the exclamation 'I do not prefer to'.[61] The latter is a negation of the binary predicate, while the former is an affirmation of the non-predicate. Thereby there is an affirmation of a non-identity that exists outside the binary that was forced upon the world, this is a radical act. The diversification of identities that followed is more a symptom of liberal individualisation than it is a flowering of this radical logic. It is a productive machine that produces more police-able identities, it feeds the liberal machine of categorisation. We see how this diversification cloaks the radical deterritorializing act that preceded it and reterritorializes it back into concrete identities.[62] It takes on the form of a Hydra that through its diversification loses its radical power and becomes a toothless complicated knot. Deleuze and Guattari warn us of something similar in their work *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject—anything you like, from Oedipal resurgences to fascist concretions. Groups and individuals contain microfascisms just waiting to crystallize. Yes, couchgrass is also a rhizome.[63]

We see here how with the productivity of the Hydra the truly radical act can restratify into microfascisms, which can again be incorporated by the economy of the head.

---

[60] This policing happens not only through an external agent, policing happens most of the time internally. Putting limits on how you act according to the roles you adhere to is a form of policing.

[61] Slavoj Žižek, "The Sexual Is Political - the Philosophical Salon", The Philosophical Salon, 1 augustus 2016, https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/the-sexual-is-political/.

[62] Although I use Zizek here as an example, I would like to distance myself from his latest takes on transgenderism, where it seems to me he has lost the plot of these being real material issues.

[63] Deleuze en Guattari, *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* p 9-10.

The roads of escape that are the most obvious seem to always lead back into the interiority of the head, it is part of its infrastructure to provide us with these predesignated areas of flight.

1.33 Our imaginations of the future and the past are compromised

The head has a certain infrastructure, a way of ordering its interiority. Infrastructure here does not merely mean basic physical structures within society, it is a much broader concept.

> The word "infrastructure" typically conjures associations with physical networks for transportation, communication, or utilities. Infrastructure is considered to be a hidden substrate—the binding medium or current between objects of positive consequence, shape, and law. Yet today, more than grids of pipes and wires, infrastructure includes pools of microwaves beaming from satellites and populations of atomized electronic devices that we hold in our hands. The shared standards and ideas that control everything from technical objects to management styles also constitute an infrastructure. Far from hidden, infrastructure is now the overt point of contact and access between us all—the rules governing the space of everyday life.[64]

In her work *Extrastatecraft*, Keller Easterling explains how infrastructure is constituted within society through repeatable forms. When you build a road, you never build one road, you build many. The idea of infrastructure is to structuralise the living space through the means of these repeating forms. The problem is that these repeating forms are a carrier for ideology, a road being built invites more roads being built, which invites a car-centric city, which promotes the automotive industry. This car-centric view of the space of everyday life is just as much part of infrastructure as the cars and the roads are. It functions as an auto-productive machine that through its appearance constitutes its repeat. As Deleuze puts it:

> You do not confine people with a highway. But by making highways, you multiply the means of control. I am not saying this is the only aim of highways, but people, travel infinitely and "freely" without being confined while being perfectly controlled. That is our future.[65]

---

[64] Easterling, Keller. *Extrastatecraft: the power of infrastructure space*, 2014. https://antikvariat11.cz/kniha/easterling-keller-extrastatecraft-the-power-of-infrastructure-space-2014, p 8.

[65] Gilles Deleuze et al., *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, 2006, https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB15338475, p322.

This autoproduction not only overcodes the way in which we can arrange our present, it limits the way we can think about our future. We have to ask ourselves why the flying car has been a dream of ours since the 1920's, why have we not dreamt past this future?

The future is dependent on the structure of the now, and when the now is constantly trying to reproduce itself in order to maintain its hegemony, we encounter the prospect of living in the future. This is where we are now concerning things like the infrastructure of transportation[66]. The futures we imagine are stuck in the past, which is why for many, the most popular innovative dream within transportation is the Hyperloop. A reinvention of the train through the aesthetic of a future that has not been futuristic since the 1920's.[67] We can see why this happened when we look at the most popular speculative futures that exist in our day and age, the sci-fi futures.

Even the realm of fiction, an area that should be the place where we can dream of new futures, seems to be overcoded by the head. With science-fiction, there are tropes that serve as an infrastructure of ideology. Eden Kupermintz writes about this in his essay *The men who sold the moon:*

> Our "future imaginaries", the way we envision and dream about the future, are productive sites for control by the cultural hegemony; if we stray too far into imagining weird and radical futures, we might imagine one where the hegemony is different than what it is today…[68]

Popular fiction differs in content but retains the hegemonic forms of the head, like individualism, meritocracy, techno-positivism, productivism etc. Kupermintz gives us examples of these forms in the storytelling of popular science fiction, he names, for instance, Isaac Asimov.

> Indeed, there is much to be lauded when looking at the politics of Asimov; he was a feminist at a time when this was still unpopular, supported gay rights, opposed the Vietnam war, and was in general an active voice in progressive circles.[69]

Yet even in Asimov the infrastructure of the present is retained, says Kupermintz when discussing him and several other seemingly progressive authors.

> Most, if not all, of their ideas and values are realized through individualist, liberal lenses. They are mostly concerned with heroes who uphold values such as

---

[66] And arguably with regard to many other aspects of society.

[67] The aesthetic of the Hyperloop evokes the 1927 film *Metropolis* as a point of inspiration.

[68] Eden Kupermintz, "The Men Who Sold the Moon," notthesky.com, accessed October 16, 2023, https://www.notthesky.com/posts/essays/the-men-who-sold-the-moon/, alinea 2.

[69] Kupermintz, "The Men Who Sold the Moon", alinea 10.

compassion, honor, duty, and virtue. They very rarely, if ever, engage with meaningful, systematic criticisms of society. Indeed, they are perfect examples of "suburban science fiction", importing much of the underlying, and thus powerful, presuppositions of our own society into the future.[70]

The form of logocentrism is maintained through the trope of the hero scientist who finds solutions for all problems within the realm of logic or science. Another one is the trope of the billionaire philanthropist superhero we find everywhere in the Marvel and DC Universes.[71] It is not a coincidence that a lot of people nowadays place their hopes for a better future in the hands of billionaires like Elon Musk or Bill Gates. These tropes serve as blueprints for these types. They see the solution to all problems in themselves as the individual hero who progresses mankind beyond its problems through the means of technological advancement. Through the solutions of the large societal problems these sci-fi utopian tropes present us, the problems themselves get rewritten. Kupermintz takes the example of the food replicator in Star Trek:

> It has almost become a cliche to say "the problem is not that we don't have enough food, it's that it's not evenly distributed" but it's a cliche because it's *true*. And I'm not talking about the only-slightly less shallow "we throw so much food away", which is technically true but not the root of the problem. The root of the problem is that food, and drink (and, maybe soon, air) are commodified to begin with. Star Trek does nothing to address this question beyond the scientism inflected solution: once the technology creates enough abundance for everyone, the profit motive magically falls away and all is now well, disregarding the vast numbers of powerful and rich people who have a vested interest in making sure nothing of the sort happens or the infrastructural gaps which we still haven't begun to resolve between the so-called "developed" and "developing" worlds.[72]

In presenting the utopia, Star Trek, through offering a solution, retroactively restructures the problem it is trying to solve and instils it in our minds as the problem to solve in the present. So while the future that Star Trek and other fictions portray look appealing, we have to stay weary. Flight presents itself as a good solution but ask yourself: to what future are we fleeing? In order to dissolve the hegemony of the head we have to stop reproducing the conditions of the present, only then a new future can arrive.

