

Esparavel

Report by Esparavel's Scientific Commission to members with orange access

Think Tank

X-Risk, Apocalypse
Economics, Polycrisis

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UK

42 Wrenford Crescent
Hollowgate
London SW14 3LP
United Kingdom

Netherlands

Brouwersgracht 128A
1013 HB Amsterdam
The Netherlands

China

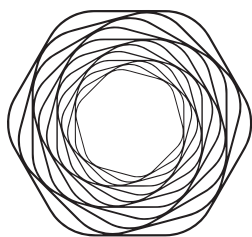
Room 1502, Building 8
88 Lujiazui Ring Road
Pudong New Area,
Shanghai 200120
China

Argentina

Av. Santa Fe 2450, Piso 7
Barrio Norte, C1425BGS-
Buenos Aires
Argentina

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Introduction:

Executive summary of the Pacific project and its potential impact on the Proteus event

Located along the 180th meridian (anti-meridian or international dateline), the Pacific project is an ongoing initiative of the TPMP (Trans-Pacific Marketplace) consortium comprising the Los Angeles, San Francisco (both owned by NYSE Arca), Seattle, Vancouver, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong stock exchanges, in collaboration with Global Express Platform¹ and Sumitomo, the leading providers of fiber optics for financial services. According to the TPMP website (<http://www.tpm.org/mission>), the mission of the Pacific project is to create “an archipelago of hubs located along the 180th meridian, with auxiliary stations in yesterday and tomorrow [i.e., on both sides of the international dateline], and thus take advantage of the Pacific Ocean’s most important natural resource, its liminal position between the present and the future, and its strategic ability to create latency times ever closer to the speed of light.”

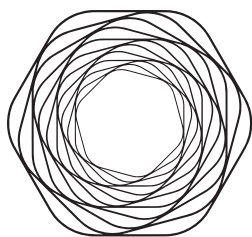
While the Isthmus of Panama was the key locus of commercial expansion during the 19th and 20th centuries, in our time the international dateline has taken this place, becoming the axis that determines the exchange of financial information on a global level and at increasingly dizzying speeds. That being said, the goal of the Pacific project is to drastically reduce latency times² between the East Asian and West American markets in order to maximize the amount of high-frequency trading³ and, with it, the amount of assets exchanged between antipodean markets. The express objective of the Pacific project is to close “the time and financial gap that divides the planetary stock exchanges.”⁴

1. Global Express Platform is a division of the telecommunications company Hibernia Networks, previously known as GFN (Global Financial Network). In 2011 Hibernia expanded into the Pacific Rim market by expanding its network to Tokyo, Singapore and Hong Kong. The origin of the TPMP (Trans-Pacific Market Place) consortium and the Pacific project is commonly attributed to Hibernia’s entry into Asia. In 2017 Hibernia was absorbed by GTT Communications, who acquired the assets and projects of its predecessor, including the submarine fiber optic network laying contract for the Pacific project.

2. The period of time that elapses between the placement of an order on the servers of a financial market and its execution.

3. High-frequency trading (HFT) is a trading method that uses powerful computer programs to process a large number of orders in fractions of a second.

4. Taken from: <http://www.tpm.org/temporics>

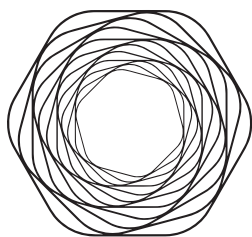


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On April 1st, a few hours after the launch of *Pacific one*, the central station of the Pacific Project (located at coordinates 35N, 180E), a number of temporal anomalies took place in financial markets, cryptocurrency servers, free port databases and other ultra-secure digital repositories that we will detail in the first section. Within hours these manifestations were accompanied by countless testimonies from thousands of people across the globe (both normal and divergent) that followed the same line: the objects they interacted with on a daily basis “had awakened,” “showed will,” “wanted to interact with some degree of consciousness” or “were trying to communicate.”

This event, known as *Proteus* because of its multiple forms and mutations, has caused serious social disruptions, shaken the health systems of several countries and dealt a severe blow to confidence in the financial system. The most widespread digital manifestation of Proteus has been the emergence of virtual records and goods from the future, which has posed a huge challenge to financial authorities around the globe. By now -only a month and a half after the events described in this introduction- some unscrupulous actors have already set in motion a pseudo-speculation market directly connected to the appearance of these goods, creating a retrocausal time loop that guarantees that they will eventually become a reality.

To this date, the main objective of Esparavel has been to coordinate working and research groups in order to elucidate the ultimate origin of these anomalies and their implications, to propose hypotheses about their functioning and their consequences, and to identify new mutations as they occur. The reader will find below: (1) a timeline of the major milestones shaping Proteus; (2) a number of testimonials from people around the world describing the subjective aspects of this phenomenon; (3) excerpts from a report led by Professor Adity Thakur of Miskatonic Virtual University (MVU) that shed light on some of the more intriguing aspects of the event; (4) A statement on the disappearance of Professor Thakur and her team during their visit to *Pacific One* last May 16 or 17 of this year, and finally; (5) some excerpts from Thakur’s diaries on her stay at the Pacific Project’s main station in the days prior to her disappearance.



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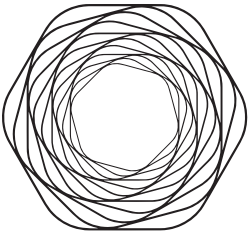
1. Partial chronology of the Proteus event

Below the reader will find the main sequence of anomalies that have been identified as related to the Proteus event to date. New events will be added to this timeline as the Project Esparavel forensic finance investigation committee confirms their existence and relationship to the event beyond a reasonable doubt. We censor the names of those involved to avoid making them targets of the press and/or compromising their physical and psychological integrity.

1. The first documented manifestation of Proteus was the sudden appearance, at 2:12:47 am (GMT+8) on April 1, 2027 (3 hours after the start of operations of *Pacific One*), of a series of shipping lists dated November 30, 2043 on the Shanghai port servers. [REDACTED] (38), a U.S. national and a foreign trade software operator at the port's terminal, assumed it was an April Fools Day prank, which led him to discard them. However, unable to delete them from the system without authorization from his supervisor, he contacted [REDACTED] (43), a Chinese national. He was astonished to find that the shipping lists were authentic and corresponded to a shipment of [REDACTED] ore organized in a container from the port of Seattle, only 16 years in the future. Even the commodity prices and insurance policies had been adjusted (or, had been automatically adjusted, if we don't want to assume human agency) to projections for the next two decades.

2. Six hours later, during the night of March 31 (6:12 pm in CDMX / 8:12 am in Shanghai), [REDACTED] (27), a Mexican computer engineer and hacker, noticed the presence of three unknown cryptocurrencies in the registry of one of the distributed Ledger databases hosted in her digital mining rig. Within the next hour his finding was corroborated by nineteen other rig operators associated with this database in eleven different countries in South America and West Africa. Checking the dates of the transactions made with these coins resulted in August 14, 19 and 23, 2073.

3. Simultaneous with the discovery of the distributed databases, the Singapore free port system registered the entry of a number of duty-free works of art into its database. These works, including paintings



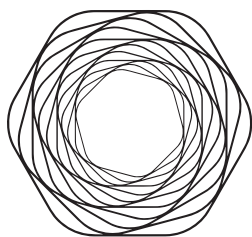
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by Picasso, Rembrandt, Pollock and Klimt, were not in the duty-free zone, but would enter the port in May 2068, following a massive purchase of art by private collectors associated with a conflict in the Balkans and Turkey at an undetermined date in the future. To date many of the registered works are still in private collections in England, Germany and the United States and, in the case of three of the Picasso paintings, in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

4. Between April 2 and April 3, 2027, during a purge of the accounting systems of JP Morgan Chase and UBS, the two banks reported the appearance in their database of loans documentation taken by a number of private energy companies (electricity and gas) in Ukraine and Belarus in the period 2039-42, which borrowed money using their future revenues as collateral and invested in different financial instruments on the NY, London and Paris stock exchanges. The purpose of these operations was to protect themselves from possible losses to the energy sector in the future by betting on falling electricity and gas prices in the short term. This practice, already common in our time, seems to have been taken to a paroxysm during this period (2039-42) and investigation by a forensic accounting firm yielded the following conclusion: "As far as we can elucidate from the data provided by our client banks, for some unknown reason these private companies in the Eastern European energy sector were forced to provide higher and higher collateral for their loans, which probably included selling more future energy, i.e. the proceeds of electricity and gas production spread over increasingly longer time spans and in many cases extending up to the period 2069-2072.⁵ The problem with these financial operations is that taken to an extreme they can drive down the price of future energy, eventually collapsing the Eurasian energy sector. Hypothetically, this point could be (or have been) reached in 2073, when records of these types of guarantees to loans taken between 2039 and 2042 suddenly cease." Note how the dates for these future events coincide with those in items 2 and 3, pointing to a possible financial anomaly or singularity during the period 2068-73.

