

Emanuel COPILAS^{*}

Coping with the Unconscious. Hegel and Psychoanalysis

Abstract: Psychoanalysis, which disavowed psychology on the ground that the unconscious is too deep to have a science of its own and can only be analyzed to the extent that it reveals itself through symptoms – posed a major challenge for modern philosophy as well. Since Hegel is one of the most important modern philosophers, I argue here that the encounter between psychoanalysis (through its major exponents, Freud and Lacan) and Hegelian speculative dialectic, far from posing a threat to the latter, it actually enriches it, while placing the former into a proper ontology.

Keywords: desire, symbol, mediation, dialectic, reason.

1. Introduction

Parallels between Hegel's philosophy and psychoanalysis were rather scarce until half a century ago. Since then, more and more studies and books that outline important similarities, but also differences between the two parts have appeared. Nevertheless, as I try to argue in this article, there is still ground to be covered in this respect. Hegel's logic, along with some of his early writings, will prove especially helpful to outline how psychoanalysis's drive for the unconscious, the non-rational dimension of individuals, can be integrated into the Hegelian dialectic between the particular and the universal. Also, Sigmund Freud's typology of the psyche (id, ego, superego) can be interpreted, although not in this order, as an internal form of dialectic that prepares the way and also parallels the authentic, social dialectic that occurs between man and his many environments.

Jacques Lacan's original brand of Freudianism and its relation to Hegel's philosophical system represents the second pillar of the paper. Lacan's insistence on desires, language and symbols that mediate our identities to the point the subject itself becomes irrelevant brought forward the bases of meta-psychoanalysis, an endeavor in which Hegel is quoted many times. Even so, Lacan generally uses some of Hegel's concept for his own philosophical purposes and specifically against Hegel's overall ontology, a position that he explicitly recognizes (Lacan 2006, 683). However, authors like Slavoj

^{*} PhD, Lecturer, Political Science Department, West University of Timisoara, Romania; email: copilasemanuel@yahoo.com

Žižek are convinced that, in the end, Lacan was a real Hegelian, even if he was not aware of this, due to the fact that he encountered Hegel especially through Alexander Kojève's seminar on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and was not directly familiarized with the German philosopher's major works (Žižek 2014).

Using the works of these two major representatives of psychoanalysis, Freud and Lacan, I intend to bring forward the hypothesis that although they share important convergence points with Hegel's philosophical system, which they challenge to a major extent – they are, on the whole, incompatible with speculative dialectic. Their insistence on particularities, even as absences, in the case of Lacan, to the disadvantage of the universal, of self-creating spirit, renders their differences more important as their tangential similarities. Still, dialectic is able to incorporate psychoanalysis and resist the splits it induces between the individual and his world(s), revealing their temporary, not permanent nature.

The first section of the article deals with what Freud and Hegel have in common and disagree as well when it comes to individuality, society, religion and history. Both thinkers were rationalists formed under the auspices of Enlightenment, even if Freud showed a kind of circumspection towards rational teleology that would have certainly perplexed Hegel. With this in mind, the most important tenet of this section is that Hegel picks up where Freud has left off: psychoanalysis ends where dialectic begins (see Johnston 1927, 554). Or, better said, for dialectic to begin at all.

The second section is centered around Lacan's presumed Hegelianism. I analyze here Lacan's use of Hegelian notions like the "beautiful soul" which follows exclusively the "law of the heart" and develops an "unhappy conscience", the "cunning of reason" and, finally, the master-servant dialectical reciprocity. Despite Lacan's powerful structuralism and his convincing arguments against the autonomy of subjects, arguments that owe not little to Hegel's philosophy, I consider that a Hegelian subject is nevertheless possible, even if as a simple fragment of the whole possessing consciousness; substance alienating itself as subject in order to plenary return to itself as ontological dynamics aware of itself, the Hegelian subject is simultaneously a projection and a prerequisite of its own object. Furthermore, by trying to transform Lacan into a Hegelian, Žižek seems to end up with transforming Hegel himself from an emancipatory and even subversive philosopher into a passive follower of a certain historical status-quo, something which Hegel never was (Žižek 2014).