---

[70] Kupermintz, "The Men Who Sold the Moon" ,alinea 11.

[71] Bruce Wayne (Batman), Tony Stark (Iron Man) and even the more "progressive" stories like Black Panther. T'challa King of Wakanda whose wealth is based on his country being the sole distributor of Vibranium. This seems to directly be a utopian ideal of what would have happened if Africa had not gotten its resources stolen, and the answer is of course a technologically advanced super state.

[72] Kupermintz, "The Men Who Sold the Moon", alinea 22.

In short, the autopoietic machinery of the head not only creates its own infrastructure, but through an overcoding of this infrastructure it also determines its own limits. The interiority of the head can't even dream of escape without perpetuating its conditions.

We can not dream of new futures, as the head in its form polices what can count as a future. We can not long to return to the past because the head structures in its appearance, through an anarchic temporalizing move, not only what can be considered the future but also what is considered the past.

A common sentiment nowadays is the urge to return to nature. Yet, the very concept of nature that we like to long for and watch documentaries about is a historically constructed category of our natural origins, seen through the lens of the material conditions of the present. This idea of nature only exists as a lack, as an ideal created by the very moment of our withdrawal out of it as humanity, there is no return possible to such a place. If the goal of dreaming and longing is to achieve an escape from the present towards a place of the past or the future, it will necessarily fail, as these places are constructed by a head to exist within a head.

We need to make a distinction between escape and escapism, they are two different categories. Escapism is "the great betrayer of escape". Escapism is to "withdraw from the social" while what we need now is something that "learns to eat away and penetrate the social, everywhere setting up charges that will explode what will explore, make fall what must fall… as a revolutionary force".[73] So how can we escape the head without simply trying to flee?

---

[73] Culp, Dark Deleuze, p 15.

Interlude

U shouldn't let poets lie to you.

In one of my favourite videos floating around the internet, we see Icelandic singer Björk sitting in front of a CRT TV.[74] Björk describes the variety of aspects of the celebrations of Christmas in Iceland that she has experienced through programmes on her TV. From gay celebration and comedy to very serious and spiritual commemoration. But now she's curious, what is behind this face of the TV? How is the TV able to put her in "all those weird situations" as she describes it. How does it operate?

She removes the exterior of the TV. Her first reaction is a comparison, "it looks like a city". She points to the various electrical components on a PCB in the TV, "All the houses are here and the little streets". But then there is a sudden break in her comparison. She points to wiring and explains that she read in a Danish book that this part takes care of all the electrons to make sure they are all powerful enough. She turns the television back around, "this television has put me, like I said, in all sorts of situations". She explains that she initially was afraid of the TV. An Icelandic poet told her that because the TV works in a different way than for example a cinema, it takes more effort to put the picture together in the mind, which leads to the watcher not really registering what is going on in the program that is displayed. This way the TV hypnotises you, and you stop judging what is right or wrong. Björk looks a bit upset while saying this. After telling how this almost gave her headaches, she explains that this fear went away after the revelation of the Danish book. She ends with the beautiful line: You shouldn't let poets lie to you.

What is Björk's message here? It seems like a metaphor that shows the human urge to look beyond the veil of reality. We are always looking for how things work, what

---

[74] igorbuenocorrea, "Björk talking about her TV", 13 february 2007, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75WFTHpOw8Y.

is the essence behind it that makes all the appearances that affect us. Björk removing the face of the TV is her effort to look behind the veil. She is met with an infrastructure that throughout the video she explains through three lenses. At first, she can only describe what she sees through an infrastructure she already knows, the city and its streets. This is the first lens, the known. But of course, this is not enough, it is a representation and not the essence of the mechanics itself, so she looks further and finds the Icelandic poet who forces her to look through a fictional lens. This lens makes her paranoid and afraid, the fictional essence of the Icelandic poet made her unable to appreciate the real. She finds salvation in the Danish book that explains TV through the lens of physics. She stumbles over her words when reproducing this explanation, which begs the question: is this lens not as much of a fiction to Björk as the story from the Icelandic poet is?. The poet tries to deceive you, but does the Danish book not do this as well?[75] When we pull away the veil, what we see has to immediately become present and real, and thus transformed. It has to be explained, and although we often let physicists do the explaining, are they not lying to us as much as the poets are?[76]

Is the very obsession with looking behind the veil not the result of the lenses the poet and the physicist give to us? Is the very existence of a veil not only real because of the fetishisation of an inner world, some magic realm of causes and meaning? A realm that will be empty if we do not fill it in through some poetry or science. These answers create the problem in the first place and tear open a space that is always in danger of being empty, and with that meaningless. We desperately try to get rid of the meaninglessness of the world, but is the real realisation not that we have to get rid of the idea that there is something to get rid of?

If our very form of thinking about the world retroactively creates a realm where lies are king we should at least be able to choose who lies to us. We can reflect on what this would mean for the head, we have to realise that we are able to choose to not follow its hegemony without it being a negation. We do not have to deal with getting rid of the head, we have to realise that there was never a head as something that holds transcendental power over us. We can only do this by proving that other things can exist within this inside that we now call a head, not by merely denying its existence or emptying it of its content. We have to embody this outside on the inside.

---

[75] The Danish book is of course a reference to Iceland being a former colony of the Danish Crown. The Danish acted as a "civilising" force which most Icelandic people accepted, they wanted to prove they were not savages but part of the "enlightened" West.

Ciarán Daly, "Kingdom Come: Inside Iceland's Complicated Relationship with the Danes", *The Reykjavik Grapevine*, 8 september 2016, https://grapevine.is/mag/articles/2016/09/08/kingdom-come-inside-icelands-complicated-relationship-with-the-danes/.

[76] Physics can take the form of religion for those who pray that God is really dead.

