TO BE OR NOT TO BE OBJECT(S)!
THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE OBJECT*

VIORELLA MANOLACHE**

Abstract: This article is interested (an interest confirmed by an ongoing *collective project focused on the political philosophy of objects*) in the non-hierarchical report established between the fundament (*object – objects*) and the objectual form (*visible-invisible object; lightened-darkened object).* The records from which we will start, test-based, refer to both the semantics and the political philosophy of the object, considering that we cannot talk about *object* in the singular, but only in an included plural. In this regard, we certify that the *object introduces items* and that the process of transition from singular to plural reaffirms *defining and changing representations of form.* We will not omit either the clarifying outlook of Wittgenstein (*object – simple component; objects – composition/compound* resulting by a double action, of body and soul): or Nicolescu's conclusions, revealing *the ability of things to return to the object.* We raise these records, insisting on the way the singular/plural of object plays both in the area of "being" and of "not being" (Foucault and Zizek's *pipe*) under the sign of shadow considered by Baudrillard an absolutely necessary clouding effect, which gives (through privacy, inventories of presence and a deletion of inner glare) a distinct value to the object.

Keywords: *object, objects, object shadow, absent object, the political philosophy of the object.*

Guiding Assumptions: the System of Objects and Baudrillard's Shadow

Accepting the alerting argument of *The System of Objects*[1], which argues that *any object transforms something,* we can agree upon a (re)knowing of the background touches of amalgamated imbalances and the expansive flow of *emergence – disappearance –* and again *emergence of the object*. One such

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permutation *game of shading – light* or *diffuse light* requires to be engaged, alike, by a process of modifying proliferation and by disturbances with an individualization role in the ratio (interference) proportion by which "the rationality of objects conflicts with the irrationality of needs". Moreover, it is precisely this well-defined contradiction which generates a system of meanings oriented towards offering/ proposing probable solutions and possible resolutions intended to clarify the relationship of interdependence between *subject -object, object - objects*. From the perspective of Baudrillard, the central stake would lie in defining a "response to successive needs through new objects" in an endeavor which, far from clarifying any occurring inconsistencies, perfects incurred functions and utilities, contradicts or deepens the unessential and, moreover, "compromises the objective status of the object".

Referring to the constantly-dosed presentation, in triple register (*The System of Objects*, 1996; *Words of access*, 2008 and *Simulacra and simulation*, 2008) of a formula for thoroughly introducing the status of *object*, is considering a *program* (close to the *manifest title of the object*) made up of specific punctual nodes, acknowledged in/through ordering *the object* inside a schema of the imaginary; the formulation of a relevant opinion about *the object's* new configurations, guided/ imprinted by *the shift*, as well as *the expansion*, of *objects* – and by positioning *the object* in *the talked system of objects*.

Impossible to restrict to prescriptions ordered from a single domain of thought, and thereby not disassociated from the area of political philosophy, *the object* needs to be perceived as "unsettling strangeness" and considered as *mediator, immediate element, immanent, overwhelming and deceptive, rest and obstacle,* "full-fledged actor", part of a "dramatic sheet music"[2].

Baudrillard's postulates anticipate a non-hierarchical report of *the object* with *the objects* and sediments, sorts and classifies their own *ideology*, in the sense of a direct proportionality – an *object freed by/from its own function – a freed subject/user of object*, based on the double process of *setting* and *fitting*. There is, therefore, a *caput* of the symbolic dimension, a finite product of the metaphoric and an exhaustion of the denotative, *form = allegorical function*, a mark of the allusive and the regressive, appreciated as criterion which, on the one hand, reclaims *the philosophy of* transcending form in functionality and, on the other hand*, a simulacrum of power politics*.

If Baudrillard (through insistence on a standard *object – cigarette lighter*) confers to the *functional shape* of the object the valences of a true cultural matrix and attach the *fundamental meanings* of a "simulacrum of lost symbolic relations", the present study exposes the priority of a balanced relationship between/in *visible – invisible*. Inside the recessive *shadow – light* report, *opacity* (ex)poses the "removal of light sources", *the shadow* being, in a Baudrillard`s sense, nothing else than "scattered and pieced" *enlightenment*, a sign of privileged intimacy, providing a distinct value to things, by "inventing presences" and "a clearing of

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[2] *Idem*, *Simulacre și simulare* [Simulacra and Simulation], Idea Design & Print Publishing House, Cluj, 2008.

inner light". In fact, the above-mentioned reflexes, may be allotted to the production process of *the object*, through processing, sanding and finishing.