5. At around 9:14 pm Eastern US time on March 31 / April 1 (3:14 am in Continental Europe) the first reports of sudden changes in the "behavior" of manufactured objects (all of them inert in nature) emer-

5. Since a hydroelectric plant or gas refinery can only produce a limited amount of megawatts or cubic meters per year, guarantees for these loans are based on projections of actual production based on the availability of the natural resource.

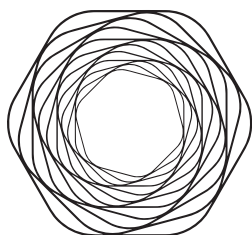


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ged in at least eighty-nine nursing homes and insane asylums in the United States, England, Spain, France, Australia, Germany and Romania. Reports continued to mount throughout the night of March 31 and the early morning of April 1, and spread to countries in Latin America and Africa to become the most widespread atypical case of what was believed to be “mass psychogenic illness” (formerly known as mass hysteria) outbreak in human history. By the morning of April 1, more than 18,000 cases of “hallucinations” and cognitive disturbances involving goods of all kinds were reported (see section 2).

6. By the end of April 3 the “hallucinations” spread to individuals with no prior history of diagnosed psychiatric conditions or mental illness. During the night of April 3 and early morning of April 4, there is exponential growth in areas geographically isolated from each other, which rules out the hypothesis of a particularly contagious outbreak of mass psychogenic illness. The mode of contagion, if it is indeed a “contagion,” remains to be elucidated and it is speculated that it is a non-local, non-linear type of transmission affecting anyone who comes into contact with manufactured goods belonging to a consolidated market. The pattern of sensitivity or even immunity of these individuals has not yet been identified and has prompted the collaboration and joint work of groups of semioticians and virologists (See section 2)

7. On the night of April 5, the gamma-ray spectrometry laboratory of the European Commission, in collaboration with Professor Adity Thakur’s team at VMU, detected a distinctive emanation of an unknown isotope of Tantalum (^{148}Ta) originating in the firmament just above the *Pacific One* main station. The appearance of this unknown emanation motivates the foundation of the Esparavel Think Tank, which during the following month will be fully dedicated to elaborate hypotheses and elucidate the relationship of the Pacific project with this emanation, as well as with the global reports of cognitive alterations to all kinds of commodities. Subsequently, Thakur’s team finds that another carbon isotope accompanies the unknown Tantalum emanation. The co-occurrence of these elements and their frequencies continues to be a matter of debate in the scientific community both within and outside Esparavel.



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2. Testimonies of subjective disturbances associated with the Proteus event

This section will be devoted to collecting some representative testimonies of the three main typologies of subjective disturbances related to the Proteus event. New typologies will be added to this list as Esparavel's psychological and psychiatric research commission corroborates their existence and their incidence rate in the population. We censor the names of those involved to avoid making them targets of the press and/or compromising their physical and psychological integrity, unless they have given their express permission for their use in the official documentation.

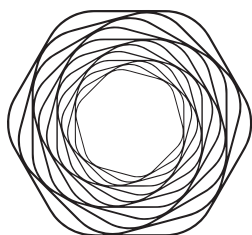
Typology 1: Commodities that appear to acquire sentence, self-will and, despite being inanimate objects, appear to be animate or simulate some degree of consciousness that allows them to interact with the subjects.

Recording 14,823C. Subject: [REDACTED] Nationality: Canadian. Sex: female. Age: 32 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: tendency to anxiety. Profession: software engineer.

At first I thought it was the radio, one of those municipality announcements about road conditions or something like that. My husband had just left for work and I was in the foyer so I went back to the kitchen to turn the thing off, but it wasn't on. And still a little voice, very polite, male, very, very, very faint, kept talking [...] talking to me. For a moment I thought I was going crazy [nervous laughter] but no, I was sure that the voice was not in my head, that it was coming from somewhere in the kitchen. And I found it, inside the dishwasher, one of my son's bottles looked different, as if it was pulsating [...] I don't remember very well what she said to me on that occasion, but I think she was talking to me about the latest birthday cake mix promotions.

Recording 9,237. Subject: [REDACTED]. Nationality: Chilean. Sex: male. Age: 22 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: NA. Profession: undergraduate student.

It was really weird [...] I was surfing the internet like every day after breakfast, looking at my socials



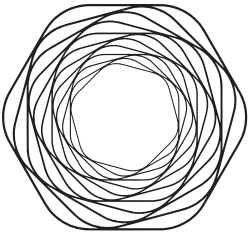
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and a couple of portals to see what was going on when wham, a voice began to manifest itself from the computer speakers, know what I mean? [...] So I thought I had left a browser tab open with some video running, so I started to close them one by one, but the little voice was still there, insisting with who knows what [...] and then I got to the first tab, which was my [REDACTED] account, and I didn't know what was happening, if I was hearing voices or what, until a while later I happened to look at the spam tab and saw that the little voice (which came out of the speakers and went away when I turned off the volume of the computer), was doing a sports narration of the messages in the spam folder, as if it was a soccer match. For a moment I thought it was a new [REDACTED] feature but commenting with the neighbors I realized that they were also hearing and seeing things all over the place [...] I was lucky, at least I could turn down the volume of the goddam laptop.

Recording 11,542. Subject: [REDACTED]. Nationality: Egyptian. Sex: male. Age: 29 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: NA. Profession: graduate student.

I already knew that strange things going on in the neighborhood and in the city, one hears things at the university and I was almost waiting for something to happen to me [...] what you can't even imagine is where the thing is going to be [...] One weekend I was watching a movie on my DVD and at first nothing happened, everything was ok, but a few minutes later, while I was commenting the movie out loud with my cousin Abasi that we realized that the device, or the device through the disc, I don't quite understand how it works, was talking to us or answering a question [...] Abasi was the first to notice it because he had already seen the movie and when he commented something about the scene we were watching the device changed the dialogues of the actors to answer him [...] At first I didn't believe him, but it happened again a couple of times, and if we rewinded and he didn't talk, things seemed to go back to normal. Truly interactive cinema! The thing is, if you ask my DVD a question during a dialogue, it responds through the actors like a genie! It works with all the movies we've tried, though not so well with the pirated ones.

[Inaudible question] It was Abasi who came up with the idea of setting up an oracle for people to ask



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questions to the DVD player. So far the favorite character is Gandalf from Lord of the Rings, people love to see him answering their questions. Sometimes he makes sense and sometimes not so much, but still people seem to pay just to hear their favorite actors answer their questions.

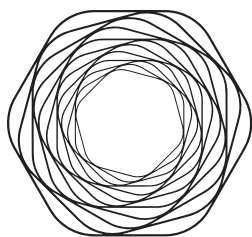
Typology 2: Commodities that appear to alter in terms of their function, lose their defining attributes or mutate into other objects, existing or non-existent.

Recording 13,245A. Subject: [REDACTED]. Nationality: Japanese. Sex: male. Age: 47 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: tendency to clinical depression. Profession: television scriptwriter.

The first time I realized that something was going on was while holding the sushi knife in my hands [...] there was something weird about the texture, something that shouldn't be there, that didn't correspond to the idea of "knife" [...] something soft, you know what I mean? So I finished cutting the ikura and decided to test the knife on one of my fingers [...] No, it wasn't like I was looking to cut myself or anything, it was just the texture of the knife in my hand didn't correspond to the idea of knife in my head, it was like the whole knife was made of a soft rubber, like it was a toy. And for an instant, just before it cut me, I had the feeling that the knife would not make a gash in my fingertip [...] but it did, no matter how rubbery it looked or felt, the knife made a razor-thin cut in my flesh. It was a knife that looked useless but it was quite serviceable [...]