In conclusion, the unconscious is offered a place into dialectic, but not a central one, although it certainly represents the point from which dialectic takes off. As the constitutive other of reason, the unconscious is negated and superseded by consciousness, by the rational ego, in the sense that it is recognized as a powerful and potentially disruptive force, but one that has

to be limited and maintained under a certain control in order for anything else to exist and develop. And since societies, laws and politics exist, no matter how fragile, unjust or polarized they may be, the unconscious traversing and inscribing them with its own negativity is also compelled by them to keep its distance, or crumble along with them and along with what makes it possible in the first place, its itself other, conscience.

2. The limits of reason. Freud and Hegel on human nature, society, religion and history

It appears that Freud, the founding father of “abyssal psychology”, as he used to call psychoanalysis, has never read Hegel. At least, not seriously (Mills 2002, 188-189; Butler 1976, 506). Indeed, Freud’s scarce and transient remarks with reference to Hegel and the “obscurity” of his philosophy are striking (Freud 2017a, 709).

However, this is a small matter, since even if he had read Hegel, Freud would have not been able to confer psychoanalysis an ontological dimension. He did not intend it in the first place: psychoanalysis is and remains a field of investigation centered around the individual and its non-rational thoughts and behaviors. Moreover, he explicitly stated that psychoanalysis must not adopt a certain philosophical vision upon the world, because psychanalyst would try to impose that particular vision upon their patients, and that would amount to an intolerable form of “violence” (Freud 2017b, 202). This is why human nature occupies a considerable symbolical weight in Freud’s writings.

However, for someone who developed such a subversive approach with reference to the reified Enlightenment oriented European status-quo at the end of the 19th century, Freud’s concept of human nature is a highly conservative one. For example, he considers aggression a salient characteristic of humanity, and all attempts to reduce it, not necessarily eradicate it, futile (Freud 2017c, 330-331). This aggression is fueled mostly by the “pleasure principle”, which aims to subdue the external reality to its erratic wishes. But the “pleasure principle” in itself is dangerous and potentially harmful, due to its lack of reasonability. However, it is contained by the “reality principle” that compels the individual to take into account social needs that are above itself and ultimately make possible his own existence.

This is how “culture” occurs, a term Freud designates for social organization in general – constraining the pleasure principle to retreat into the unconscious and generate different phantasms and thus making its repressed presence felt in various sublimated ways (Freud 2017d, 17, 218-220). External reality induces major divisions into the “psychical apparatus”, as Freud calls it, as the individual must learn to obey norms and customs in order to

live in an organized community. The id, where the pleasure principle reigns, consisting mostly on libido, an energy ultimately based on sexual desires – develops the ego, an interface that allows it to socially integrate and pursue its existence according to the specific laws of a given society. As the individual internalizes these laws and norms, especially in his childhood, under the guidance of his parents, the superego comes into the scene. The superego, the ideal of the ego, is linked in an intimate way to the id: if the first represents a relentless drive for unchained sexuality (including incest) and aggression, the last is also a frantic dimension of internalized conformity that induces all sorts of peculiar behaviors, especially melancholia and anxiety. It is the task of the ego to maintain the fragile equilibrium between the id and the superego, and to expand itself to the detriment of the id. In other words, people should become more and more rational, but this is not the tantamount of superseding human nature. After all, the id, consisting in instincts and repressed memories of all sorts (Jung 1994, 45), represents the biggest part of the psychic apparatus and its constant repression under the auspices of civilization entails many forms of neurosis and guilty consciousness, a result which propels Freud to argue that neurosis is the unavoidable price we pay for the advancement of civilization, the “discontent in civilization” (Freud 2017d, 304-306, 314-320, 330-331, 334, 336-343, 356, 370; Freud 2017c, 292-293, 310-312; Freud 2017b, 244-246, 275-276, 443-444; Freud 2017e, 262-263; Freud 2017a, 580-589, 594-602, 615-616; Freud 2017f, 264-265, 270-272, 314-315).

But the advancement of civilization is not the equivalent of progress, an idea Freud decisively rejected (Freud 2017c, 195, 222-236, 313-314). The id is insurmountable regardless of the social context, because “the ego is never master in his own house” (Freud 1999, 80). Society, the reified image of the archaic father, the arbitrary ruler of the primitive hoard that was killed by his own sons only to be reinstated latter as rules and interdictions in order to prevent chaos and anarchy (Freud 2017c, 150-151, 266, 300-301, 512-517) – can never amount to something more than a thin lair of reason temporarily covering huge amounts of libidinal energies waiting to burst at every occasion they get.