With relevance for the field of political philosophy, all (im)mediated findings of the conducted process establish that: *the object* accumulates and supports social features and thus may be endowed with the primacy of social status; *the subjective object* is the equivalent of the *collection object,* thus becoming an *object-pure-and-simple*; *the object* involves operating/operations with criteria relating to the choice/selection, use, possession/property, personalization (fundamental marks, considered by Baudrillard fit to arraign *the object* with the glamour of a *fundamental ideological concept*) and its marginal difference. On the trail of La Bruyere's collector/example, cited by Baudrillard, *objects* can be equated with *the last absent term of the series*, the one which maintains *a policy of specific finality* and which can provide *philosophical sense/meaning* to a collection, where *each object is a model.*

Explanation of an Imperative: Back to Object(s)!

Integrated to standard lexicographic practice (to start from/with an articulation of point definitions*), the object* is called by *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*[3] a lexical reference tool, a fundamental concept of philosophy and a component of categories with high degree of generality, *shadowed* by the absence of any rational self-records. From this perspective, *daily use objects/common objects* are required to be (re)examined through the knowledge sufficient conditions imprinting them with the quality of *concrete objects* without circumventing, however, any abstract entities opposed to the substance, which correspond to *the temporal and spatial tropes* produced through direct experiments[4].

If one could give credit to the guiding Strawsonian perspective stating that the logical subject queries the status of *the object*, decreeing it to be (in the acceptation of Tugendhat) "in the singular", meaning a noun – identifying mark, we find that only in the plural do *objects* advertise *a specific grammar* (and less of an adapted *dictionary* such as Baudrillard would invite). Moreover, Henry Laycock[5] brings into focus *object semantics* – which expresses the tendency for non-singular reference categories, considering that one cannot talk, in the case of *objects/things*, about a singular – just about an included plural.

The premise Laycock is submitting certifies the existence of a *specific corpus of objects – chairs, tables, dogs, cats, snowflakes, ice cubes, flowers, trees, houses, stars, plants, bacteria, molecules*; all of these represent distinct, measurable/ countable *units*, with uniquely cohesive identities, interacting causally under the pre-established coordinates of a preset, shared time/ space [such a quantification lacks, according to Laycock, quantity (in transforming, vaporizing forms and formulas), composing, for example, the gold/salt in water or in the atmosphere,

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[3] H. Laycock, "Object", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2014 Edition, in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/object/.
[4] D. Lewis, "An argument for the identity theory", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, 63 (2), 1966, pp. 17-25.
[5] H. Laycock, *Words without Objects*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2006.

showing that, in fact, what prevails is *the finished object* and not the matter included in *objects*].

The hypothesis we deploy establishes that *the object introduces objects*: the process of change from singular to plural reaffirms, as its defining element, *a change of shape representation* (the moment of *grinding* involves indecision, open options towards possible/diverse finalizing outcomes). Such modification/ transformation was foreshadowed by Plato[6], when he stated that *objects* "do not sit in a spot", being circular and rectilinear, moving in a circle, their moving and wiggling pointing out that, in fact, what is placed "under no aspect" is *the object itself*. Plato advocates *searching for the utility of any object to which this practice applies* (thus conferring upon *the object* a philosophy of its own and a concrete policy) in order to prepare enough (*sufficiently*) its own elements for accepting and assuming the attribute of "art": *the practice* is not concerned with anything other than its own *object,* therefore it requires *work* and *the service of work*, but researching *the object* with the mind until "words come to respond to thoughts" is also absolutely necessary

In a Wittgenstein`s way, *just* through philosophical exercise, one can correlate two fundamental processes/procedures – "studying utility and learning from it" – both showcasing the role of "the act of showing shape or color" as being subsumed to the mechanism of "taking into consideration" (even by concomitantly directing attention to one *object* or another[7]). We will not omit either the clarifying outlook of Wittgenstein's concept about the status of single/plural *objects*: *object – simple component; objects – composition/compound* resulting by a double action, of body and soul.