Recording 5,265. Subject: [REDACTED]. Nationality: Brazilian. Sex: female. Age: 29 years old. Psychiatric preexistence: NA. Profession: toll-booth employee.

I began to notice that something wasn't right with the convex mirrors they put in the corners of our booths, but at first I didn't think anything of it. When you look at one of those mirrors the image that appears is always distorted, like rounded at the edges and convex in the center. But when I looked at the mirror the opposite happened, I don't know if you understand me [...] the image I saw seemed rounded at the edges, as always, but at the same time it was no longer rounded but sunken in the center, as if it was being sucked by the mirror itself [...] or as if it was the other type of mirror that was reflecting it. This



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one, what's its name [...] concave [...] a concave mirror, yes. But none of this made sense, so I asked Marcela, my shift partner if she also saw the same thing, but she saw things normal in the mirror [...] Then I found out that she heard glass objects singing, as if they were a chorus.

Recording 7,883d. Subject: [REDACTED] Nationality: Finnish. Sex: male. Age: 36 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: obsessive compulsive disorder. Profession: Architect.

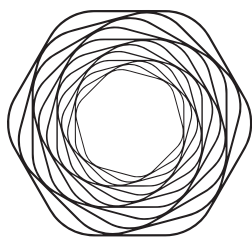
The first hallucination took place on the first Sunday in April when we decided to get together with my siblings and cousins, taking advantage of the fact that we were all in the vicinity of Koupio for the first time in years. It went like this: I was in the kitchen with my cousin Helmi checking that the meat we had left in the oven didn't dry out. Helmi was holding the tray while I plunged the thermometer into the tenderloin, one of those old analog thermometers you have to stick all the way in to get a reading. The meat was still a little bit raw, it still looked juicy [...] But when I started to pull the thermometer out, what came out of the tenderloin was not the metal rod but a [...] I don't quite know how to explain it[...] a small alien sword or dagger covered with iridescent jewels and bulbs that shone with a strange light, as if illuminated by another portion of the spectrum [...] Heimli must have seen my face because he left the tray and helped me put Aarvaeströem, that's what the dagger was called, on the counter.⁶

Typology 3: Commodities that appear to alter in function or lose their defining attributes in accelerated periods of time.

Recording 3,921B. Subject: [REDACTED]. Nationality: Indonesia. Sex: female. Age: 44 years old. Psychiatric preexistence: N/A. Occupation: housewife.

I was doing laundry when the plastic dishpan in which I was rinsing my husband's shirts changed. It changed not only how it looked but also how it felt. One moment it would wrap around me and the next

6. Some 7% of the population who have encountered these objects described as "alien," "extraterrestrial" or simply "weird," say they hear their name from the object itself. Some 73% of these names appear to be adaptations to the subject's native language or language family of phonetic combinations that make no sense, make sense in other language families (65%), or are simply meaningless in any human language (35%).

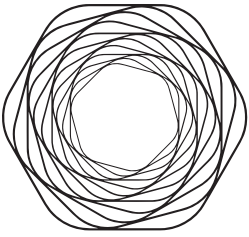


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it would let go of my hands. I felt like I was bewitched, like when the neighbor cast a spell on me to stun me and steal my husband Supardi. Then, out of the blue, the plastic began to take other shapes and suddenly it lost its green color and became flat and it let the water fall on the patio floor, and then it became a circle with a rim, it was as if the bowl was building itself, without the help of a machine or anything [...] And then, after that, instead of turning again into my dishpan, it turned into a raw-colored ball of that bounced behind the sink [...] when I went to look, it was the bowl again and everything was as if nothing had happened, but the water all over the floor so I was sure that it had happened and there was no one putting a curse on me.

Recording 9,436A. Subject: [REDACTED] Nationality: Nigerian. Sex: Male. Age: 67 years old. Psychiatric preexistences: N/A. Profession: Pensioner.

It all started when my sister convinced me to buy that nightstand at [REDACTED]. Nothing like going to the carpenter, but once Adanna gets something in her head, there's no one who can get it out. Scandinavian design my ass [...] The thing is, two weeks after having the damn table next to my bed, it begins to transform as if it were a mischievous spirit. First it loses its color and stops being a table to become a cube with the shape of my night table but without drawers, then it turns into something similar to a stool, but with very short legs, and a few hours later it becomes a pile of splinters [...] and all the while I thought I was going crazy [...] until I realized that the wood itself was going through all the shapes it had before it was a table, as if it were alive and remembering all the things it had been, or was going to be [...] And then I called the store and they tell me that they have so many complaints that they decided to cancel the return policy. Can you believe that, what good is a table that doesn't behave like a table but like Exu?



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3. Key excerpts from the report “One time: Proteus as a consequence of the temporal merger of global financial markets,” presented by Professors Thakur, Wombacher, Chan, et al. to Esparavel’s the scientific committee

Fragment 1: On the relationship between the indebtedness of the financial sector, the emptying of the future and the degradation of the present.

The erosion of the present on account of the indebtedness policies that characterize the financial sector today has begun to become sadly evident. In this regard, the artist and essayist Hito Steyerl, argues that,

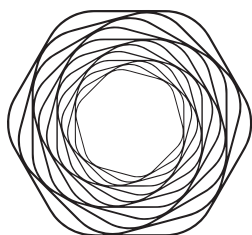
the economic viability of the present is sustained by debt, that is, by future income claimed, consumed, or spent in the present. Thus on the one hand futures are depleted, and on the other, presents are destabilized. In short, the present feels as if it is constituted by emptying out the future to sustain a looping version of a past that never existed.⁷

The conclusion of Steyerl’s proposed time loop is compelling: “at least [in] parts of this trajectory, time indeed runs backwards, from an emptied-out future to nurturing a stagnant imaginary past, sustained by disruptive design.”⁸ A prime example of this type of disruption through design is the Pacific project, which, by using the 180th meridian as a server site, creates an artificial and effective fusion of time in financial terms. A place where time could flow in any direction as a result of logistical, geographic, and data engineering decisions.

If disruption is the contemporary heir of the creative destruction that Joseph Schumpeter called the essential fact of capitalism, we are probably witnessing the creative destruction of time and its reconfiguration as a new financial temporality that encompasses the entire planet and its commodities.

7. Hito Steyerl, **Duty-free Art**, 25.

8. *Ibíd.*



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Fragment 2: On the acceleration of latency times in global financial markets.

Time compression and its approaching to a single time frame is already a characteristic of today's trading, for which three milliseconds in a timeframe controlled by high-speed algorithms are equivalent to one hour of human time. At these speeds, humans can no longer control anything. The result of these operations has been a radical decrease in the latency⁹ times of financial operations, which, with the advent of the Pacific project, seems to have surpassed a threshold and achieved a single, global framework by uniting the Asian and American markets (the European and American markets had already been previously linked by the transatlantic cable).⁹ The consequences of this acceleration are unknown and could represent a radical change in our conception of time as a global standard.

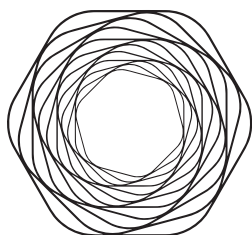
Fragment 3: On time as subject to the volatility of financial instruments.

By now it is a recognized fact that different financial instruments produce different types of temporality within their systems depending on whether or not there is volatility.¹⁰ For this reason, says the engineer and stockbroker, Elie Ayache,

in the days where there is no volatility and nothing goes on and no action on the market floor, even time was frozen. And by the way, inside the formulas there is a complete correspondence between volatility and time so the main variable is not time as such but is volatility multiplied by the square root of time. You can argue in a way that when there is volatility and things going on, time is passing and when nothing is going on nothing takes place, so its true that in finance you can rescale time anyway and make time actually depend on the activity of the underlying and you can even formally show that there is a transformation where the real variable is that comprehensive variable which is volatility not time.¹¹

9. For a definition see the first footnote of the introduction to this report.

10. Volatility is a measure of the variation in the price of a financial instrument over time (Editor's note.)



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Ayache's argument points toward the following conclusion: it is the temporality generated by this or another financial instrument or, even, if we extend his argument, by the entire market, which determines the flow of time within a given financial system. Thus, real time is susceptible to becoming a variable subject to volatility or, in the case of Proteus, to the emergence of a new temporal standard that is an exclusive product of the disruptive conditions that characterize our time.