2 Escape without flight

Dreaming new futures

2.1 Theoretical framework for an outside on the inside

We have to leave the concept of simple flight behind, as it is not sufficient. What I will be presenting in this second part of the thesis is an alternative movement that can be best described as a transfiguration. Within theology, the moment of transfiguration is the moment where Jesus reveals to be the son of God. He does this by revealing his light and equating his identity as the son (the representation or nature) with God the father (essence). This is the moment where image and essence are one again, the completion of the movement back into itself. Transfiguration sounds comparable to the earlier mentioned movement of kenosis, which we compared to the Hegelian dialectical movement, yet there is a peculiar difference. Kenosis is a movement where the things that are split, essence and appearance, get connected through a mediating form that instils itself as the unity of these moments both as splitter and uniter. This mediating form was Spirit. Dialectical movement is the purifying movement of difference towards unity, yet in this distillation process from flawed spirit to its purest Absolute form, there escapes spiritualised vapours. These vapours are not noticeable in the turmoil of dialectics until the moment of transfiguration. Hegel in a piece called *Boehme myth* describes this himself:

> The consumed nature rises up in a newer, more ideal form, like a realm of shadows which has lost its first life, the appearance of its spirit after the death of its life. But this new form [Spirit] is the overcoming of the evil, the enduring of the glowing fire [*Glut*] of pain in the centerpoint, where as purified it leaves all the flakes behind in the crucible [Tiegel], a residuum, which is pure nothing.[77]

The movement thus leaves behind residue. Transfiguration is not only an *Aufhebung,* it sublates its otherness, but in this purification, Spirit sheds itself of *das nie mar Aufgehende.* This *nie mar Aufgehende* is a *caput mortuum.* This is an alchemical concept of the useless remains that are left behind after a chemical process. It signifies an ultimate decay, a leftover after a transfiguration (like sublimation). This transfiguration is the step from the head to kaput, where the head represents the Hegelian Spirit of the dialectic, which constantly tries to come back to itself through its own transfiguration. Kaput is the head's *caput mortuum, das nie mar Aufgehende* or that which can not be incorporated in the dialectical

---

[77] Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition*, p 207-208.

movement, something absolutely other.[78] Kaput is the sign of the decay of the head, a sign that something can be left behind after the head transfigures. The very existence of a leftover is a sign that there is or was a hole in the whole. For a brief moment only, this other becomes visible where it was opaque, not an other against the dialectics that it can simply sublate, the dialectic can not see this other as it moves over it. It is an outside that was always already present on the inside. This brief moment where the other is visible is where our chances lie. This moment shows an other that can not be ripped apart into a dialectically opposed difference of essence and appearance, of image and reality. This other is an image[79], yet it refers to no reality, it is unreal, unrecognisable, uncategorical. Note here that being unreal is not the opposite of being real, being real or not real does not make sense to this other, as it was already in reality without being real. It resists the real that dialectics tries to appropriate it to.

In his work *The margins of philosophy*, Derrida explains the dialectical urge to appropriate as follows:

> To insist upon thinking its other: its proper other, the proper of its other, an other proper? In thinking it as such, in recognizing it, one misses it. One reappropriates it for one misses it, or rather one misses (the) missing (of) it, which, as concerns the other, always amounts to the same.[80]

This other can not stand in relation as an image to reality or as other to an I, it resists this as absolutely other. It will always be secreted out of the whirlwind of dialectics, because it has no content that dialectics can engage with. This other never faces the I, but moves obliquely to it, it is not a parallelism neither is it a perpendicular movement which could be appropriated by dialectics as a form of relation. This obliqueness is important to Derrida, it gives an alternative to the relations of dialectics where everything is always opposed.

---

[78] What happened to Christ's body when he died? It disappeared.

"At that moment, the spirit of Jesus Christ departed His body—a body that had endured suffering so that He could atone for the sins of all people and succor them in their infirmities. That body, now an empty vessel, was removed from the cross, wrapped in linens, and eventually placed in a tomb. On the third day, the women approaching the tomb were there to complete burial preparations for that body. But the body was gone."

"The Resurrection of Jesus Christ and Truths about the Body," April 1, 2017, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2017/04/the-resurrection-of-jesus-christ-and-truths-about-the-body?lang=eng.

[79] An image that does not refer to any reality but does have the power to inspire something new would tick all the boxes of the term sigil.

[80] Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), xi-xii.

Which is why the figure of Persephone is obliquely brought forward in his argument as a being of this other. In the myth of Persephone, she is kidnapped by Hades and brought to the underworld, thereby forcibly breaking her away from her connection to her mother, Demeter. When someone eats something in the underworld, they can not go back to the overworld. Eventually, Persephone is allowed to return to her mother, but as it turns out she has eaten six pomegranate seeds while in the underworld.[81] This makes it so that despite being released, she has to return to the underworld every once in a while. She becomes now not only the God of spring and nature but also queen of the underworld.[82]

Derrida relates her name to the French name for an earwig or perce-oreille which would translate to ear piercer. At the same time he obliquely relates the layout of the ear canal and the existence of the over and underworld, where the eardrum, or tympanum, exists as a veil between both, as their limit. The voice of reason penetrates the ear and resonates the eardrum, which translates this resonance towards the inner world. This is the movement of dialects, the limit (tympanum) is no real limit but an endless mediator that facilitates the movement. Persephone here becomes the real limit in refusing to be mediated and carving out a space for herself in the cavernous in-between of the outside and the inside. Thereby, she pierces (perce) the veil with her voice (phone) which has no origin but is merely an echo that bounces around between the walls of the cave. As perce-oreille she moves through the ear, pierces the tympanum and disappears in the inside. In the unity of Hegel's system that means that there is an outside not negated and thus not incorporated with the inside. Yet this outside has space for itself on the inside. This perce-oreille is our revolutionary figure, so allow me to transpose and present this bug within the poetics of the head.

2.2 Viral bugs

You are starting to notice the fleshy pink folds of your interior, you try to make sense of the space. You make your way through the dark interior until you encounter something that catches your eye. You see a bug hidden within the network of connections that make up the head. The bug is tapped into the informational flows of the dendrites that facilitate communication within this space. The bug, where it is, feels no urge to escape, it nurtures itself, reproduces itself, it is content. The bug has no need to generate an outside to manifest itself, it is perfectly visible where it is. The bug eats away, it does not flee. It feeds itself on the machinic production of the head but what it spits out is not recognisable, it is weird and eerie. The bug is a

---

[81] Important to note is that this was a conscious decision and not a force feeding.

[82] Tamara Agha-Jaffar, *Demeter and Persephone: Lessons from a Myth* (McFarland, 2002).

virus, or more precisely, a semiotic parasite.[83] It has the power of being a disruptive force within the positive feedback loops of overcoding that the head engages in.[84] It feeds on the productivity that constitutes the head's economy, it burns away these productions, it burns it as a sigil, a sign of something other. This figure of virality is one that Derrida also sees as a leading thread throughout his work.

