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The Toilet As The Žižekian Vase: The Philosophical Surplus of Psychoanalysis

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I have chosen as our starting point a quote from a conference by Jacques Lacan on psychoanalysis and the formation of the psychiatrist, which took place at the Sainte-Anne hospital, in 1967. At the very end of his presentation, we find the following passage:

“There is something quite astounding, which is that those who do quite well the work of transmission, [by doing it] without actually naming me, regularly lose the opportunity, which is quite visible in the text, of contributing with the little idea that they could have presented there! Little or even quite big. (...) Why is it that they would produce a small innovation? It is because, in citing me, in the very fact of citing me, they would presentify (...) the context of struggle [“contexte de bagarre”] in which I produced all of this. From the sole fact of stating it within the context of struggle, this would put me in my place, and would allow them to produce then a small innovation” (LACAN, 1979: 66)

In a formulation that cannot but resonate with the Hegelian conception of totality, Lacan proposes that a new conceptual contribution, the production of a new idea, takes place when we include into a given field of knowledge the symptomatic distortions it produces. The crucial point, however, is that it is not the name “Lacan”, but the *act* of naming him – not the statement, but the position of enunciation – which brings into play the “context of struggle”, the constitutive impasse, of which the name “Lacan” is but a singular and local solution. This operation is Lacan’s answer to the problem of intellectual property – the problem being, in fact, that there is no such thing, for nothing guarantees the ultimate reference of a statement back to its original utterance. On the other hand, when Lacan articulates transmission and conceptual innovation in a totality operated by his name, he is not claiming that the name functions as the index of an origin, a property, but rather as the mark of a historical and conceptual impasse, one in which we partake, sharing its origin, when we engage with this totality.

To better understand what is the 'context of struggle' evoked by the name "Lacan", let us now turn to the final chapter of Jean-Claude Milner's book *Les Noms Indistincts*, titled "A Generation which Squandered itself" (MILNER, 2007: 133-144). In this last text, Milner describes the strange fate of his generation – a generation whose failure, he observes, was not that of falling on contradiction, but rather that of stumbling on a point of indistinction at the very core of its political and conceptual projects. Having trusted that a political vision of the world could find in a purely symbolic discourse the univocal pivot on which to assure that collective organization could structure itself around desire, and not reality, around freedom, and not survival, the generation of the 60's in France paid an unexpectedly cruel price: the requirement that there should be pure discernment - in short, a name capable of undoubtedly distinguishing the real from the realist cause - ultimately implied that every distortion or error in following through the consequences of their project was a matter of misunderstanding the emblem, or a matter of betrayal. Consequently, those who had sought to organize in the name of a real, the real of desire or freedom, found themselves soon enough to be irredeemably disjunct from each other, incapable even of reminiscing together on the past, which is something most generations are allowed to do even in the face of the worst of failures. This dispersion, which was nothing but the very real of their trust in the power of the purely symbolic name, is for Milner the fundamental trait of his generation, the consequence of having repressed a fundamental ambiguity which could never have been truly erased from any emblem.

In Milner's conceptual framework, the name of this indistinction is *homonymy*, the inherently equivocal constitution of any name, the unavoidable possibility that it merely has the semblance of the symbolic efficacy or excess to itself that its meaning suggests. And because there is nothing outside of the world - not even the pure letter - which could safely verify for us that the name we have invested with the power to organize this very world has in fact consented to its real, there is also no way to foresee the consequences which arise from this naming, since evoking "the real" might very well be an homonymous plea for the suturing of what is in excess to the world. The repeated effects of having negated the political homonymy - irreversible betrayals, misunderstanding and errors which could only be thought of as mistakes in the application of an idea, and not as distortions inherent to the idea itself - finally imposed the conclusion: there is no political metalanguage, no way to safeguard against the imaginary use of the political names of the real, and, furthermore, there is no metalanguage at all, for this indistinction is in fact inherent to the name as such.

In the closing paragraphs of the last chapter of his book, Milner turns this fundamental impasse into one of the most clear and exemplary formulations of the context of struggle of the end of the 60's, a "contexte de bagarre" that is indissociable from the name of its symptom:

"It was then that the political vision of the world, in itself, looked like a thing from the past. (...) the reign of homonymy was again sovereign and dispersion seemed irremediable: no signifier could from then on count as the One of a grouping. Maybe there is nothing to deplore here, only a childish lament of what has now become a passed youth. What is grave,

what is mortal, unforgivable, is what Jakobson already pointed out in his time: the triumph of muteness.