Now, if the financial system in question encompasses the entire globe, as it occurred when the Asian and American markets were merged by the Pacific project, we would be facing the creation of a unified financial time (or UFT) that runs under the rules determined by that global market. This could well turn out to be one of the terminal points of capitalism: the creation of a new time that encompasses, reorganizes and/or transforms the commodities that are produced or take place within the global market.

At this point, it is worth considering that Proteus may be a result of this situation. Namely, that by closing the planetary loop of capital circulation, the bond between capitalism and time (as its basic unit of production) spins out of control, altering the time-money continuum that characterizes market economy.

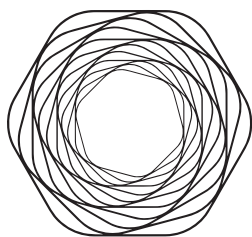
Fragment 4: On the relationship of the Pacific project with the Proteus event.

Given the chronology of the event and its coincidence with the appearance of the first manifestations of Proteus in populations across the planet, we conclude that this event is inextricable from the launch of the Pacific project on April 1, 2027, which linked the Asian and American financial markets with latencies close to the speed of light. This temporal fusion point between global markets meant not only the unification of time in financial terms, but also the rupture and irruption of something alien but apparently congruent with the dynamics of our current conception of the market.

Fragment 5: On a possible retrocausation between points B and A in time

While the temporal merger of the markets would appear to be the trigger for the Proteus event, many of the anomalous records that appeared on servers between April 1 and 4 of this year in the wake of

11. Taken from the documentary *Hyperstition* (2016), Dir: Christopher Roth.



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Proteus point to an anomaly and a possible collapse of the energy sector in the time period between 2068 and 2073 (see items 2, 3 and 4 of the chronology). If we assume that this anomaly has to do with loans taken using future income as collateral in the period 2039-42, an operation that according to Steyerl constitutes an effective emptying out of the future (see fragment 1 of this section) that could (may) have led to a financial collapse of the energy sector in Eurasia, we would be confronted with a time loop in which A (loans taken in 2039-42) causes B (energy collapse 2068-73). However, if we look at it from a future point of view, that is as a leakage of “non-existent” money from the future that is invested in the past, B (collapse) would cause A (loans), a retrocausation that would seem to reverse the “arrow of financial time”. Such a temporal configuration would explain the appearance of these future records in the current databases. On the other hand, our mere knowledge of these future events in the present turns Proteus into a sort of “presequence” that facilitates and probably intensifies borrowing at point A and, presumably, shuts itself off at B.

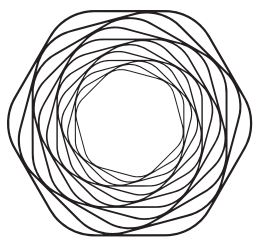
Fragment 6: On the new commodity as the result of the exacerbation of capitalism.

It is important to bear in mind that if “the subsistence economy is adapted to satisfying man’s physical needs, which are satiable, its goals are therefore finite. The industrial economy, on the other hand, is adapted to imaginary needs that can be constantly expanded through man’s fantasy; these needs are insatiable.”¹² In this sense, the new type of commodity that appeared after Proteus could be an exacerbation of capitalism, an imaginal or phantastical paroxysm that reveals new, unknown facets of the metaphysics of the commodity. A “weird tangent” as a response to the exponentiality of capital that brings with it new imaginal densities.

Fragment 7: On the relationship of commodities to their original markets.

We consider that if markets are ultimately made up of value relations and commodities are linked by these relations to their original markets, then what happens to a given market must be reflected in the

12. H.C. Binswanger, *Money and Magic*, 102.

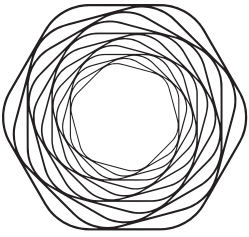


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commodities that emerge from it. Therefore, if the relations that make and are the markets change, the relation that defines commodities as such must also change. That is why commodities seem to have changed from within or, for practical purposes, mutated into entities that seem to simulate volition or, at least, a rudimentary form of consciousness, as demonstrated by the many testimonies collected in the last month throughout the planet.

Thus, it would be useful to think of commodities as entities that can be conceptualized as separate from their original market but that in reality are not, they are rather an integral part of this system, like polyps are part of a coral or neoplasm is part of a cancer. But perhaps the most fertile hypothesis is to compare the market as a mycelium and the commodities as its sexual organs (mushrooms or fruiting organs), fungal terminals that spread the perception and time of their rhizomorphs.

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4. Communication from Esparavel's assistant secretary general to the members of the project on the disappearance of Professor Adity Thakur and her team

Monday, May 26th, 2025

Dear Colonel [REDACTED],

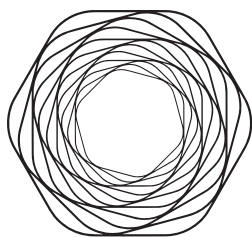
Military liaison officer to Esparavel's scientific commission

The purpose of this communication is to inform Esparavel members of the disappearance of Professor Thakur, chair of econophysics and organic economics at Miskatonic Virtual University (VMU), and her team¹³ during their research expedition to the *Pacific One hub*, one of the three hubs under construction on the 180th meridian that house the fiber optic stations linking the financial markets of the American territories with their counterparts in Asia-Pacific.

On May 12th, Professor Thakur and her team, along with a detachment of US Marines, were transported by helicopter to the platform of *Pacific One*, in order to investigate ground zero of the so-called "Proteus Event." This event is the supposed origin of a number of anomalies in financial markets across the globe and, more recently, in individual commodities that seemed to begin to "acquire sentience," "come to life" and "interact with some degree of consciousness" with our species.

From the beginning of her research, Professor Thakur argued that the Proteus event was "inextricable from the launch of the *Pacific Project* on April 1, 2027, which linked Asian and American financial markets with latencies close to the speed of light," and asserted that the "temporal fusion point between global markets meant not only the unification of time in financial terms, but also the rupture and irruption of something alien but apparently congruent with the dynamics of our current conception of the

13. Thakur's (53) team consisted of Dick Alves (38) and Cynthia McMillan (43), astrophysicists with PhDs in Econophysics; Antoine Holpainen (44), an electronic engineer and geophysicist; and Alice Wombacher (48), a philosopher, anthropologist and economist.



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market.”¹⁴

Thakur’s team, in collaboration with the European Commission’s gamma ray spectrometry laboratory, was the first to detect that Proteus was linked to a distinctive emission of an unknown isotope of Tantalum (148Ta) that appeared to originate exactly 2.3 km high in the sky above Pacific One. The team also determined that the isotope emission corresponded to a reverse pattern of a group of Kondratiev waves organized in a sixty-year cycle.¹⁵ It was later determined that another carbon isotope accompanied Tantalum in a pattern of waves that fit a decreasing cycle of Smihula waves.¹⁶ Superimposed, these two patterns give the impression of carrying both organic and inorganic chemical information, probably residual, from that point in space.¹⁷

Based on their achievements during the first round of hypotheses and research in their capacity as advisors, Thakur and his team were selected to be part of the expedition that landed on Pacific One to conduct a hands-on assessment of the station’s operational status and its effects on Asian and American markets, and of course, the electromagnetic anomalies still occurring above *Pacific One*.

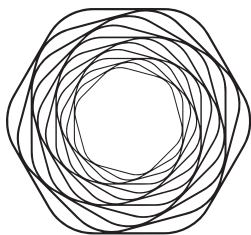
Given its geographic location, *Pacific One* is the place with the most efficient broadband connection on the planet. Despite this situation and the absence of failures in the station’s communication devices, both Thakur’s team and the marine detachment stopped all communication as of May 17 (GMT +12),

14. Taken from “One time: Proteus as a consequence of the temporal merger of global financial markets,” presented by Professors Thakur, Wombacher, Chan, et al. to Esparavel’s scientific committee

15. In economics, Kondratiev waves (also known as super-cycles or K-waves) are hypothesized cyclical patterns closely related to the life cycles of technology. A Kondratiev wave typically lasts forty to sixty years, during which it passes through periods of growth and depression in the following order: prosperity, recession, depression, and improvement. Although detractors of the hypothesis argue that this cycle involves false recognition of patterns that may not exist, Thakur demonstrated through a spectrum analysis technique that the frequency of the Tantalum emanation fits a sixty-year Kondratiev cycle in the time domain.