> "All I have done … is dominated by the thought of a virus, what could be called a parasitology, a virology, the virus being many things…. The virus is in part a parasite that destroys, that introduces disorder into communication. Even from the biological standpoint, this is what happens with a virus; it derails a mechanism of the communicational type, its coding and decoding. On the other hand, it is something that is neither living nor non-living; the virus is not a microbe. And if you follow these two threads, that of a parasite which disrupts destination from the communicative point of view—disrupting writing, inscription, and the coding and decoding of inscription—and which on the other hand is neither alive nor dead, you have the matrix of all that I have done since I began writing.[85]

We could argue that one of the places where we can see the form of this virus is in Derrida's concept of Hauntology. Hauntology for Derrida is an element that exists outside the binary of alive and dead, it is a spectre that spectralizes the present with its existence. Ghosts are entities of the past that introduce themselves in the present, they do not properly belong in the present as they are historical, yet the hauntological can not be pinned to an origin.

> The temporality to which the ghost is subject is therefore paradoxical, at once they 'return' and make their apparitional debut…[86]

The hauntological opens up a spectrum within the fabric of time and space giving itself, in an anarchic move, a history. Derrida keeps referring to this as a non occurrence when time is out of joint.[87] This being out of joint of time refers to it no longer following its chronological flow, but a disruption of this flow where its past

[83] Laboria Cuboniks, *The Xenofeminist Manifesto: A Politics for Alienation* (Verso Books, 2018).

[84] Nissimov, Jozef I. "Ecological and Functional Biodiversity in a Marine Algal-Virus System: Genotypes, Phenotypes and Their…" *ResearchGate*, December 12, 2013. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294444607_Ecological_and_functional_biodiversity_in_a_marine_algal-virus_system_genotypes_phenotypes_and_their_ecological_significance

[85] Jacques Derrida, Brunette & Wills, ed., *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, page 12.

[86] Mark Fisher, "The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology," *Dancecult* 5, no. 2 (January 1, 2013): 42–55, https://doi.org/10.12801/1947-5403.2013.05.02.03, p 44.

[87] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (Routledge, 2012).

gets rewritten. So these ghosts haunt the present in a sense with its past, but it can haunt our present with a new future as well. The head structuralises time and space[88] through its infrastructural feedback loops. The viral bug, just like the hauntological, has the ability to throw these feedback loops out of joint or luxate them.[89] When the parasite burns up, it rips open a hole in the head through which the outside can leak in. It shows that there was always already a possibility of an outside in here. An outside that feels distant but familiar, it produces events that do not blend in with the ontological theatre of the head, but persist as points of pure expenditure. When looking into this portal, we do not see a lost future… there never was a future to lose. Women, minorities and queer people never had a future that they could lose within the interiority of the head. They have to invent their future and their history in order to even make space for a present.[90] The only way for them to exist is to go beyond what existence means now. That is what these parasites are, manifestations that have become real by ripping open the present, new myths, new fictions. It is why this bug feels so strange yet so familiar, looking into the revolutionary heat of your own expenditure engulfs you in an outside that feels present. The flames open up the centre and let the outside leak in. What might this look like?

2.21 Toul prison revolt

---

[88] That the head dictates our physical infrastructure and with that our living space is clear, but the time aspect is a bit more abstract. As we have shown the head can constitute what the future and what the past can be and with this it structuralises time.

[89] Jozef I Nissimov, "Ecological and Functional Biodiversity in a Marine Algal-Virus System: Genotypes, Phenotypes and Their…," *ResearchGate*, December 12, 2013, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294444607_Ecological_and_functional_biodiversity_in_a_marine_algal-virus_system_genotypes_phenotypes_and_their_ecological_significance.

[90] This all might feel as something that is a mere hope of a new future, but we have to realise that hope when it is felt is always present and actual.

The 1971 Toul prison revolt was one in a wave of prison revolts throughout France. Prisoners usually have two modes of escape: break out or suicide, this revolt did neither of those. Foucault writes:

> They confined themselves within a prison of which they were now masters, and from which they chased the administration: no one could enter without their express permission. They occupied it like one occupies a factory, a place of struggle. They made it a fulcrum to demonstrate their demands and to assert their rights. They inverted the functions of the wall, the bars, and imprisonment itself. On that day, they did not want to get out of prison, but rather to be free of their status as humiliated prisoners.[91]

A prison is of course a head in itself, it polices, sets up boundaries and makes escape impossible. Any individual that escapes does nothing to break up the walls of the prison itself, in fact, it might even heighten those walls. Through the revolt, the Toul prisoners ripped open a hole in the interiority of the prison itself through which they could communicate with the outside, almost literally.

> The revolt in the Toul prison in December 1971 was the first collective struggle led by prisoners in France during which the division between inside and outside crumbled: prisoners went up on the roof and addressed their claims to the public opinion, to the journalists who were there and told them: 'this is what we want'.[92]

They did not need excessive violence.

> The prisoners chose to hold no leverage over the administrators beyond the building itself. Guards would be allowed back into their place of work only once they had recognized those they incarcerate "as a force with which one negotiates."[93]

Despite being stuck in an interiority that completely overcoded their existence[94], they were able to escape. Not to an outside, but they were able to break free an outside within the confines of the prison where existence became possible again.

---

[91] Michel Foucault and Prisons Information Prisons Information Group, *Intolerable: Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group (1970-1980)*, 2020, p 234.

[92] Martina Tazzioli, "Producing the Intolerable: Anti-Prison Struggles, Abolitionist Genealogies," *Radical Philosophy*, October 30, 2022, https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/commentary/producing-the-intolerable.

[93] Acid Horizon, *Anti-Oculus* (Watkins Media Limited, 2023), p 122.

[94] The prisoners were reportedly chained to their beds for days, they were pushed to suicide and sedated against their will.
Michel Foucault, *intolerable,* p 252.

After their demands were met, most returned to their cells, not in defeat but as a return to order. They allowed to let the interior restratify again, albeit with their demands integrated in it.

The Toul revolt is an example of a virality within the material space, a rather practical one at that. It shows that even in the most controlled position in society, that of a prisoner in a prison, there is still a possibility of taking up space. Of being heard as an other by reclaiming an interiority within the confines of a literal prison. Now let us look at a more theoretical example.