The ensemble of data impregnated through/in the Socrates – Theaitetos dialogue contains an essential element that guides a whole approach towards elucidating what one means when specifying either the *representation and/or item represented,* by recognizing the question regarding: *which is the object, the image, or who is the one who shows the image?*[8]. Switching to *the object(s)* occurs, in Wittgenstein`s sense, through the process of identifying *prime items* (deprived of a punctual definition and synonyms of the *individuals* Russell`s concept – or *Gegenstände*). Their existence is semantically explained through *denomination* – synonymous with *giving a name/naming. Via the attribution of feelings, objects feel (something),* argues Wittgenstein. Moreover, he imagines a *table*, subordinate to the register of its own imagination, operating at the limit of dictionary rules [an instrument of translating a word through another] and the mechanism of correct restraint and control that is used, for example, as a method of work for an explanatory booklet – an explanatory tool with fixed timetable – *The Train Time-table*.

Fixed in the deployed/developed plane of these Wittgensteinian *caputs*, *objects* assume the gaze, and force its commitment in/towards a pursuit of *the imagination*

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[6] Platon, *Republica* [The Republic], Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică Publishing House, Bucharest, 1986.
[7] L. Wittgenstein, *Cercetări filozofice* [Philosophical Investigations]*,* Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2013, p. 120.
[8] *Ibidem,* p. 298.

table – by consultation, but also by representing the experiment – using Wittgenstein's scheme, measurable and verifiable through recourse to concrete *objects* (clock and dial; the right hand in full action of giving money to the left hand; the car and the armchair) directly involved in three practical reports – the first guided by the interrogation: *can a machine think?*; the second coordinated by the conjunctionally-concessional assertion: *however, a machine cannot think!*; and the third, marked by the significance of the statement – *the armchair thinks for itself.*

The Political Philosophy of the Object

Political philosophy is (re)acting with respect to a conspicuous act *of seeing as returned to/from objects* through particular positioning bearing the mark of a dedicated community of domain theorists (Bruno Latour, Levi Bryant, Ray Brassier, Steve Shaviro). Their perspectives and details assume a dual interpretive analysis: requesting a response for the articulated Nancyan interrogation – *Who Comes after the Subject?* by validating post-Fordist reactions on the status of the *intellectual, immaterial and communicative object*[9] or by accepting Rancière's theory[10] which refers to this *nov process* as *a sharing and distribution of the sensible*. Svenja Bromberg[11] individualizes, for this purpose, two opinions that can re-position *the object* in the central plan, offering it to the scrutiny of political philosophy – Harman & Meillassoux.

From the series of interlocutors-philosophers concerned about *the object* (Latour, Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas), Harman[12] selects those who insist upon the "causal link" between *subject* and *object*, concerned about the possibility of correcting the philosophical way/manner which considers that real *objects* have no connection with each other and do not come into relationship with each other. It also lays down the fact that their causal link develops a certain proximity that doesn't deplete, but neither implies the complete synthesis of *the object's substance*. In their turn, *objects* "melt, abandon the safety threshold, expand into a common shared space in which real objects are once again, partially-absent"[13].

With certain identifiable properties and uses, *objects-in-relationship-with-their-objectual-self* transmits, in equal measure, a *particular sensuality/fascination* (just through surface appearances, which elude the eye of agent). The central idea of the Harmannian approach consists in removing any distance (of Kantian origin) between *the coordinates of the corporeal world* and *any topics suitably able to perceive the object*: everything that exists consists in real *autonomous objects*, a feature underlined both by its own reality and the existence of individual substance.

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[9] See for example, M. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labour", in *Radical Thought in Italy – A Potential Politics*, Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno (Eds.), University of Minnesota Press, London, 1996, pp. 132-146 and M. Hardt, A. Negri, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, London, 2000.

[10] J. Ranciere, *Împărtășirea sensibilului. Estetică și politică* [The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible]*,* Idea Design & Print Publishing House, Cluj, 2012.

[11] S. Bromberg, "The Anti-Political Aesthetics of Objects and Worlds Beyond", in *Mute*, 25 July 2013, http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/anti-political-aesthetics-objects-and-worlds-beyond.

[12] G. Harman, "On Vicarious Causation", in *Collapse 2*, Speculative Realism, March 2007.

[13] *Ibidem,* p. 190.