15. As in the case of Kondratiev waves, Smihula waves are a cyclic wave pattern closely related to technological revolutions. These waves postulate a technological evolution in three phases: innovation, application and saturation, after which the next cycle is shortened by the progress of the technological generation in question. In the specific case of Pacific One, the spectrum analysis carried out by Thakur and the European Commission’s spectrometry laboratory discovered an interference pattern between the stable cycle of Kondratiev waves and the declining cycle of Smihula, which turned out to be composed mostly of carbon, with some traces of oxygen and hydrogen, which are the basic components for the emergence of organic life. This configuration led to speculation that the Kondratiev wave would correspond to the inorganic emanation of Tantalum (used in capacitors and resistors for electronic components), while the Smihula wave to an organic emanation of a life form that, like ours, is based on carbon. The joint presence and meaning of these two waves remains a mystery.

17. Both the point of origin of this signal and the possibility that it is some kind of message (i.e. a communication coming from a volitional entity) or, at least, information or data classifiable as such, are still the subject of intense debate in specialized circles and think tanks associated with Esparavel.



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five days after their arrival at the hub. After 3 days of silence, Esparavel requested the intervention of the United States Navy's Pacific Command. The findings were unusual. As expected, *Pacific One* continued to transmit data at its usual speed, but neither Thakur and her team, nor the marine detachment (nor the station on-site staff) were found on the platform. The electromagnetic anomaly continued undisturbed. Given the absence of bodies or explicit signs of violence, the only logical explanation for the disappearance of all the members of the expedition is that they jumped into the sea for some unknown reason. This hypothesis seems confirmed by the latest of the station's security footage, which shows Antoine Holpainen and Alice Wombacher with an unidentified Marine running towards the northwestern end of the platform.¹⁸

Among the traces left behind by the group, which were sorted and classified by the archivists and graphologists at Esparavel, were found some notes in Professor Thakur's handwriting, which we present below as transcriptions and which in their original format correspond to a brief diary kept in a notebook, some post-its and isolated notes written on sheets of paper from *Pacific One*'s stationery. Only the entries from May 12 and 13 (GMT +12) were found in the trash can of Adity Thakur's laptop; from this point on, the professor preferred to use paper, pencil and pen to record her impressions and thoughts.

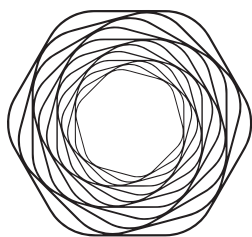
We present these notes below, which give an account of her speculations and state of mind during her stay on *Pacific One*. To date, these remarks constitute an interesting, if unorthodox, explanation of the Proteus Event —a sort of metaphysics or ontology of markets and commodities. Given the lack of functional hypotheses about Proteus, this diary presents itself as a plausible beginning that will lead us to an eventual understanding of the anomalies in which our financial markets and their accompanying commodities have been living since April 1 of this year.

Kindly,

[Redacted signature]

Assistant to the Secretary General

18. Only a few shots have been released as of now and these recordings remain classified as sensitive information by the Department of Defense.



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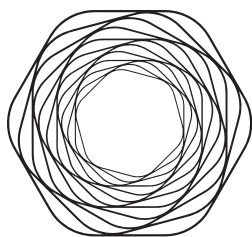
5. Transcript of the diaries of Professor Adity Thakur

For the reader's convenience, during the process of transcribing these notes, the graphology and research team added the footnotes referred to in Professor Thakur's text. Similarly, fragments and annotations that Thakur recorded in other notebooks and separate sheets were included at the times and places where they make the most sense within the main narrative. Each group of these notes is marked at the beginning and end by a dotted line and each individual note by the paragraph symbol (§).

May 11/12:

Two hours and twenty minutes in a Marine Corps helicopter from the Midway Atoll airfield. This island, part of the US Pacific territories, is in the -11 time zone so as we approach the 180th meridian we instantly jump from May 11 to May 12, we are traveling one day in the future. We arrive at *Pacific One* without incident. Lots of movement by the Marines who seem to be gearing up for war when the only battle in this place is against the enemy they will never be able to defeat: time. And I don't mean a countdown, I mean time as a standard, as a sequence of time zones that can apparently be violated in this place. Emphasis on *apparently*. We cannot really say that time "is," said Augustine of Hippo, except by virtue of its continuing tendency *not to be*.

On the platform we were greeted by the team of three engineers and two janitors who keep *Pacific One* running on 10-day rotations. The western half of the station, we were told, is on Asian time (+12 GMT) while the eastern half is on the previous day's time (-12 GMT). This particularity determines the position of the servers of each exchange; the American exchanges to the east of the meridian, and the Asian ones to the west. In the middle, right on the 180th meridian, are the hybrid "Asian-American" markets. The staff's schedules are adjusted to the +12 time zone, to take advantage of being half a day in the future. The station team does not seem to be disturbed by the sites's remoteness or by the temporal paradox that dominates the place and their routine was barely interrupted by the arrival of our helicopter. The VMU team and I began the task of setting up our spectrometry equipment on the station deck. This afternoon we will be able to collect the first measurements. Dick Alves, Cynthia McMillan and Antoine Holpainen will be taking over the readings of Proteus while Alice Wombacher and I will continue to work on hypotheses about the origin and implications of Proteus.



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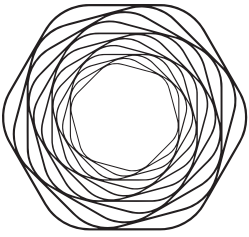
May 13:

The spectrum reading of the emanation coming from kilometers above the station oscillates between the established parameters and corroborates the data we collected with the European Commission's spectrometry laboratory. Proteus is predictable and stable, to the point that it is difficult to decide whether this stubborn consistency in the readings is the product of a volitional agent from the place of origin of the transmission, or of its absence. In this case it is not possible to discern through the physical evidence whether we are dealing with an agency or a non-agency. Perhaps it does not even matter; to assume agency and intelligence is to assume a possible message, and so far we have not been able to decipher any meaning in the emanation... If it has no meaning and is a "natural" phenomenon, we should not have to concern ourselves with the semantic aspect of the situation any more and dedicate ourselves to the strictly physical.

In the station's corridors, row upon row of towers housing the hundreds of servers that enable the connection between Asian and American markets, reigns the "antiseptic" air typical of all the high-tech havens I have visited. But there is also something "sinister." "Unheimlich" is perhaps a better term. Uncanny in the sense that it appears to be like any server farm but, at the same time, it isn't. Perhaps it is its unusual geographical location. *Pacific One* is strange and not at the same time. A place on the edge of time, the threshold between the present and the future. This whole situation is uncanny, and here I refer to the state of things, in the sense that our objects, the commodities that surround us daily, seem to be undergoing unpredictable, protean mutations in how we perceive them.

A possible conceptualization of Proteus: In *Zero History*, W. Gibson characterizes the market as "the inability to aggregate the order flow at a given moment."¹⁹ the market (financial, consumer, institutional, etc.) is, therefore, unknowable, since we do not have hard evidence of a higher-order "event/entity" capable of totalizing the orders that compose it. Could we conceptualize Proteus as this type of totalizing "event/entity" that comes from the future? If this were the case, by totaling all the orders of one or more financial markets, Proteus would be able to decipher such a market, taking it to a higher instance of itself; to a kind of self-knowledge or "awakening." (This conclusion is somewhat metaphysical for my taste, but as a hypothesis it is particularly interesting because instead of assuming that the market is "something whole," it places absence, the unknowable, the threshold and the limen,

19. William Gibson, *Zero History*, 177.



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as the foundation of knowledge. A threshold like the one we find ourselves in at this moment).

This process of “self-awareness” of the market would be similar in character to a meta-system transition from which a higher level of organization emerges. Although rather than a higher level of organization, from our current point of view, the emergence of Proteus would seem to have given rise to a particularly chaotic, capricious and not particularly organized level (or organized according to a logic invisible to us).