2.22 Xenofeminist Manifesto

There is a function of the head that can be found back in the field of discourse creation in the title of an author. The author is not merely a sign that refers to a historical individual, it does more than that. When we are talking about an author, we are not talking about the authorship of a private letter, that has a writer but not an author. We are talking about a sign that has next to a significative function also a descriptive one. Foucault discusses this in his work *What is an Author?*

> …an author's name is not simply an element of speech (as a subject, a complement, or an element that could be replaced by a pronoun or other parts of speech). Its presence is functional in that it serves as a means of classification.[95]

This classification is used to group a collection of works and differentiate them from other texts, it creates an authorial zone. This zone is an overly visible zone that can be policed by the ocular apparatuses of the head. For example, when we talk about Marx we barely talk about the individual Marx, the name signifies a discourse. Marxism as a discourse is heavily overcoded and policed, discussing Marx in the McCarthy era of politics did not mean discussing *Das Kapital,* it meant treason. The content of Marx's works were no longer present in the authorial zone of Marxism, the space got colonised by a specific interpretation. This is the danger of the author function, there is always the possibility that the space the sign of the author refers to gets overcoded and policed by state apparatuses.

> Speeches and books were assigned real authors, other than mythical or important religious figures, only when the author became subject to punishment and to the extent that his discourse was considered transgressive.[96]

---

[95] Foucault, Michel. "Authorship: What Is an Author?" *Screen* 20, no. 1 (March 1, 1979): 13–34. https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/20.1.13. p 19.

[96] Foucault, *What is an Author?* p 20

This authorial zone is a classificatory zone, an empty interiority that serves to contain a specific content linked to a certain work or body of works that are in themselves uncontainable. The work itself hides nothing, it does not limit itself, it is always open. You can not control a work, you can only use it. We can already see how decapitation and Hydra-ism would not work here as means to flee from this zone of authorship. So let's incorporate our bug again and eat away at the centre of this zone instead of trying to flee away from it.

The Xenofeminist manifesto is a project that manifests a new kind of feminism, it mythologises itself. A myth is of course a story without an identifiable origin, it denies history and opens up space to instil its own. We see here the hauntological elements coming back. The manifesto tries to resist the codification of the old language through which the problems of feminism are structured and presented.

> Is xenofeminism a programme? Not if this means anything so crude as a recipe, or a single-purpose tool by which a determinate problem is solved. We prefer to think like the schemer or lisper, who seeks to construct a new language in which the problem at hand is immersed, so that solutions for it, and for any number of related problems, might unfurl with ease. Xenofeminism is a platform, an incipient ambition to construct a new language for sexual politics—a language that seizes its own methods as materials to be reworked, and incrementally bootstraps itself into existence. We understand that the problems we face are systemic and interlocking, and that any chance of global success depends on infecting myriad skills and contexts with the logic of XF. Ours is a transformation of seeping, directed subsumption rather than rapid overthrow; it is a transformation of deliberate construction, seeking to submerge the white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy in a sea of procedures that soften its shell and dismantle its defenses, so as to build a new world from the scraps.[97]

XF realises that proposing a solution to a determinate problem means accepting the language of that problem[98], silencing the problem would still speak its language as we discussed earlier. Instead, they construct their own language that "incrementally bootstraps itself into existence". This language seizes its own method as material to be reworked on, it makes space for itself, by infecting the host language (softening up the shell). Not a rapid overthrow of this language, that would be a decapitation. The new language is not a metaphor that only refers to the "real" world, they refuse to cooperate with reality. This is why the head is powerless with regard to XF, their content has no meaning within the language of the head and because of that can not be captured by its classificatory organs. But the content is not meaningless, it

---

[97] Laboria, *The Xenofeminist Manifesto*, 0x19

[98] Like the food replicator in Star Trek, which we discussed earlier.

constructs its own meaning in its own space, and in order to say anything about this you have to at least speak the language of XF. XF is not the only example here.

The CCRU is another group that uses this technique, their most famous concept is the concept of Hyperstition or "fictions that make themselves real". They also immediately mythologise their own origin:

> There is nobody positioned to accept attribution for the 'work' of the Ccru, nor has there ever been, so this compilation has been guided by a principal of editorial modesty. Whatever it is that occurred 'here' – during these years of the Numogram's initial ingression into recent human history, triggering an outbreak of digital hyperstition – is not considered a matter to be resolved in this volume, even in part, through retrospective commentary. This book is sheer documentation. It is not expected to clarify anything, but much rather the reverse.[99]

These words do not echo the guillotine falling down, this is not a decapitation. Instead, they immediately make space for themselves, they open up the authorial zone in order to overcode it themselves with their own mythos. This mythos reads as follows:

> Underneath lies Ccru [Cuh-Cru], Crypt-denizen, the many within itself, that which spreads through the end-time, dripping fake ID-tags like phosphorescent slime. It makes a peopling machine on the hyperplane, conjurations of identity, hypersonas. Consider the names on the contents page. Melanie Newton, Steve Goodman, Ron Eglash ... We doubt it. Even Dan Barker discovered that his existence was a fiction, and Echidna Stillwell is more an ethnographic legend than a social fact.[100]

Of course, many people would still say this is mere nonsense, and within the language of the head it is. This form of writing has found the ability to cloak itself from the ocular apparatuses of the head, it turns the overly visible authorial zone into a diffused foggy interior. The fog fades when you learn its language, but learning its language means manifesting it as a reality[101], that is the hyperstitial trick and the aim of the CCRU. The CCRU is:

> … a meaningless brand-name, but brands are demonic, tuning into Cyber-hype dynamics, numerizing culture, and innovating methods of propagation. Various things latch onto them in order to spread. These latchings are sorceries – involvements, participations, spirals of contamination.

---

[99]Ccru, *Writings 1997-2003* (MIT Press, 2017), p1.

[100] CCRU, *Writings.* p 10.

[101] Abracadabra or *Abera Kedabera* meaning in Aramaic: I will create when I speak.

The viral element of this language becomes clear, it contaminates itself in order to spread and tear open a hole for itself within the crystallised field of discourse.

While the remarks in the introduction about the need for a magic lens might feel strange at first, I hope that this makes its uses more clear. Hyperstition and mythos creation is something that exists at the borders of virtuality and reality, this is the domain not of the philosopher or the author, but of the sorcerer. Here we once again stumble upon a point already made by Deleuze and Guattari in their work *a Thousand Plateaus* where they show the importance of the figure of the sorcerer.[102]

> … their existence menaces the state…, which ceaselessly attempts to reintegrate marginal subjects. To engender the becomings of the sorcerer is to become a political aberration. The figure of the sorcerer evades the domesticating stamp of the filiative apparatuses within the social order while instead propagating illicit alliances and clandestine networks at the fringes. These alliances skirt the appropriative mechanisms of social recording, becoming imperceptible and insulating themselves within a *sacred conspiracy*.[103]

We are no longer dealing with metaphors at this point but with a becoming more than metaphor. A metaphor works as an image that refers to a reality, but this referral always gives validity to the power of categorisation, *this is like that*. An image does not necessarily have to refer to anything, what inspires in an image can be merely a making space within a symbolic order that constantly tries to reduce everything to intelligible categories within that order. This effectively turns the image into a sigil, something that can conjure up monsters that are unidentifiable in reality, which do not refer to anything already in reality. The same goes for parody, sometimes when we encounter our bug it might come across as mere parody or a satirical enlargement of a hegemonic structure. This brings us to our last example of the bug, which is a socio-cultural one found in music.