From the fact that homonymy is the Real of language [lalangue], it does not follow that it is not necessary to inscribe whatever it is in language; from the fact that every thought, given that it names, is equivocal, it does not follow that it is not necessary to think; from the fact that every name is multiply ambiguous it does not result that it is not necessary to name; from the fact that univocity is the impossible it does not result that it should not command a desire. It is necessary to speak, and think, and name, and singularly, it is necessary to speak, think, name the homonymy – even at the risk of concentrating it with one sole signifier, which is a proper noun: Lacan.”

(MILNER, 2007: 143-144)

This is then the context of struggle evoked by the name “Lacan”: there is no metalanguage - and therefore, there is homonymy - but it is necessary to speak, think and name, and to speak, think and name the homonymy itself. It is also crucial to note that Milner delineates quite clearly what he considers to be the political limits of the Lacanian teaching: the non-existence of metalanguage is the very cause of naming and speaking – this could be thought of as the very axiom of the clinic – and it should also be made into the cause of transmission of knowledge itself – this is the axiom of analytical theory – , but the lack of a political metalanguage *did* serve as a warning *against* the political organization: “no signifier could from then on count as the One of a grouping” – the homonymy is not turned into the cause of the collective.

Milner reinforces this position many times throughout his work, most notably in 1991, in his magnum opus, *L'Oeuvre Claire* (1998), when he argues that the failure of the *École Freudienne de Paris* was a direct consequence of the “deconstruction of the second Lacanian classicism” (MILNER, 1998: 129), a dissolution which would have begun around Lacan’s 20th Seminar, when the doctrine of the *matheme* was absorbed by the theory of the borromean knot - that is, the collective organization was inherently doomed to fail once the letter was thought of as the composite of the indistinct knotting of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. It is worth mentioning that a very similar diagnosis can be found in the work of Jacques-Alain Miller, specially in his brilliant and highly influential text *The Six Paradigms of Enjoyment* (2000), where he also identifies a crucial conceptual break in Lacan’s teaching around 1970: a shift from the notion of “discursive enjoyment” (MILLER, 2000: 101) – enjoyment as retroactively produced by the entropic dimension of the signifier’s incidence in the body – to the notion of “idiotic” or “autistic” enjoyment (ibid: 103) – enjoyment as the body which only accedes to the signifier in order to find satisfaction in the babbling of language – which would characterize our so called “post modern” times of dispersion and new symptomatology. The very destiny of the institutional dimension of the Lacanian field testifies to the consequences of this fundamental break in Lacan’s teaching: the *Cause Freudienne de Paris*, which substituted the dissolved School, was supposed to answer to the impossibility posed by this “autistic enjoyment” by organizing itself as the agglutination of smaller units, always containing up to 7 or 8 people, called cartels. In this way, the excess

produced by the One of a group would always be referred back to the individuals which compose it. This brief overview of the position of two of the greatest Lacanians should be enough for us to recognize that what we could call a “Lacanian classicism” organizes itself not only around the name “Lacan” and a certain context of struggle – defined by the impasses of the homonymy – but also within a certain political limit – the impossibility of the political metalanguage - whose effects are recognizable both in the current organization of the Lacanian Schools as well as in the overall agreement as to the mapping of Lacan’s conceptual itinerary.

We should be now in a position to reformulate the question which serves as the heading of this panel – that is, to ask: what context of struggle is evoked by the name “Žižek”? Our wager is that the crucial point of impasse which constitutes what is a properly Žižekian problem can be revealed in a brief comparison between the more orthodox Lacanian position we have just described and Žižek’s distinctive take on Lacan’s conceptual and institutional developments from the late 60’s. The first point is explicitly articulated, for example, in Žižek’s book *On Belief* (2001), where he directly reproaches Miller’s conception of Lacan’s “sixth paradigm of enjoyment”, arguing that it does not live up to Lacan’s nor to Miller’s own conceptual standards because it fails to read the new contemporary symptoms against the background of our ideological predicament (ŽIŽEK, 2001: 31-33). The second point is extensively addressed in *Parallax View* (2006), where he criticizes Milner’s reading of “the Jew as the *object a* of Europe” (ŽIŽEK, 2006: 253-259) – basically, the idea that the name “Jew” stands for the inherent failure of formal universality as such -, as well as Miller’s description of the function of psychoanalysis today – that of normalizing the tensions and excesses produced by our society of risk, helping us to cope with the subjective toll of the contemporary novelties (ibid: 260-261). A crucial passage from *Parallax View* makes it quite clear that what constitutes the productive antagonism circumscribed by Žižek’s position is the different destiny he assigns to the challenges faced by Lacan’s teaching around 1970 - impasses responsible for certain innovations which both Milner and Miller consider to have been overcome, rather than supplemented, by what followed them:

“when Lacan introduces the term “desire of the analyst,” it is in order to undermine the notion that the climax of the analytic treatment is a momentous insight into the abyss of the Real, the “traversing of the fantasy,” from which, the morning after, we have to return to sober social reality, resuming our usual social roles—psychoanalysis is *not* an insight which can be shared only in the precious initiatic moments. Lacan’s aim is to establish the possibility of a collective of analysts, of discerning the contours of a possible social link between analysts (...). The stakes here are high: is every community based on the figure of a Master (...), or its derivative, the figure of Knowledge (...)? Or is there a chance of a different link? Of course, the outcome of this struggle was a dismal failure in the entire history of psychoanalysis, from Freud to Lacan’s later work and his *École*—but the fight is worth pursuing. This is the properly Leninist moment of Lacan—recall how, in his late writings, he is endlessly struggling with the organizational questions of the School. The psychoanalytic collective is, of course, a collective of (and in) an emergency state. (...) so what if, in the constellation in which the Unconscious itself, in its strict Freudian sense, is disappearing, the task of the analyst should no longer be to undermine the hold of the Master-Signifier, but, on the contrary, to construct/propose/install *new* Master-Signifiers?” (ŽIŽEK, 2006: 305-306)

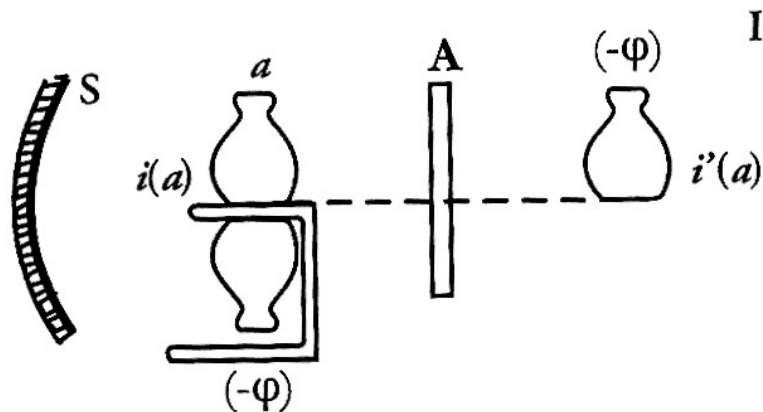
There where Miller and Milner identify a break or shift in Lacan's work, Žižek recognizes "a fight worth pursuing", a fight which has to do precisely with the status of the political in the times of the "reign of homonymy". It is important to note, then, that Žižek's position does not contradict the Lacanian one, it rather supplements the obstacle identified by Milner - the homonymy of the political name - with the *object of the political as such*, namely, the conceptualization of an impasse that is constitutive of the social space, a structural failure which *endows it with a cause*. This is why Žižek's hypothesis - that the task of the analyst today, in face of the ideological atonality of the world, should also be to install new master-signifiers - is fundamentally supported by the recognition that there is an excess which is produced *in and by* the social link and which cannot be reduced to the individual register - in fact, a real whose exclusion constitutes the very distinction between the social and the individual domains. We must consider the analytical consequences of the fact that not every One of a group sutures the real of a subject's responsibility, because there are certain consequences of one's mode of enjoyment which are *only* brought into play when we consider - to use an expression from *Living in the End Times* (2010) - that "in the social field the 'as if' is the Thing itself" (ŽIŽEK, 2010: 285), that is, that Capital is not merely a symbolic fiction which is sustained by our individual practices, but rather the cause and product of an autonomized and irreducible dimension of sociality.