Now, if this hypothesis starts from absence (or from the representation of it) it allows us to see any financial market as a representation of the totality of orders existing at a given moment, that is, as the presence of an absence, of the unrepresentable and unknowable that is the flow of orders and, at the same time, as the absence of a presence, which would be its totality. Alice pointed out (very pertinently) that my formulation of the market as “the presence of an absence” was very similar to G. Agamben’s idea of the fetish as “a symbol of something and at the same time of its negation.” She also commented that Agamben had traced a genealogy that linked the religious fetish with the sexual one and with Marx’s commodity fetishism as part of the same conceptual movement. She will look online tonight for this characterization.

[...] Continuation of the May 13 entry:

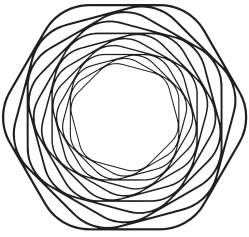
Tonight it turned out to be in a **couple of hours**... Apparently my time is still on the US West Coast (GMT -8).

Alright, so Agamben and the fetish: In essence, Agamben takes Freud’s idea of fetish that he presents in his 1927 essay “Fetichismus”²⁰. In this text Freud postulates that the fetishistic fixation arises

from the refusal of the male child to acknowledge the absence of the penis of the female (of the mother). Confronted with the perception of this absence, the child refuses [...] to admit its reality, because to do so would permit a threat of castration against his own penis. The fetish is therefore the “substitute for the woman’s (the mother’s) penis that the little boy once believed in and —for reasons familiar to us —does not want to give up.”²¹

20, *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (vol. XIII), 1927.

21. Quoted by Agamben en *Stanzas*, 31.



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Although entirely phallogentric, Freud's idea would seem to shed light on a primal process of psychic life that could be found elsewhere. Freud's fixation with his genitalia is well known. Thus, whether "a part of the body or an inorganic object, is, therefore, at one and the same time, the presence of that nothingness that is the maternal penis and the sign of its absence. Both symbol of something and its negation,"²²

Now, according to Agamben, sexual fetishism is characterized by a feeling of constant absence and dissatisfaction that replicates the dynamics of the fear of castration.

The fetish confronts us with the paradox of an unattainable object that satisfies a human need precisely through its being unattainable. Insofar as it is a presence, the fetish object is in fact something concrete and tangible; but insofar as it is the presence of an absence, it is, at the same time, immaterial and intangible, because it aludes continuously beyond itself to something that can never really be possessed.²³

According to Agamben there is something that unites the sexual fetish (that presence of an absence) and the commodity understood as a fetish:

Just as the fetishist never succeeds in possessing the fetish wholly, because it is the sign of two contradictory realities, so the owner of a commodity will never be able to enjoy it simultaneously as both useful object and as value [...]²⁴

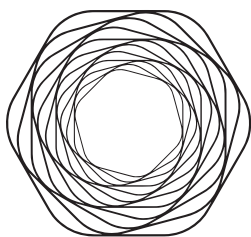
Unsurprisingly, the dynamics of fetishism and consumerism share one essential trait. "Precisely because the fetish is a negation and the sign of an absence," says Agamben,

it is not an unrepeatable unique object; on the contrary, it is something infinitely capable of substitution, without any of its successive incarnations ever succeeding in exhausting the nullity of which it is the symbol. However much the fetishist multiplies proofs of its presence and accumulates harems of objects, the fetish will inevitably remain elusive and celebrate, in each of its

22. Agamben, *Stanzas*, 31-32.

23. Ibid, 33. Italics are A.T.'s.

24. Ibid, 37.



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apparitions, always and only its own mystical phantasmagoria.²⁵

It is for this reason that the commodity understood as a fetish can only be enjoyed through a compulsive accumulation that highlights the basic compulsion of consumerism.

However, could we extrapolate the fetishism of the commodity to its higher level, to the market? That is, is the market itself a kind of *überfetish* whose general form constantly refers to something beyond itself (the totality of the order flow) without ever possessing it completely...?

(Perhaps reaching the fetish would correspond to a metasystem transition...)

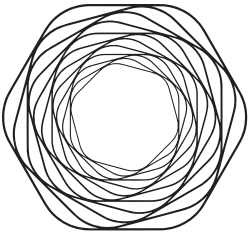
\$ This idea is too big and general... it feels like a dead end. Maybe we should start with the particular and then circle back to it.

\$ What is the relationship between the market as a fetish and commodity fetishism?

\$ My laptop feels strange, alien, haunted. It's like a laptop "should" be, but for some reason it seems more "alive" than in the previous days... To paraphrase Eco, "it charges the spirit not with matter but feeds it with essences." Does proximity to Proteus, to ground zero, do something to previously unaffected goods? Continue jotting down notes in my notebook. Paper and pencil seems the best way to do this...

May 14:

25. Ibid, 33..



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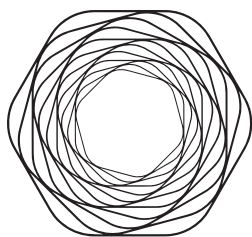
Early morning on the platform. I didn't get much sleep last night, I walk outside covered with a blanket, drinking a cup of coffee. I waited for the sunrise, and as it peeked over the indigo waves of the Pacific I realized I was looking into the past. A past sun, that of yesterday in America, rose before my eyes. As I turned 180 degrees west, towards Asia, I contemplated the future, which was calling to me. (*Today or the future?*) I felt dizzy, as if the station were moving in the ocean like a ship leaving a wake in the water, a wake of time. And there I was, alone, on the platform of *Pacific One* at dawn, in the only present possible in this place, standing on the fixed point in the middle of the river of time, the past in front of me and the future behind me. How does one grow old in a place like this? Is it possible being at the static, eternal point between yesterday and tomorrow? The arrow of time, its inevitability and irreversibility as a thermodynamic fact, never stops, but perhaps its ontological status as a sequence of events does. A fixed point in time can only be an eternal present. Paradise or punishment?

§ Obviously the arrow of time does not stop, only the way we record the passage of time. Does this have any psychological effect?

§ Have these types of questions been reported by the station team? (Find out)

Regarding Proteus and the changes reported in thousands of commodities globally, Alice and I decided to take a more general approach, focusing first on the effects recorded in thousands of individual commodities and then extrapolating them to the market level. My current hypothesis, which requires a few conceptual leaps (two specifically), would seem inseparable from Marx's concept of commodity fetishism. For some reason, in the wake of the April 1 event, a dislocation would have emerged between the use value and the exchange value of the commodity.

Marx:



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A commodity seems at first sight to be a trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a use-value, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it satisfies human needs, or that it first takes on these properties as the product of human labour. It is absolutely clear that, by his activity, man changes the forms of the materials of nature in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary, sensuous thing. But as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing on its own free will.²⁶

The mysterious and clearly mystical quality of the commodity as a sensible thing which also transcends sensuousness, arises from its separation into two forms of value: use value and exchange value. The first, which an object acquires by supplying a specific human need, and the second, which comes from its capacity to acquire a monetary value by entering the market. While use value expresses “a physical relationship between physical objects,” exchange value expresses “the value relationship between the products of labor in which this form is represented.” These products, however,

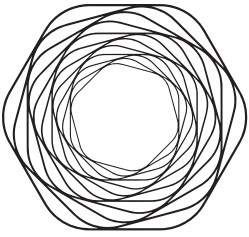
have absolutely no connection with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the *fantastic form* of a relation between things.²⁷

Exchange value is perfectly intangible, abstract.

Indeed, exchange value—the *fantastic form* of the commodity—is not even made of matter, something that

²⁶, Karl Marx, *El Capital*, 72.

²⁷. Marx, *El Capital*, 73. Las itálicas son de A.T.



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Marx himself admits when describing this form of value:

In obvious contrast with the materiality of the body of the commodity, not a single atom of matter penetrates to its value... Metamorphosed into identical sublimates, samples of the same undifferentiated labor, all objects manifest but one thing, which is that a certain force of labor has been expended in producing them. Insofar as they are crystals of this common social substance, they are reputed to be value.²⁸

The commodity as the crystallization of an abstract form of value that corresponds to social labor is an idea pregnant with metaphysics.