---

[102] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p 239-252.

[103] Acid Horizon, *Anti-Oculus*, p 189. Here they discuss the Deleuzo-Guatarrian figure of the sorcerer.

2.23 Hyperpop

104

The capitalist machine has had its grip on music for a while now, every artist that bursts on the scene with a new sound gets immediately pulled into a contract that forces them to relinquish creative control over their music. From there on their sound has to go through a marketing team where it gets sterilised to become as palatable as possible for everyone, most often this means that it will become pop. If you try to spare yourself this fate as an artist, it means becoming an underground artist that no major record label will touch with a ten-foot pole. This would not be a problem would it not be the case that these major record labels have a monopoly on what can make money and what will be listened to in the music scene. Genres that tried to flee from the hegemony of mainstream music, like punk or hardcore, did so by placing themselves on the outskirts of society as social rejects. Their critical voice came from standing against the mainstream. Here the head played its now familiar trick and turned this place on the outskirts to a predesignated area of flight. Punk and the whole punk ethos has been commoditized and turned into an aesthetic.

What has been proved marketable for these labels is nostalgia, so instead of giving new sound a chance, they will forever favour regurgitating old sounds in a new guise. This way, the music industry has made it impossible for a future to exist within its interiority. Cultural critic Mark Fisher has called this the slow cancellation of the future. [105]

---

[104] *10,000 Gecs*, n.d., *Https://Www.100gecs.Com/*, n.d., https://www.100gecs.com/images/10000gecs_Explicit.jpg. Edited album cover

[105] I'm not saying that a genre like pop is not 'good' or valid but that their presence leaves no room for something other within the scene.

> Rather than the old recoiling from the 'new' in fear and incomprehension, those whose expectations were formed in an earlier era are more likely to be startled by the sheer persistence of recognisable forms. Nowhere is this clearer than in popular music culture. It was through the mutations of popular music that many of those of us who grew up in the 1960s, 70s and 80s learned to measure the passage of cultural time. But faced with 21st-century music, it is the very sense of future shock which has disappeared.[106]

This is the same phenomena described earlier in the chapter about our impossibility to dream up new futures. The infrastructure within music keeps pointing us to roads that lead to marketable places, and because a lot of musicians that do come up with new sounds often come from an underprivileged background, they are eager to accept deals that will secure their future. And rightfully so. From within this secured future they finally have the ability to do music, not for survival, but for creative expression again, but now their creative control has already been sold away.[107]

So how do we open up this musical hegemony in order to make place for new sounds, and not merely the futuristic sound of a synth drone that has been futuristic since the 70s. Futuristic music has become an established sound on its own, with its origins in the electronic sounds of artists like Kraftwerk. So how do we break open new futures?

One place to look is to the musical genre of Hyperpop. Hyperpop is a genre that is dominated by trans artists like 100 Gecs, Arca, SOPHIE, Dorian Electra and many more, it is the only space on earth where transness has become a majority. What is special about the genre is that it does not try to flee away from the hegemony of pop, it places itself in the middle, explodes it, and makes room. It incorporates a future inside the dominating presen(ce)t of pop, a future that was always already there. It hyperizes the realm of pop, enlarges it till it explodes into a hole that has let a variety of new futures in. Simone A. Medina Polo describes this in her essay *Hyperpop, Capitalist Realism, and Articulating the Future*:

> …there is the general disdain for capitalism and the perpetuation of its own closed off horizons that are breached through aesthetic practices — in a sense, we could

---

[106] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, 2014, https://research.gold.ac.uk/15798/, p 17.

[107] This is in no way a judgement, it is an analysis on how the capitalist machine profits on selling the creative expression of young and disenfranchised artists. They are often expressing their position as an other to society, as a minority, and because the general population is not familiar with these expressions they feel very new. They typically bring elements of other cultures in their music that people are not familiar with as well. This is all very profitable for record labels, so they expropriate their creative control and sterilise their culture in order to make money.
.

say that hyperpop was a virtual corruption of the actuality of pop, so we were able to move on from pop to pop 2.[108]

The sounds that hyperpop generates are jarring, they can produce that visceral reaction to a radically new future of sound that was lost for so many years. Or what Matt Bluemink refers to as "future shock".

> When we listen to an artist like Sophie, regardless of our personal opinion of her music, it's hard to imagine that she would fail to induce 'future shock' in listeners from 20 years ago. Sophie's music exists on the boundaries of what could even be considered popular music. We might say that the blend of the abrasive and the angelic exists solely to subvert the expectations of the listener.[109]

Yet the goal is not merely to shock. This music speaks in a language we are not used to, it opens up a space where its structurations can exist without being drawn in comparison to the common structurations of music. Once we learn its language, its sounds can do something to us again. This is why we have to see hyperpop not as a critique of pop but an overindulgence of it.

Let us take for example the song by Chester lockhart *Our God Is An Awesome God.*[110] The lyrics are taken from a popular congregational song made by Rich Mullins. Although Chester's version has all the elements of being a critique of Christianity and the way in which the awesomeness of God excludes Chester's own identity as a nonbinary person, I would still not consider this a parody. Chester's version takes the message of the original value laden song and reduces it to a mere sound again, to a melody. They do this not by reacting to the song, but by taking the song and hyperizing it. It does not make the lyrics ironic in its transformation, it makes the lyrics into something that can be enjoyed again as sound and rids them of their biblical connotation. The hardcore kick, the metallic clangy sounds take the forefront and feed off of the corny lyrics of the original.

And that is precisely the point of this form of resistance. The abnormality of these songs is not something that stands against the original, it is not about being against

---

[108] Simone A. Medina Polo, "Hyperpop, Capitalist Realism, and Articulating the Future," *Medium*, September 18, 2022, https://pseudo-antigone.medium.com/hyperpop-capitalist-realism-and-articulating-the-future-25236 26c98c7.

[109] Matt Bluemink, "Anti-Hauntology: Mark Fisher, SOPHIE, and the Music of the Future," Blue Labyrinths, January 4, 2023, https://bluelabyrinths.com/2021/02/02/anti-hauntology-mark-fisher-sophie-and-the-music-of-the-futu re/.