Our wager, then, is that turning the inconsistency of the big Other into the cause of the social field - which we have seen to be the limit of subjective engagement for the Lacanian classicism - is in fact what constitutes the strictly Žižekian context of struggle, in which the "sublime object of ideology", the autonomized part of a political body (that does not exist), is not reducible to the individual body of the speaking being. The crucial shift here - which, again, should be thought of as a supplementary step rather than a break with the fundamental coordinates of the Lacanian teaching - is the move from conceiving the social space as a symbolic/imaginary space which we would endow with its normative function so that it might then offer us an escape from the real of the body and the impossibility of sexual relation, to a conception of the social link in which the subject's fantasy knots itself to the indistinct status of the norm, to its own inherently homonymic dimension, which is irreducible to the sum of all individual practices.

In order to investigate a little further the validity of this claim, I will attempt to exemplify this conceptual shift or supplementation with reference to Žižek's rather infamous ideological analysis of toilets. After all, one of the first "Žižekian" tasks is to learn how to take Žižek seriously, and considering Lacan's well-known remark on the relation between taking things seriously and putting things into a series (LACAN, 1999: 2), the toilet is an object of study which offers itself to this serious analysis with particular usefulness. The starting point of this investigation must then be the question: into what series is the toilet to be included? The answer, reflecting our overall attempt to inscribe Žižek into the Lacanian field, is in fact quite evident: the series of the Lacanian vases.

Lacan actually provides us with a RSI of vases: the first one is included in the optical schema of the mirror stage as a model of the imaginary, it is the 'vase without flowers' that was an object of great investigation specially in his early seminars (LACAN, 1991).

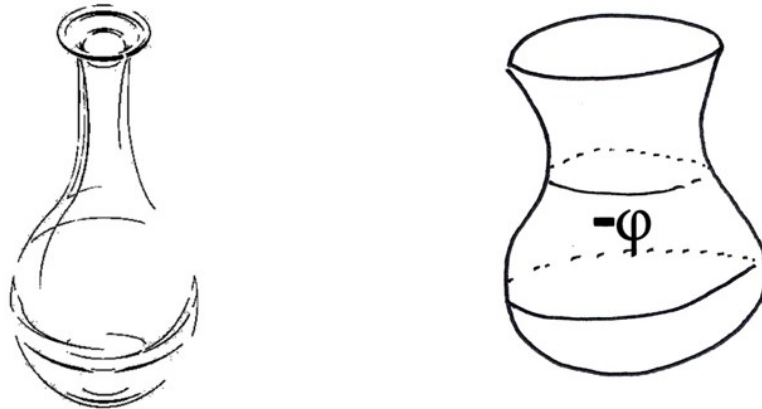
The optic schema



The vase of the symbolic is the most famous one, the one he borrowed from Heidegger's text *The Thing*, and which served as a mythical model for the introduction of the signifier into the world - as Lacan puts it, "it is on the basis of this fabricated signifier, this vase, that emptiness and fullness as such enter the world" (LACAN, 1997: 120). This conception of the vase is most extensively dealt with in his seminar on ethics, but Lacan returned to it many times throughout his work, most notably in his seminar on anguish, where he calls it "the vase of castration" (LACAN, 2004: 224), on account of how the round border of the vase functions as the frame of fantasy, that is, as the minimal circumscription of the empty place of the object of desire.

The vase of castration

(The vase as a model of how the signifier, a void, enters into the world, introducing the distinction between empty and full)