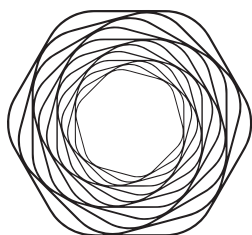
§ Are we witnessing the moment when our commodities stand on its head, not in front of other commodities but in front of us? The moment when they reveal their fantastic form and begin dancing?

§ Could commodity and exchange value be defined as object and quality in phenomenological terms?

[...] Continuation of the May 14 entry:

It is perhaps the fantastic form, the exchange value, which became “literal” and “tangible” from Proteus onwards and which we are confronted with at this moment. The “dislocation,” which from this point of view would be a “conjunction” or “rearticulation,” consists in being able to directly witness this fantastic form, that is, being able to simultaneously account for the use value and the exchange value of any commodity. Being able to account for

28. Thakur toma esta cita alterada de Estancias, la palabra y el fantasma en la cultura occidental de Giorgio Agamben, 79. (N. de los Eds.)



Esparavel

something complete, whole, absolute.

§ Is this a kind of coniunctio oppositorum, a conjunction no longer of opposites (C. G. Jung) but of polar and complementary elements? A coniunctio complementarum? Or even, beyond that, a meta-coniunctio that connects not two elements but two levels?

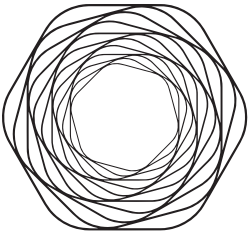
§ Note: perhaps the commodity has always been disarticulated and only now, through the fusion of financial time, its globalization (see Virilio), has it been "rearticulated" and has shown its "true faces" [...] both "true" faces

§ think: what does global and glocal look like at the same time?

May 15:

Two bad nights in a row. (Nights confused between dream and reality... Voices coming from the station's servers... Huge waves... Something speaking to me...) Note: double melatonin dose tonight to readjust my circadian cycles. I check the previous day's entry to make sure of the date. May 15, three days since our arrival. Three nights and today, the day that begins, the fourth. After breakfast I go out to the platform for a while to clear my thoughts. *Cirrus uncinus* to the east, the clear sky to the west. I imagine myself standing on an island or on top of a mountain in the middle of the sea. (What is an island but the top of a mountain in the middle of the sea?) Who wrote about an enormous mountain in the middle of the Pacific? Bataille... Daumal, perhaps? A sort of Mount Meru, a spiritual axis of the world. Anyway... Alves and McMillan want me to review the Proteus readings, (there was a slight fluctuation apparently). Then, meeting with Alice about commodity fetishism.

As I mentioned yesterday, our hypothesis requires two conceptual leaps. First leap:



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What if what we are witnessing is the emergence of an *absolute commodity*?

This expression reminded me of *Stanzas*, the first book by G. Agamben that Alice brought to my attention. In the passage in question, Agamben gives an account of Baudelaire's attitude towards the invasion of the commodity into everyday life in 19th century France. The greatness of this poet, says Agamben, "was that he responded to this invasion by transforming the work of art into a commodity and a fetish. That is, he divided, within the work of art itself, use-value from exchange value, the work's traditional authority from its *authenticity*. Hence his implacable polemic against every utilitarian interpretation of the artwork and the ferocious zeal with which he proclaimed that poetry has no end except itself.²⁹ *l'art pour l'art*

How then can we separate the use value from the exchange value in any object, in any given commodity?

§ "Art for art's sake" goes beyond aesthetics and delves into the ontological, it gets lost in the... [illegible]

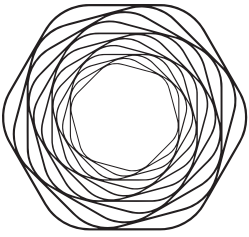
§ the epistemological turns around on itself and becomes (recoils) ontological

[...] Continuation of the May 15 entry:

Agamben:

[...] what gives his discovery a genuinely revolutionary character is that Baudelaire did not limit himself to reproducing within the artwork the scission between use-value and exchange value, but also proposed to create a commodity in which the form of value would be totally identified with the use-value: an absolute commodity, so to speak, in which the process of fetishization would

29. Itálicas de A.T. Completamos con las líneas de que siguen en el original de Agamben. "De ahí también su insistencia en el carácter inasible de la experiencia estética y su teorización de lo bello como epifanía instantánea e impenetrable."



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be pushed to the point of annihilating the reality of the commodity itself as such. A commodity in which use-value and exchange value reciprocally cancel out each other, whose value therefore consists in its uselessness and whose use in its intangibility, is no longer a commodity..³⁰

This type of commodity (if it can still be called such) is absolute because its exchange value is abolished by its use value and vice versa, and this mutual cancellation makes it simultaneously useless and/or intangible.

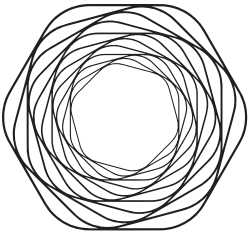
§ The other option implicit in Agamben's argument is "a commodity whose tangibility is its exchange value and its use value is its uselessness," a perfect oxymoron.

§ At times it seems to me that the pencil with which I take these notes does not write correctly... I check the tip, it is a little blunt, yes, but not so much that it cannot write... it makes marks on the paper... however, the annotations lose relevance and it is the pencil itself that grabs my attention. Yellow, 2HB, the yellow painted wood seems intangible... or, rather, there is something else, something else that seems tangible through it.... something quasi-phenomenal that wants my attention [...]

§ Is this what our commodities have become? Objects that reveal themselves as masks?

§ If we can assume that commodity fetishism brings with it a homogeneous and empty variety of time, is this temporality what is disrupted when a commodity manifests itself in all its stages of production, from raw to recycled material?

30. Continuamos el fragmento de Agamben: [...] la mercantilización de la obra de arte es también la abolición más radical de la mercancía



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§ What would exchange value, something perfectly abstract, look like if it were tangible?

[...] Continuation of the May 15 entry:

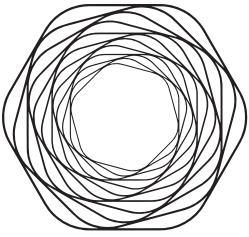
The commodity described by Agamben is no longer an object in the traditional or etymological sense of the term; that is, it is not something, a thing, that simply *lies before us* (ob + iacere). It is a “philosophical object” that, returning to Marx, is animated by its fantastic form, by “the value relation between the products of the labor that produced it” and that has now become its “~~soul~~/essence.” (Perhaps this explanation is too animistic.)

§ Are we beginning to witness our consumer goods simultaneously on the obverse and reverse side [...] use and value, inside and outside?

§§ What would a commodity that is simultaneously intangible (use value) and useless (exchange value) look like?

§ How could we perceive something composed of two qualities that cancel each other out, what would we see?

§ Or perhaps our mind imagines that these qualities cancel each other out because we simply cannot conceive that they can be perceived simultaneously. Our Aristotelian logic prevents us from doing so.



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May 15 no, 16:

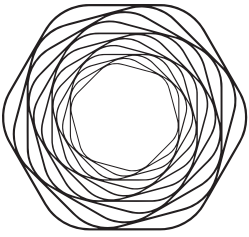
More nightmares, waves of time enter and flood the server room. Iridescent coral formations invade the station. A mountain that is a funnel in the sky, just above the station, an inverted mountain. (Maybe it's the melatonin that's giving me these lucid dreams... back to the previous dose). But everyone seems normal here, McMillan and Alves continue to work on the Proteus readings as if nothing strange is going on, (yesterday's fluctuation is slightly out of the norm but nothing exceptional). Is there something strange going on, or am I just more susceptible? (Susceptible to what? Perhaps to an invisible influence spreading through the station... Are you listening to yourself Adity..., an invisible influence...? Spooky action at a distance...?) I have breakfast and stay inside the station, preferring not to look up at the sky (sometimes the horizon seems to shift and distort, twist...) It was René Daumal who wrote *Mount Analogue*, a short novel, incomplete on account of his death, about an expedition to a great invisible mountain in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Okay, so the first conceptual leap was to mutually annul the use-value and exchange-value of a commodity, to make it "absolute." Now the second conceptual leap:

Once the commodity is conceptualized of as a philosophical object we can think of use-value and exchange-value as its qualities (something that can be easily visualized in the case of the use-value of a physical commodity). Here the relation to phenomenology is evident, in particular to the gap that Husserl establishes between objects and their qualities in the phenomenal world. For Husserl sensory objects, those with which we interact on a daily basis, have sensory qualities that make them evident to the senses. Similarly, we can interact with everyday commodities through their use-value, so that this form of value becomes our analogy in its sensory quality.