The real/reality is perceived by Harman as *field of depth for real objects*, existing in an independent space which generates, in its turn, interrelated actions: the act of translating *the existing* through image and knowledge (hence, the belief that *objects* and their real qualities cannot be accessed, inventoried and unmitigatedly inventoried), and the presence of an absolute fracture/rupture occurring between the real and realistic knowledge (a formula attributed by Harman to an ontology unburdened from realism and materialism). In this regard, *objects* are individual substances, between which there is no direct relationship, but merely a reflex mediated effect. In fact, *objects* are located in the third space, a positioning that marks a separation from the principles of analogy and delimitation from the act of reduction: *the object* emerges from/to the place fixed under a superabundance of sense for events with substantiality, solidity and compactization.

Graham Harman[14] insists on *the first-degree object*, having distinct properties such as familiarity and analogy, reduced to invisible particles for the attention of the subject, downloading electrical loads and returning to causal structure, confirming that *objects are not series of atoms*, *but emerging force structures*. By means of *the third table, the third order object* recalculates its placement in the interference space between particles and their *produced effects*, a way in which it reaffirms the impossibility of palpating and checking *the object*; it can *only be seen* (*the act of seeing = process of looking through the shadows*) through a return to *the dimensions of erotic knowledge* which bring back into focus *the ensemble of idiomatic objects*.

With a slight sense tint, Quentin Meillassoux[15] argues in favor of waiving a forced correlation between *objects* and *the subjective perspective*, seeing the prospect of *returning to objects* as a backdrop to processes which occur through absolute factuality (both *possibility* and *contingency*), in the sense of a *nov materiality*.

Beyond mere exposure or (complicated) extraction of *objects* from a *second-order report,* researches in political philosophy concerning *the object* consist of moving a state in favor of another, in order to uncover and entertain new/other relationships, re-profiling the mental scheme of *a place of coexistence between the subject and the object*. On one such (re) placement occurs in *the central node* proposed by Diedrich Diederichsen[16], through the effect of *de-reification*, insistent upon the validation and validity of "a critique of reification" operant in the area of an excessively idealized past, within the fractionated perimeter of the capitalist production system, generating *the separation of subject from product* and disconnecting the subject from the panel/table of *objects*.

Through freezing, *objects* may be regarded, in a Lukacsian way[17] as elements involved in *the reification process*, and, by default, subject to the notice of *objectivity recalculation*, a Kantian approach to *rethinking forms of objectivity*

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[14] G. Harman, *The Third Table = Der dritte Tisch*, vol. 85, 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts /100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken, Ostfildern, Germany: dOCUMENTA 13/ Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012.

[15] Q. Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*, Continuum, London, 2009.

[16] D. Diederichsen, "Animation, De-reification, and the New Charm of the Inanimate", in *E-flux*, no. 36 July 2012.

[17] G. Lukacs, *Istorie și conștiință de clasă. Studii despre dialectica marxistă* [History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics], Tact Publishing House, Cluj, 2015.

that shape human existence. *Objectivity* represents a mediating moment, able to find itself in all categories of relationships, a product of both the individual and of social evolution. According to Lukács, the dialectical classes of thinking do not allow themselves to be translated and externally – subjectively imposed inside *objects*, but mark the sum of *objective* structural relations (the proletariat represents *the object* of the economic mechanism; the worker becomes merchandise). Social *objectuality* turns from relationship to *process* of reificated forms.

The status of reification thus corresponds to *the existence of the object as object*, a result of separation, of the end of coexistence and the dismantling of the common area of the product manufacturer. In the sense of Adorno and Horkheimer, reification occurs against the background of teleological uses of *the object*, *the third* being accepted, in this context, as *an object of a plan that will exist in the future*. More than the dramatic alienation of a subject of Marxist inspiration – *a topic wandering through the forest of objects* – this is aimed at overcoming particular anthropocentrism, by accepting *the object* as a separate entity of complete empowerment. But Diederichsen believes that reification damages the surface of both subject and *object*.

Hence the need for a re-dosed classical criticism of reification, by superimposing the logic of contemporary capitalism over a state of overlaying *de-reification* through an insistence upon speculative realism which finds that *the-thing-in-itself* is at hand/touchable, concrete and palpable, and that nature can be experienced as *an object apart*.

However, Diederichsen concludes that *de-reification* invests capitalism with the ability of operating and marketing immaterial labor, valuing authenticity – persuasion (at the expense of practical ability) and applicability, without resorting to a work – life reconciliation, but also insisting on *the object*, as fully animated element, and on turning the subject into an *object-in-itself* (with all peculiarities of a biological, sexual or emotional order). As a distinct brand of dual animation – of both subject and object – critics of neoliberal capitalism foresee the running exhaustion of the subject both from the perspective of agent in charge, and of object of the action.