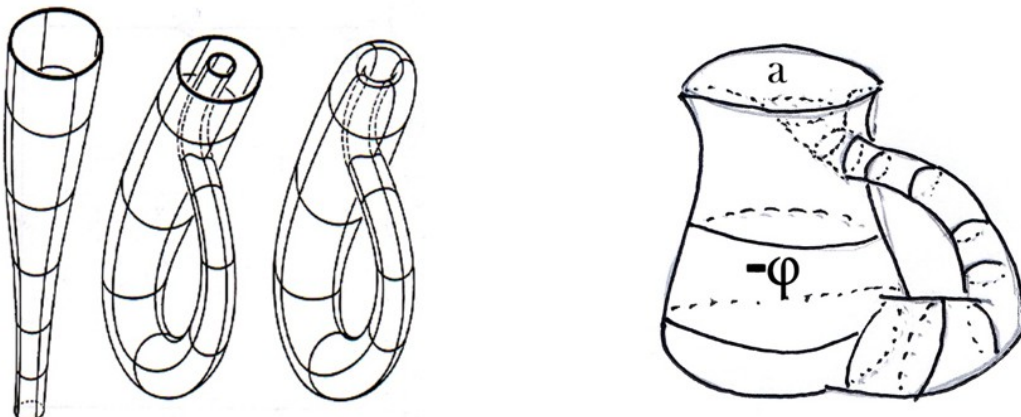


The third vase, the real one, appears for the first time in this same seminar, in the class of 26th of March of 1963, and Lacan calls it the “vase of the object a” (ibid: 226). The crucial point here is that Lacan introduces a certain twist - a Moebian twist, in fact - to the vase of castration, in order to construct the model of how “the lack comes to lack” (figure 3). This amounts to the following operation: we must first visualize the regular vase, with its border surrounding the empty content and dividing it from the different sort of emptiness of the outside, and then imagine that we distort it so that the bottom of the vase is pulled down, twisted up and then re-introduced through the lateral of the vase, “gluing” itself back to the upper border of the vase from within. This is the three-dimensional visualization of the topological surface called Klein bottle.

The “twist” which distinguishes it from the vase of castration is that, from within the void of the vase, from the place of the ‘minus phi’, the lack of the imaginary phallus, something appears. If

The vase of a

(Klein bottle as the model for the structure of the signifier and its parasiting excess, which disrupts every dualism)



we consider the most famous property of the Klein bottle - that it has no actual division between the inside and the outside, because we can move indistinctively from the inner to the outer regions without ever crossing an edge or border - we can understand why Lacan goes on to claim that what makes this particular configuration a model for the emergence of anguish is that what returns from within is precisely the remainder of this lack of border. That is to say, anguish arises when the regular vase, the model of castration, is transfigured so that the object disturbs the constitution of the border between inside and outside - and therefore the place of the object of desire. In Lacan's words:

“this vase becomes anguish-provoking (...) because what comes to half-fill the hollow constituted from the original castration is the ‘object small a’ insofar as it comes from elsewhere, that it is only supported, constituted through the mediation of the desire of the Other. And it is there that we rediscover anxiety and the ambiguous shape of this edge which, because of the way it is made at the level of the other vase, does not allow us to distinguish either the inside or the outside” (LACAN, 2004: 227)

Now, the Žižekian toilet is also a vase. In order to construct it, we will bring together references from two different sources. The first is a long passage we find in the first pages of *The Plague of Fantasies* (1997). Here Žižek discusses Buñuel's movie *Phantom of Liberty* and then moves on to present the analysis of the topography of German, French and Anglo-Saxon toilets. This is in fact a crucial point: Žižek focuses on the *topography* of toilets - the differences which distinguishes the variations of one same topological form - that is, the disposition of the hole inside the toilet bowl, where the excrement falls. The analysis goes as follows:

“In a traditional German lavatory, the hole in which shit disappears after we flush water is way in front, so that the shit is first laid out for us to sniff at and inspect for traces of some illness; in the typical French lavatory, on the contrary, the hole is in the back - that is, the shit is supposed to disappear as soon as possible; finally, the Anglo-Saxon (English or American) lavatory presents a kind of synthesis, a mediation between these two opposed poles - the basin is full of water, so that the shit floats in it - visible, but not to be inspected. (...) It is clear that none of these versions can be accounted for in purely utilitarian terms: a certain ideological perception of how the subject should relate to the unpleasant excrement which comes from within our body is clearly discernible. (...) So it is easy for an academic to claim at a round table that we live in a post-ideological universe - the moment he visits the restroom after the heated discussion, he is again knee-deep in ideology.” (ŽIŽEK, 1997: 4-5)

According to this first reference, the relation between the Lacanian vases and the Žižekian one could be described in Hegelian terms as the passage from formal to concrete universality: while the Lacanian vases work, respectively, as mythological and topological models of the circuit of desire, Žižek's analysis focuses on how this infinite plasticity of the Lacanian vase appears in the world as various topographical distortions - so the topological invariances still remain that of the regular vase, but the disposition of the hole inside of it, more or less hidden by the particular form of the bowl, functions as the singular solution to the universal problem posed by “the vase of the object a”. To paraphrase one of Alenka Zupančič's beautiful *logions* from *Sexuality and Ontology* (ZUPANČIČ, 2008): ‘the concrete toilet is a paradox-ridden deviation from a norm that doesn't

exist' - there is no way to disappear with one's excess without this very operation producing a residue, a paradoxical distortion which, in its very lack of function, evokes the inexistent norm of what "pure functionality" is supposed to mean, what Lacan called the big Other. This is what is at stake when Žižek writes that