In this social process, religion plays a key role. Based on a collective superego that underlines every human community, on an essence, to use Hegel’s terminology, religion has nevertheless a negative impact both upon individuals and societies. Its rigid morality triggers coping mechanisms that result in hypocrisy, a feature that every religion and every society as well possesses. But, equally important, religion suppresses critical thinking beginning with childhood and thus produces neurotic individuals with guilty consciousnesses. Even if religion has played an important role in fostering social coherence and imposing the reality principle upon the unconscious,

the id and its never-ending pleasure principle, Freud renders it as a transient phase of historical development. From animism, humanity arrived at religion. But now it is time to go beyond religion and constitute itself on solid, scientific principles (Freud 2017a, 698-699, 702-703, 706; Freud 2017c, 195-222, 446-449; Freud 2017g, 194-204). As we will observe, Hegel's philosophy of religion shares numerous similarities with what Freud had to say about it.

Finally, considering Freud's accounts of individuality, society and religion, we can understand why he perceives history as a permanent trail of crimes, wars and libidinal manifestations (Freud 2017c, 61-62). In close connection with his dismissal of progress, the idea of history as nothing more than chaos and crimes committed by individuals and/or peoples completes the picture of a profoundly skeptical thinker with a peculiar taste for reason and civilized behavior, even if only at an individual level (see also Burston 1996, 73). This, for Hegel, is nothing more than a betrayal of reason. One more remark: Freud often quotes approvingly Arthur Schopenhauer (Freud 2017g, 46-47; Freud 2017c, 445-446), the philosopher of arbitrary will as the driving force of everything that exists, and also one of the most anti-Hegelian thinkers of the 19th century.

Turning our attention to Hegel, his position regarding human nature is highly different than that of Freud. But Hegel was not at all naïve. He did not endorse cosmopolitan Kantianism, for example, but he did argue in favor of progress, both moral and political. However, the path of this progress is a long and sinuous one, marked by numerous setbacks. Consequently, human nature is gradually paving the way for the affirmation of human spirit:

While the first paradise was that of human nature, this is the second, the higher paradise of the human spirit, the paradise where the human spirit emerges like a bride from her chamber, endowed with a fairer naturalness, with freedom, depth, and serenity. The first wild glory of its dawn in the east is restrained by the grandeur of form and tamed into beauty. The human spirit manifests its profundity here no longer in confusion, gloom, or arrogance, but in perfect clarity. Its serenity is not like the play of children; it is rather a veil spread over the melancholy which is familiar with the cruelty of fate but is not thereby driven to lose its freedom and moderation. (Hegel 1961, 325)

While Freud's concept of human nature is stuck into the unconscious and therefore permanent, Hegel's concept of human nature is subjectable to change, and it changes according to the historical context the individual lives in. There is no permanently determined human nature: every man is the product of its environment, as well as every environment is the product of its inhabitants. The unconscious that produces specific human natures is just the first stage of spirit, its unmediated immediacy (Berthold-Bond 1991,

195; Mills 2002, 4); as the layers of spirit gather, human nature is compelled to supersede itself into human spirit. This does not mean it will disappear altogether, because feelings, its main component, will not disappear with the advancement of reason. On the contrary, it will still be recognized as one of the main forces shaping human existence, but it won't be allowed to orient it in a constitutive way.

Berthold-Bond argues that, for Hegel, “the unconscious which is a mere surface, and consciousness or rationality which is the genuine text of the psyche” (Berthold-Bond 1991, 195). If we take a closer look into Hegel's logic, Berthold-Bond's argument is not sustainable. The *Science of Logic* follows the process of quantity being converted into quality and the reverse. Unaware of itself and the multitudes it contains, quantity gives birth out of itself to quality. Arising as a differentiation within quantity, both as limit and as conscience, quality is not the beyond of quantity, not its metaphysics, but quantity negated and thus propelled to a superior stage of existence (Hegel 1986; Hegel 2010). If we replace quantity with the unconscious and quality with the ego, it follows that the ego is not the opposite of the id, but a split within the id that allows it to return to itself in a more mature and dynamic way. Rationality is not the “genuine text of the psyche” because Hegelian rationality is always related to the universal, to political societies. Individual intellects are capable of reason only to a limited extent; after all, they are mere “accidents”, as Hegel argues in his *Science of Logic*, while the rational Idea alone is true, at a historical scale. In Hegel's words,