Jane Benett[18] integrates the issue of *the object* within the manifestation sphere of the political ecology of things. This approach cannot be detached from *the rule of the three ecologies*, proposed by Felix Guattari[19], which places the act of (over)capturing both *the object* and the subject within the scope of the recalculation approach to the *pseudonarrative* (an equivalent of the universes of incorporeal reference), and allows for early dispositional re-articulations, that do not involve returning to the Pascalian distinction between "spirit of geometry" – "spirit of finesse", but accepts the complementary approach of affect and percept. The logical mechanisms of intensities, irreversible duration, existential – self-referential sub – assemblies co-involve "all partial objects in the psychoanalytic sense, all transitional objects in Winnicott's sense, all institutional objects ("subject

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[18] J. Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2010.
[19] F. Guattari, "Cele trei ecologii" [The three ecologies], in *Idea Artă + Societate*, no. 38, 2011.

– groups"), faces, landscapes", suggesting a specific situation of *implementation into being*, which would express, in a Guattarian vision, an approach allowing them "to work on their own".

Close to the triple registry launched by Baudrillard, Guattari valorizes repetitiveness, symptomatology, ritual, the emblem and the word of access, as ways of reordering a subjectivity rendered partial near *objects*, from the *series* which Guattari called both *fractured objects* or "dissenting subjectivity generators", but also institutional, economic, architectural, cosmic *objects* supporting "existential production".

At the same time *agent, action and affirmation*, unable to avoid the technical connotative, "*the object* can impersonate a temporary hiding place" (of placing in *partial shadow*), as Deleuze and Guattari[20] observe, proposing, through *the machinist – technical and psycho – expressive assemblage of the object*, a forging of the metaphor in favor of the real situation, precisely by means of a *de-reification of the object* which becomes both a practical element and a tool-maker.

The same assembly logic is discussed (in the footsteps of Lupasco) by Basarab Nicolescu[21], who exposes the space-localization capability of *objects*, noting that "there are no objects in space, but space in objects; objects are not localized but create locales". The coordinates of dimensional democracy reduce the trans-disciplinary *object* and support the existence of multiple subjects and *objects*, in the structure of a complementary relationship and report. If the outer object belongs to the mental process of conferring a specific identity, responsive to potentiality, but also to the effective update of *objects*, Basarab Nicolescu reveals *the ability of objects to return to the object*: only through the unconscious, *objects cease to exist and become object* in a context where any action of *the included third* is the one which restores balance and maintains the harmony of reality.

On such an *objectiv-ated* foundation one can set Jane Bennett's[22] approach reuniting philosophy (an ideatic – theoretical way of insisting upon the native, inert, primitive *object*) with a *politics of the object* (a basic, practically – active formula of involvement in *real projections of vibrant matter and the animated object)*. In fact, one recognizes the availability of the *object* (through a secondment of the blocker effect to the wishes/desires of the subject) to act as quasi-agent with separate power/force, re-certifying the fact that *any political event is nothing but the result, the final amount of the object's vibrant materiality*.

To be or not to be object(s). An Illustrative Insert Foucault's Pipe and Zizek's Pipes

In his introductory notes to Michel Foucault's "This is not a Pipe"[23], James Harkness seems rather more interested in the destiny and artistic consecration of René Magritte than that of Michel Foucault. The name of M. Foucault is inserted

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20 G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedip (Capitalism și schizofrenie I)* [Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia], Paralela 45 Publishing House, Pitești, 2008.
21 B. Nicolescu, *Ce este realitatea?* [What is Reality?], Junimea Publishing House, Jassy, 2009.
22 J. Bennett, *op. cit.*
23 M. Foucault, *This is not a Pipe*, California University Press, California, 1982.

in the prefatory construct, at the point of intersection, through registry approaches with Magritte, even though the theoretical attractions (heterotopy, a critique of language, representation theory, an archive of similarities) are considered by Harkness himself "a conjectural product/issue"[24].