"this materialization of ideology in external materiality reveals inherent antagonisms which the explicit formulation of ideology cannot afford to acknowledge: it is as if an ideological edifice, if it is to function 'normally', must obey a kind of 'imp of perversity', and articulate its inherent antagonism in the externality of its material existence. This externality (...) is also occluded as utility. That is to say, in everyday life, ideology is at work especially in the apparently innocent reference to pure utility." (ŽIŽEK, 1997: 4)

The question of the materiality of ideology - the relation between "external materiality" and the ideological presuppositions embedded in its very shape - leads us to our second reference. In *Enjoy your Symptom!* (2001b), again in the context of cinema, this time an analysis of Coppola's *The Conversation*, we find a crucial passage which makes apparent the "small or even big innovation" of the Žižekian context of struggle mentioned above, namely, the paradoxical status of the materiality of the social space itself. The scene is well-known: Gene Hackman's character is inspecting the scene of a supposed murder and, after carefully studying the hotel room and the bathroom, he flushes the all-too-clean toilet just to witness in terror how an overflowing amount of blood re-emerges from it. Note how Žižek reads the emergence of the blood from the toilet in line with Lacan's construction of the anguish-provoking "vase of the object a":

"the domain to where excrement vanishes after we flush is effectively one of the metaphors for the horrifyingly sublime 'beyond' of the primordial, pre-ontological chaos into which things disappear. Although we rationally know what goes on with the excrement, the imaginary mystery nonetheless persists: shit remains an excess that does not fit our daily reality (...) What is "real" in the scene from *The Conversation* is thus not primarily the horrifying and disgusting stuff reemerging from the toilet sink, but rather the toilet's drain itself, the hole that serves as a passage to a different ontological order." (ŽIŽEK, 2001b: 209)

We have advanced the hypothesis that what distinguishes the Žižekian from the more orthodox Lacanian conception of the political limits of psychoanalysis is the affirmation that there is an homonymic dimension that is proper to the social space as such - that is, that to put the inconsistency of the Other as a cause of the political is not necessarily a suture or escape from the impasse of the unconscious. So when Žižek claims that it is not the function of the excrement in fantasy which elevates its return to the register of a terrifying presence, but rather the place from where it returns, we should note how this points to another structural trait of this ideological vase, a trait which is no longer of the order of topography, but of topology proper, because it has to do with the fundamental disposition of localities. Somehow, the excrement disappears through the concrete plumbing system below the toilet, but when it comes back, it returns from the fantasmatic space.

Now, we could say that this is an operation which pertains strictly to each subject's individual fantasy - individual in the sense that it solves, in the form of a symptom, the impasse of having a body marked by sexual difference - but this answer contradicts Žižek's statement that it is the structure of the toilet, the "toilet drain itself", which is properly real in the Lacanian sense. If the real at stake in this example was reducible to the real of the body of the subject - for example, the real as impossible full enjoyment of the desire of the obsessive, for whom the excrements can play a very important function in his strategies of postponement and so on - then the drain of the toilet would have to be understood as the symbolic substitute for a bodily orifice, and the whole setting would be reducible to the return of the real in the imaginary - anguish, in other words. The Klein bottle as developed in Lacan's tenth seminar would suffice to account for it.

But we must be attentive to the subtle difference which characterizes the structure of this precise toilet or vase, a difference which requires us to supplement the "vase of the object a" by introducing an ambiguity into the very conception of horror, the traumatic encounter with that which lies beyond fantasy. In a footnote from the first chapter of *The Plague of Fantasies*, written in the same context as the ideological analysis of toilets, Žižek remarks:

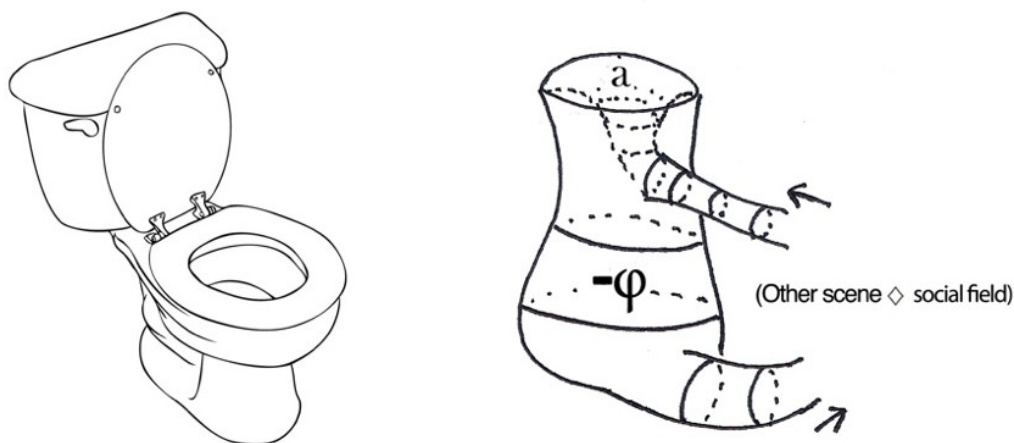
"Horror is not simply and unambiguously the unbearable Real masked by the fantasy-screen - the way it focuses our attention, imposing itself as the disavowed and, for that reason, all the more operative central point of reference. The Horrible can also function as the screen itself, as the thing whose fascinating effect conceals something 'more horrible than horror itself', the primordial void or antagonism. (...) The logic of the horror which functions as a screen masking the void can also be illustrated by the uncanny power of the motif of a ship drifting alone, without a captain or any living crew to steer it. This is the ultimate horror: not the proverbial ghost in the machine, but the machine in the ghost: there is *no* plotting agent behind it, the machine just runs by itself, as a blind contingent device. At the social level, this is also what the notion of a Jewish or Masonic conspiracy conceals: the horror of *society* as a contingent mechanism blindly following its path, caught in the vicious cycle of its antagonisms." (ŽIŽEK, 1997: 40, footnote 5)

This passage circumscribes a singular sort of traumatic object, which I would like to provisionally call the "Stalinist object" and whose specificity should become clear if we allow this ambiguous function of horror to shed some light on the strange "twist" of the Žižekian vase. This object is the pivot which allows us to ask the properly Žižekian question: what if the horror of the intrusion of the Other scene itself functions so as to prevent us from facing a realization that is "more horrible than horror itself", "the horror of society as a contingent mechanism blindly following its path"? What if what returns from the toilet is a certain excessive dimension which pertains to the social space as such, that which must disappear so that we can recognize ourselves as conscious participants, agents of civil society?

This hypothesis would require us to shift around the relation between the concrete function of the toilet and fantasy space. Firstly, the toilet drain opens up the space of the Other scene, into which the excess 'magically' disappears, annihilating any operation of signification which could link us to those who are responsible for the actual destiny of our excrements. What is truly horrible then, what is more unbearable than the horror of the encounter with the Thing itself, is that the

contingent return of this excess carries a certain social surplus: it constitutes an object whose dreadful appearance violently includes us into the concrete network of social relations, where, without the ideological resource to this phantasmatic cut between reality and the netherworld, we are brought too close to the social antagonism which structures this division itself. This object, which functions precisely as lacking, is a piece of the real which returns from the toilet as a reminder that the social link is not simply a space where we can escape the unbearable dimension of the real of the body, but rather a register which has itself a certain autonomy, which is itself supported by its own material cause, as distinct from the sum of the causes of its parts - a piece of the real which returns as the irreducible index of the constitutive, necessary alienation of the subject in the social link - what Alfred Sohn-Rethel called “real abstraction” (SOHN-RETHEL,

The Žizekian vase
(the parallax relation of the fantasmatic space and the material basis of production)



1983).

In this sense, what is strictly Žizekian is the uncanny path which leads to the construction of the toilet *qua* Klein bottle: the fundamental and highly enigmatic question of how the material basis of production and the Other scene of fantasy are bound together in a non-relation, each one touching in a different way on the real of their incommensurability. Though it is clear that Žizek follows Lacan’s construction of the “vase of the object *a*”, his own example of the ideological dimension of the toilet seems to require a further step in its parallaxian conception, whose topological construction is still an open matter: supplementing the Thing as real, we could venture as an ambitious conclusion something which is, in fact, nothing more than one of the starting points of Žizek’s work: the real as Spirit, social substance as the real of the symbolic itself.

This material cause is irreducible both to the ideal and the immediate apprehension of the social dimension, and its paradoxical status plays a constitutive role in the most fundamental level of social cohesion: for commodities to circulate or ideas to be transmitted - or even to disregard the

political implications of an analytic act - this surplus must disappear. To investigate and think through the vicissitudes of this sublime surplus is one of the fundamentally Žižekian tasks.

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