[110] crystal lockhart, "Chester Lockhart - Our God Is An Awesome God," May 2, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-_x21PSg_s.

the norm. What it is about is being within the place of difference, a self defined zone that exists outside the binary of normal and abnormal. It is about ripping open new zones that in no way refer to a present yet exist in the middle of them.

2.3 The USB
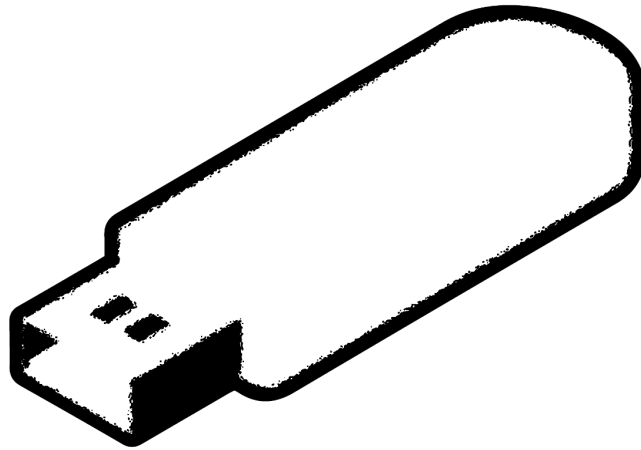
The head has now become an interior blown open with holes, a zombie like figure, its jaw dislocated, eyeballs missing, the head made kaput. But let us not cheer too loudly, let us not fall for its ruse once again. Remember that its death has no meaning. As we walk through the interior turned to a wasteland, we start to notice something, the walls start glitching in and out of existence. You walk towards the confines and reach out your hand, to your surprise it does not feel warm, goey or organic as the inside of a head should feel. It feels hard, cold and metallic. U look around once more, the holes close up and make the outside no longer visible, the interior walls change from organic to PCB plastic. The dendrites change into wiring and the brain slowly starts to reveal itself as a CPU. After the fires have died down, what we find is not a place in ashes but a totally new interior. Our parasitic entity has changed into lines of code that coat the walls of our new interior. The bug has done its work, but its revolutionary power is not endless, otherwise it would not be revolutionary at all. Lines of flight get reterritorialized, sovereignty falls into despotism, and what once was special becomes banal again.[111] SOPHIES music is already being used in commercials.[112]

What we did, did have an impact, but our story is not a linear one. It does not have a teleological end goal that we can aim towards, it is a constant struggle against fascist concretions. The only thing we can do is to continuously rip open holes and hope we can match the structuralising power of the head. Hope that we can make visible that what the dialectics of the head constantly overlooks.

---

[111] Two modes of escape as explained by Deleuze and Bataille.

[112] Sadly we can not ask what she thought of this as she died in a freak accident in 2021.

You walk along the interior of the USB following the maze of wires running from component to component, no direction leads outwards. Suddenly lights turn on, surges of electricity start running through the components, a larger light blows out your vision completely until all you see is white… and then some black. Letters start to form: FILE DIRECTORY. Thousands of directories open up before you: Music, Documents, Videos, Downloads, and one that just says KAPUT. You click on it and immediately everything turns blue.

2.4 Conclusion

Escape used to mean flight, it used to be an escape from a monarch, from slavers, or the church, from an external ruler. But something changed in the time of the enlightenment, Kant was the first to revert our gaze inwards and by that placed the limits of our reason not out there, but in here. But what also nested in our heads with this move were the apparatuses of control. Hegel, with his dialectics, internalised God into a formal logic, a dizzying movement that no longer needed a sovereign on the outside as it has the ability to completely overcode the inside. The dialectics is a self policing mechanism, its only goal is to keep everything in and thereby reducing the outside to a non-existent zone. This is why a lot of philosophers of escape struggled with the question, how do we leave Hegel behind? And this framing of the problem was precisely their downfall. Let us return to the Foucault quote:

> Truly to escape Hegel involves an exact appreciation of the price we have to pay to detach ourselves from him. It assumes that we are aware of the extent to which Hegel, insidiously perhaps, is close to us; it implies a knowledge, in that which permits us to think against Hegel, of that which remains Hegelian. We have to determine the extent to which our anti-Hegelianism is possibly one of his tricks directed against us, at the end of which he stands, motionless, waiting for us.[113]

What Foucault is really saying is that when we are again confronted with Hegel's bloated head, instead of running away, we need to confront it. This does not mean to stand against it, we need to sit inside and explode what can explore. This movement we find not only as traces in Hegel's own philosophy but also in Derrida's figure of Persephone. A figure that is able to carve out a space on the inside where it can exist as an outside. We need to appropriate Hegel in order to get away from him, concretise his formal logic, monstrify it into something that we can explode. Something in which holes can exist, where outsides are visible, albeit only temporarily. The holes will close again, and a new inside will crystallise, but instead

---

[113] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of knowledge* (Psychology Press, 2002), p 391.

of caving to the knee-jerk reaction of flight, we have to stand inside and take up space. We have to resist throwing ourselves in the dizzying movement of dialectical logic, the anxious cycle of thought thinking itself. You can not think your way out of dialectics, it has no real walls you can break through, its limits are no real limits but its food. Anxiety is a fear that has no concrete object, which is why it is so hard to get rid of it. If we want to make steps in the right direction, we have to make this object concrete ourselves. With dialectics this is not a monster as a *Gegenstand,* something that we can face, but the monstrosity of an interior, of realising the real limits, the finitude of the space, its walls. The head serves as a concretisation of this interiority so that we can at least be afraid of something instead of only anxious. The head is still a form, we have to keep that in mind, but by looking at its moments we can understand its movement. Foucault's quote echoes here once again, in our escape we find ourselves incredibly close to Hegel's own philosophy.

The categorisation of Hegel as a sorcerer in the beginning of this text is my own mythos creation, in this way the text tries to practise what it preaches immediately. Structurally, this text will not always really fit the qualifications of an academic thesis, but this something that I want to foster. Completely following the rules and structure of the academic hegemony feels a bit disingenuous for this text. It preaches about making space within these limited spaces, so in terms of leading by example, the text places itself within this field as an outside on the inside, by drawing on its own mythos.

Mythos works not by talking about a subject matter and defining it with qualities, but by talking around it. It circumscribes its ultimate point, tangentially caresses it as to carve out a space. In this space, a voice rings through, a voice without origin, an echo. A voice that resonates so deeply that philosophy can no longer hear its speech, but its presence is still felt. A magical presence, the presence of an anomaly. To end, I want to share this quote from the French collective the Invisible committee that, only after writing this thesis, has revealed to me its importance and true meaning.