Foucault's opening chapter involves therefore a double substance analysis, akin to Magritte's *two pipes* (the same pipe, the same statement) – the 1926 version, and that integrated into *Aube à l'Antipodes*: the first is simplified, being in excess; the second multiplies intended ambiguities. But, as a proponent of both versions, Foucault argues that there are two pipes, two drawings of the same pipe, a pipe and a drawing of a pipe, two designs – each representing a different pipe, or a pipe and something else; or neither image is a pipe, but altogether other objects. However, the statement relates only to the disproportionately – floating (*vaporous, solid*) position (captive, caught, closed), of the ideally-simple notion of a pipe, or a pipe fantasy. This is the moment when Foucault becomes the partisan of another interpretation, as an alternative to the Magrittean text: "do not look for a real pipe. This is an imaginary pipe"[25].

Screwy and disruptive (the meaning of the translation relies on *sorcery* – witchcraft, magic, or even *trick,* in Deleuzian terms), the first version plays, in a Foucaultian manner, upon a page drawn from a manual of botanic – a figure and the text that describes it[26] accompanied by a secretly elaborated calligram and later decomposed, in order to satisfy any alphabetical compensation needs, and to allow for repetition without the intervention of rhetoric – but also for compressing things within the corset of double graphics[27]. However, all of this recommends a paradoxical double text: Magritte called 'obvious' that object that does not need to be named by a too-familiar appellation, and the appointment constitutes a mental process launched by the syncope of *the object that is*.

From intertwining figure and text, the pronoun *this* [as alleged, intuited form] betrays the existence of two instances of the object viewed from two perspectives; both "I'm not a pipe", and of pipe bowls made permanently invisible, broken eliminated[28]. In fact, it appears that "nowhere is there any pipe"[29] and that the statement issued inside the text belongs to a predisposition towards *amusement*, nothing less – in Deleuze's interpretation – than the "humorous version of an approach that Foucault had carried in his studies of history"[30]. Despite this predisposition towards the humorously – amusing, the Foucaultian text remains serious and true to the Magrittian perspective, exposing five working modalities: to practice a calligram as a way of identifying, in simultaneity, the presence and visibility of the image, to determine the correlation between image and text, or an outline of statement and its common place; to suddenly open and immediately break the missing calligram; to visualize the visible/legible shape of letters

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[24] *Ibidem*, p. 3.
[25] J. Harkness, in M. Foucault, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
[26] Foucault, *op. cit.,* p. 19.
[27] *Ibidem*, p. 21.
[28] *Ibidem*, p. 31.
[29] *Ibidem,* p. 29.
[30] *Ibidem.*

which, by design, enter into uncertain, indefinite and confused relationships with *graphia,* without requiring any common meeting area; to multiply similarities with reference only to themselves; to carefully check, at the end of the chemical process, the resulting precipitate in "the last tube", in order to determine whether the statement *this is a pipe* truly cradles the expressed negation *this is not a pipe*. The conclusion which "Foucault the chemist" leaves us to discern lies in the amusement of the experiment itself, and fidelity/seriousness of its outcome.

Under the sign of a plural record – "there are pipes and pipes" – Slavoj Zizek (in a more serious registry) is *unfaithful* to Magritte (if one were to keep, as a directory, the imperative of James Harkness) and *faithful, up to a* point, to Foucault; *hence* the adopted Deleuzian procedure of providing examples of cinematographic disjunction – *see vs. talk* (Deleuze believes that what is seen is not out of place in what is said and vice versa[31]), and he proposes, for example, La Straub, Syberberg and Marguerite Duras, doubly expressing an interest in the films *India Song* and *The Woman on the Ganges.*

For Zizek, Magrittian paradoxes are the subject of a "smart booklet" meant to illustrate something more than the basic image matrix that enacts the Kantian contrast of *reality-void of reality.* The whole Zizekian approach falls and remains close to the method of Foucault – content narration, scored references which fit the content, presented in two condensed pages, as a given response, by a short and concise text, to a book reduced in size. But Zizek is interested in the latter Magrittian variation, which, although not explicitly named, he considers as the perfect formula for an illustration of the Hegelian thesis about tautology, as the ultimate contradiction[32], and accepts as calligram ("any calligram is therefore tautology", underscored Foucault). Therefore, the inscription on the board, placed under the pipe**,** attests to the rupture between *a pipe-that-belongs-to-the-real* and *a-pipe-as-the-real*, a gap maintained by the symbolic order, and concludes that there is a reality and an enigmatic surplus of reality, each de-realizing its opposite[33].

Such an argument derives its essence from four instantiations: three film elements and a psychoanalytic one.