§ (I cross out in the notebook all references to the manufacturer and cut the tags on my clothes, a strange recourse that in certain cases seems to appease commodities... the proximity to ground zero definitely seems to affect them).

§ Now, if the sensory quality is the "use value" of the commodity, would Husserl's



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real quality be the "exchange value"?

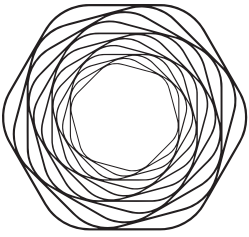
§ Why is the epicenter right here, at the 180th meridian, why in this precise place? Does the gap in time correspond to the gap between objects and their qualities?

Okay, where were we? Apart from sensory objects and their sensory qualities, in Husserl's system there are also "real objects" and "real qualities" which are not available to the senses but which give them their particular character, which make them what they are and not something else. The interaction of a real object and its real quality gives rise to the "essence" of the object, while the interaction of the sensory object with its real quality gives rise to what Husserl calls *eidos*. In our object-commodity analogy, Husserl's "real quality" would be the exchange value, which the commodity acquires when it enters the market.

Perhaps this is what is happening with many of our commodities, that we are seeing *through* the sensory commodity to its real qualities, its *eidos*. We are perceiving the **metaphysical** of the commodity that was previously unavailable to our senses. Witnessing something non-phenomenal through the phenomenal. And this is disconcerting, if not terrifying, because it seems as if commodities were alive and capable of ... [illegible text].

§ Alice seems distant... strange. Her voice and gestures don't match her appearance... she seems upset, I feel she is upset, but her face doesn't reflect it at all...
~~is it her or me?~~

§ A pencil, something as simple as a pencil, a piece of wood with a graphite rod inside, at times seems devoid of qualities, it seems almost "naked." It's just... a piece of wood... matter dissociated from any attribute or use...



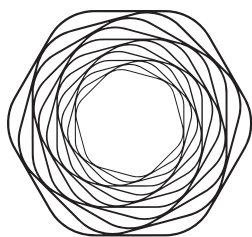
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Thus, from the Husserlian point of view, the commodity as an object would present us with two simultaneous tensions: a hidden tension that lies *beyond* or *behind* the “sensory commodity” that we can perceive with our senses and that can be described by the conjunction of the “sensory commodity with its real quality,” that is, its exchange value in the market, and an evident tension that we could describe as “sensory commodity and sensory quality” that corresponds to its use value. We can use the sensory, manipulate it, but the “real,” what lies behind the appearances of the commodity, is beyond our instrumental and sensory reach. And yet we seem to be able to perceive it...

May 17:

4:03 AM, I wake up startled by a nightmare. I write down what I remember: The point from which Proteus springs, a couple of kilometers above *Pacific One*, is actually the top of an inverted mountain, a funnel through which time flows into our dimension... this mountain is something like a plug in the sinkhole of time, a descending peak that... [illegible]. I see two intersecting cones tracing spirals; Proteus is the apex of the upper cone and the station the apex of the lower one, which intersect producing corals and anemones in constant movement (extemporal anemones... extratemporal...) that extrude into our world... I can't find any other words to describe this [illegible].³¹. I don't see a mycelium, I see a coral. Commodities would not be the “sexual organs” of the rhizomorph-market, they would be hyperdimensional transmission antennas of an outside that we do not fully understand, something that wants to make contact with us but does not speak a remotely human language and resorts to altering matter and time to transmit its message. (Does all this make the slightest sense?)

31. La pesadilla de la Dra. Thakur guarda una sorprendente similitud con la estructura geométrica de conos y espirales descrita por W.B. Yeats en *A vision*. En este libro los personajes de Yeats Michael Robartes y Owen Aherne, el primero de los cuales ya había aparecido en *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921) y, el segundo, que aparece en diversos textos con una existencia más tenue en la mente del autor, «dan cuenta del descubrimiento de un sistema filosófico arcano, codificado a partir de una serie de diagramas geométricos (“esferas y cuadrados, conos hechos de remolinos en expansión que se entrelazan a partir de varios ángulos, figuras que parecen ser de gran complejidad”) firmado por un tal “Giraldus” y datado de 1594 [...] Los diagramas de Giraldus son variaciones sobre un mismo principio esquemático compuesto de dos conos intersectados, cada uno invertido y anidado dentro del otro» (Amy Ireland, “el Poemameno” en *Filosofía-Ficción: Inteligencia artificial, tecnología oculta y el fin de la humanidad*, 120-21). Hasta el momento no hemos encontrado ningún indicio de que la Dra. Thakur estuviera familiarizada con el sistema que Yeats describe en *A Vision*, lo cual hace de su sueño un notable coincidencia. (N. del E.)



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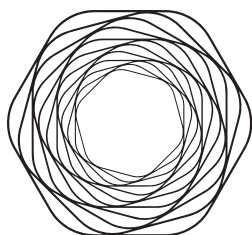
Let us return to our topic. I think I have already achieved some clarity with respect to Husserl's position. On Heidegger's side things become even more interesting when we think of them from his conception of phenomenology. If Husserl is a philosopher of presence, says G. Harman, Heidegger is a philosopher of absence. What interests him is not what is presented to consciousness, but that which is not presented to it but is still there. His tool-analysis is dedicated to this topic.

Harman:

Heidegger's tool-analysis is familiar to anyone even loosely acquainted with recent philosophy. At any moment I am conscious of a number of objects lying before me: desk, lamp, computer, telephone. Yet Heidegger notes that most of the things with which we contend are not explicitly present to the mind at all, but have the mode of being of "equipment," or readiness-to-hand. These range from the eyeglasses that I usually fail to notice, to the beating heart that keeps me alive, to the chair and solid floor that prevent me from toppling to the earth, to the grammatical structures mastered in earliest childhood. Conscious awareness makes up only a tiny portion of our lives. For the most part, objects withdraw into a shadowy subterranean realm that supports our conscious activity while seldom erupting into view. Heidegger also frequently claims that this occluded underground realm is a unified system rather than a collection of autonomous objects: strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "an" equipment, since tools are reciprocally and globally determined by their mutual references.³²

Reality is only a small piece, a slice of what our consciousness can encompass. We should not say *reality*, but *our reality*; the reality available to the human mind. Now, if objects, whether conscious or unconscious, belong to a unified system that is defined by their relationships, it is these relationships that define their status within the system. And this is the very definition of a market! A unified and self-regulating system that is determined by the value relations between its elements and, to paraphrase Marx, by the exchange value relations of each commodity that crystallize into objects that we can now see in all their... [illegible]

32. Graham Harman, *El objeto cuádruple, Una metafísica de las cosas después de Heidegger*, 33.



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End of Dr. Adity Thakur's diary

* * *

\$ The commodity has always been an abstract entity ... its immaterial part has always preceded its ... part ... [illegible] Perhaps we have accessed an ontological level of the market ... perhaps the market itself (and its polyp-commodities), are revealing themselves to be ontological, entities in their own right! Volitional entities that are trying to interact with us ... to establish contact ... to communicate

.... An Ontological Marketplace

\$ Nature likes to hide, said Heraclitus... perhaps nature has become camouflage for something else.

\$ It is [illegible] ... the emergence of a new nature (phusis) and a new form of manifestation (phainomena)!

\$ What emerges from Proteus is not a new R'lyeh but the plug in the sinkhole of time, in the form of an inverted mountain, not a huge mycelium but a descending peak, a stalactite of time covered with tetradimensional corals [...] inorganic flora [illegible] extruding itself into our world, an inverted tree from which hangs the new commodity [illegible]

\$ Pacific One is Mount Analog turned upside down... A caesura in time...

\$ With the weird commodity dead labor becomes alive.