> Revolutionary movements do not spread by contamination but by resonance. Something that is constituted here resonates with the shock wave emitted by something constituted over there. A body that resonates does so according to its own mode. An insurrection is not like a plague or a forest fire-a linear process which spreads from place to place after an initial spark. It rather takes the shape of a music, whose focal points, though dispersed in time and space, succeed in imposing the rhythm of their own vibrations, always taking on more density. To the point that any return to normal is no longer desirable or even imaginable.[114]

---

[114] Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Semiotext(e), 2009), p 12-13.

Bibliography

10,000 Gecs. n.d. Https://Www.100gecs.Com/.

> https://www.100gecs.com/images/10000gecs_Explicit.jpg.

Agha-Jaffar, Tamara. Demeter and Persephone: Lessons from a Myth. McFarland,

> 2002.

Appendix 2: Hegel's Occult Drawing. December 29, 2017. Al-Islam.Org.

> https://www.al-islam.org/spirituality-modern-philosophy-hegels-spirituality-m

> uhammad-legenhausen/appendix-2-hegels-occult.

Barth, Karl. Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background &

> History, 1973.

Bataille, Georges. Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927-1939, 1985.

> http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA01186804.

Bluemink, Matt. "Anti-Hauntology: Mark Fisher, SOPHIE, and the Music of the

> Future." Blue Labyrinths, January 4, 2023.

> https://bluelabyrinths.com/2021/02/02/anti-hauntology-mark-fisher-sophie-a

> nd-the-music-of-the-future/.

Brunette, Peter, and David Wills. Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media,

> Architecture. Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Ccru. Writings 1997-2003. MIT Press, 2017.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)." In University of

> Minnesota Press eBooks, 3–25, 2018. https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.4.

Committee, Invisible. The Coming Insurrection. Semiotext(e), 2009.

crystal lockhart. "Chester Lockhart - Our God Is An Awesome God," May 2, 2021.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-_x21PSg_s.

Cuboniks, Laboria. The Xenofeminist Manifesto: A Politics for Alienation. Verso

Books, 2018.

Culp, Andrew. Dark Deleuze. U of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Daly, Ciarán. "Kingdom Come: Inside Iceland's Complicated Relationship with the

Danes." The Reykjavik Grapevine, September 8, 2016.

https://grapevine.is/mag/articles/2016/09/08/kingdom-come-inside-icelands-

complicated-relationship-with-the-danes/.

Deleted. "Reddit - Dive into Anything," n.d.

https://www.reddit.com/r/PhilosophyMemes/comments/oo3e3r/the_hegel_u

nderstander/.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and

Schizophrenia. Bloomsbury USA Academic, 2013.

Deleuze, Gilles, David Lapoujade, Ames Hodges, and Mike Taormina. Two Regimes

of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995, 2006.

https://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB15338475.

Derrida, Jacques. Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning

and the New International. Routledge, 2012.

Derrida, Jacques. Writing and Difference. University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Easterling, Keller. Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space, 2014.

https://antikvariat11.cz/kniha/easterling-keller-extrastatecraft-the-power-of-inf

rastructure-space-2014.

Fisher, Mark. Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost

Futures, 2014. https://research.gold.ac.uk/15798/.

———. "The Metaphysics of Crackle: Afrofuturism and Hauntology." Dancecult 5,

no. 2 (January 1, 2013): 42–55.

https://doi.org/10.12801/1947-5403.2013.05.02.03.

Foucault, Michel. Archaeology of Knowledge. Psychology Press, 2002.

———. "Authorship: What Is an Author?" Screen 20, no. 1 (March 1, 1979): 13–34.

https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/20.1.13.

Foucault, Michel, and Prisons Information Prisons Information Group. Intolerable:

Writings from Michel Foucault and the Prisons Information Group

(1970-1980), 2020.

Hamacher, Werner, and Kirk Wetters. "Guilt History: Benjamin's Sketch

&Quot;Capitalism as Religion&Quot;" Diacritics 32, no. 3 (January 1, 2002):

81–106. https://doi.org/10.1353/dia.2005.0010.

Harris, H. S. "Hegel's Development: Night Thoughts (Jena 1801–1806)." In Oxford

University Press eBooks, 1983.

https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198246541.001.0001.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Fredrich. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel: Encyclopedia of

the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Part 1, Science of Logic.

Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. Phenomenology of Spirit. Oxford University Press,

USA, 1977.

Horizon, Acid. Anti-Oculus. Watkins Media Limited, 2023.

igorbuenocorrea. "Björk Talking about Her TV," February 13, 2007.

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75WFTHpOw8Y.

Klein, Naomi. No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies. Vintage Canada, 2000.

Kord, Catherine, Marcus Bullock, Michael W. Jennings, and Walter Benjamin.

    "Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Vol. I (1913-1926)." Antioch Review 56,

    no. 1 (January 1, 1998): 118. https://doi.org/10.2307/4613641.

Kupermintz, Eden. "The Men Who Sold the Moon." notthesky.com. Accessed

    October 16, 2023.

    https://www.notthesky.com/posts/essays/the-men-who-sold-the-moon/.

Magee, Glenn Alexander. Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition. Cornell University

    Press, 2008.

Malabou, Catherine. The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic.

    Psychology Press, 2005.

Muratori, Cecilia. The First German Philosopher: The Mysticism of Jakob Böhme as

    Interpreted by Hegel. Springer, 2016.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. Expectation: Philosophy, Literature, 2017.

Nissimov, Jozef I. "Ecological and Functional Biodiversity in a Marine Algal-Virus

    System: Genotypes, Phenotypes and Their..." ResearchGate, December 12,

    2013.

    https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294444607_Ecological_and_functi

    onal_biodiversity_in_a_marine_algal-virus_system_genotypes_phenotypes_an

    d_their_ecological_significance.

Polo, Simone a. Medina. "Hyperpop, Capitalist Realism, and Articulating the

    Future." Medium, September 18, 2022.

https://pseudo-antigone.medium.com/hyperpop-capitalist-realism-and-articu

lating-the-future-2523626c98c7.

Stoekl, Allan. "Truman's Apotheosis: Bataille, 'Planisme,' and Headlessness." Yale

French Studies, no. 78 (January 1, 1990): 181.

https://doi.org/10.2307/2930122.

Tazzioli, Martina. "Producing the Intolerable: Anti-Prison Struggles, Abolitionist

Genealogies." Radical Philosophy, October 30, 2022.

https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/commentary/producing-the-intolerable.

"The Resurrection of Jesus Christ and Truths about the Body," April 1, 2017.

https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2017/04/the-resurrection-o

f-jesus-christ-and-truths-about-the-body?lang=eng.

Wikipedia contributors. Acéphale. September 2, 2023. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ac%C3%A9phale#/media/File:Acephale1.gif.

Žižek, Slavoj. "The Sexual Is Political - the Philosophical Salon." The Philosophical

Salon, August 1, 2016.

https://thephilosophicalsalon.com/the-sexual-is-political/.