Cinematographically, Zizek relies on the Marx brothers version ("this object it looks like a pipe and works as a pipe, but do not be fooled – this is a pipe"), supplemented by diverse variations of the paradox of identity/strangeness offered to the existence/ownership report (Emmanuel Ravelli *resembles,* therefore *is* Emmanuel Ravelli; "this man looks and behaves like an idiot, so he is an idiot" or "everything reminds me of you except yourself"), certifying (via Jakobson) that "every predication has the status of a metaphor"[34]. It draws therefore into the equation the *effect of analogy – pipe – emergence* of Laura (Otto Preminger), through the role of the detective whose real presence is nuanced by imitation/

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[31] G. Deleuze, *Foucault,* Idea Design & Print Publishing Houe, Cluj, 2002, p. 60.
[32] S. Zizek, *Zăbovind în negativ. Kant, Hegel și critica ideologiei* [Tarrying with the Negative. Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology], All Publishing House, Bucharest, 2001, p. 101.
[33] *Ibidem*, p. 102.
[34] *Ibidem*, pp. 256-257.

simulacrum, a scene that Zizek proposes "easily imagining as the inscription *that's not Laura*"[35], or clippings of similar order (in *Once upon a time in America* the phone *continues* to ring – a sequence which reflectively projects the external stimulus of dreaming, but also confirms, in a Lacanian manner, *the insistence of the real*[36]).

In psychoanalytic manner, Zizek paradoxically accredits the Freudian paradox – *Vorstellungs – Repraesentanz* – applying it to Magritte, and believes that "Foucault is quite right when he notes that the painting functions as a kind of inside-out rebus: in a rebus, comic representations of things replace the words they designate; while here the words themselves are filling the gap of absent things"[37].

Concluding Remarks: Shadow and Object-Emergence

If one were to accredit, with added user value, Graham Harman's[38] assertion that "people become objects, along with fire, cotton and trees" the returning gaze (in the sense of *coming back*) toward the Platonic essence is more than natural, in the context of validating *an inability to (be) opinionated pointlessly/without an object*. "As some still look elsewhere for the object they have in their hands, so we have not looked at it, but have turned our eyes far away, a reason for which this has, perhaps, evaded us", warned Plato, creating an elision of interpretation (and) status *for the shadow hanging over the object*. Oriented towards o*bjects* "illuminated by the glow of night", the look is not seeking "to see the shadows" but recalculates "the seen proportion of objects", accepting, by *truth/true meaning*, the *shadow-impregnated sense of the object*: "Being able to easily see shadows is the first-stage/primordial stage which later opens reflections of men and other things, and then the things in themselves".

Although we cannot evade all arguments contesting or combating the existence of *material objects*, seen as integrated elements of a philosophical system (wood, stones, tables or chairs cannot be seen/perceived except by the common sense of their agreed existence, being vague and contradictory concepts; see, in this sense, the counter-argument by Amie Thomasson[39]), the belief of our study is that, through *shadow/shading* (in the Humean sense of the world as a divided formula of *discrete bodies*) *the object* is taking shape and contour, looming and being there, but also having visibility.

Shadow/shading can be correlated, in the manner proposed by Quine[40], with the opacity argument (*and not that of existence* – we note) *of the object*: *objects* represent more than mere presences with elementary structure and substance, following the evaluation of the entire material content of a fragment/portion of

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[35] *Ibidem*, p. 102.
[36] *Ibidem*, p. 257.
[37] *Ibidem*, p. 103.
[38] G. Harman, "On Vicarious Causation", in *Collapse 2*, Speculative Realism, March 2007.
[39] A. Thomasson, *Ordinary Objects*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.
[40] W.V. Quine, *Theories and Things*, Harvard University Press, Harvard, 1981.

space-time (irregular, discontinuous and heterogeneous[41]). Outdoing its *form* as instrument (product or result), *the object* demands to be clarified and re-analyzed by re-valuing its particular *fundamental* identity (*there is no entity without identity,* warned Quine[42]) and through a double connection between the theoretical (*primordial objects and bodies are from the very beginning theoretical*[43]) with the practical, and between *the philosophy of an object and its policy*.

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[41] *Ibidem,* p. 10.
[42] W.V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity & Other Essays,* Columbia University Press, Columbia, 1969, p. 23.
[43] *Ibidem.*