The human being is this Night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity – a wealth of infinitely many representations, images, none of which occur to it directly, and none of which are not present. This [is] the Night, the interior of [human] nature, existing here – pure Self – [and] in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night which turns terrifying. [For from his eyes] the night of the world hangs out toward us. Into this Night the being has returned. Yet the movement of this power is posited likewise. (Hegel 1983, 87)

However, reason depends on intellects to impose itself, and this is why it is always fragile, due to the particularities that convey it. In the same time, reason gathers its strength from the unintended consequences produced by the activities of individuals, which are unaware that in every selfish act the seeds of the universal are planted, in the sense that its beneficial effects will be sought by more and more different and diverse people and, eventually, institutionalized.

Furthermore, using Hegel's triadic dialectical method, we can consider the id as nature, the superego as the abstract, rational Idea, the concept of

reality, and the ego as their synthesis, actually existing spirit. After all, Freud himself characterized the ego as a unifying and synthetic force within the psychic apparatus (Freud 2017f, 273, 288, 336). As stated in the introduction section, this internal, psychological dialectic between id, ego and superego paves the way for the Hegelian social and historical dialectic, allowing individuals to become as rational as possible, both from inside and from outside themselves.

Due to the fact that reason can only accomplish itself in the relations between individuals, and not inside their intellects, their arbitrary psychologies, societies represent for Hegel the true cradle of individuality, and not the other way around, as Freud considers. But in order for societies to be truly rational, they must institutionalize themselves as states and bring forward their own, specific forms of right. However, particularity is not to be oppressed in the name of the general will; after all, what Hegel calls the “subjective spirit” represents the cornerstone of modernity (Hegel 2003). For spirit to advance, both particular and the universal must reciprocate themselves as fair as possible; after all, they exist and prosper only in their speculative, dialectical unity; outside it, they are nothing but empty, abstract projections of arbitrary and thus non-rational wills (Hegel 1977).

Next, Hegel’s theological reflections are rather congruent to those of Freud, although Hegel does not contest religion as fiercely as Freud does. Religion is just a phase of spirit, of humanity’s self-consciousness. With all its excesses, religion is indispensable for a proper morality, but when it transforms this morality into a political instrument and substitute itself for the state, we are no longer on the realm of spirit. Due to its moral impetus and the fear and punitive approach that goes along with it, religion remains on the realm of finitude and cannot access real infinity, the universal; consequently, it is suited only for individual purposes and should center itself to the private sphere. Be that as it is, Hegel does not believe that religion represses knowledge, as Freud does. The original sin is nothing but the distance between the knowledge of man and the knowledge of God, both reconciling themselves in the process of historical becoming. God is therefore man, spirit, and it is a true part of human communities as long as it helps them become more open, more tolerant, more aware of their internal and external mediocrities. Redemption is mundane, not metaphysical, and it is available for everyone (Hegel 1988; Hegel 1995).

As for history, although it is bloody, violent and apparently chaotic, it represents way more than a series of various massacres, as Freud interprets it. History is, to quote Hegel’s famous syntagma, “the court of the world” (Hegel 2003). History is the depositary of spirit, from its infancy and to its future maturity, and philosophy is nothing more than an expression of its historical epoch. Hegel’s account of history is groundbreaking and radically different in respect to the previous philosophies that approached the topic:

far from being a metaphysical wisdom with universal validity regardless of time and place, philosophy is nothing more than a product of its time, a way among many others through which a period and a context understands and puts itself into perspective (Hegel 2011).

To sum up, Freud and Hegel disagree on important matters, like the ones presented above, but they also share a common affinity towards the ideals of the Enlightenment, even the first works his way in this direction with an empirical method and the second prefers a speculative dialectical approach (Mills 2002, 188-189, 191). But maybe their most striking difference can be found in the way they comprehend mental derangement, or simply madness. For Freud, madness, under its most common form, neurosis, is the product of the unconscious, more specifically it occurs as a conflict between the id and the ego, a conflict in which the id eventually takes control of the psyche. For Hegel, madness is also the product of the unconscious, a relapse into emotionality and feelings on the expense of reason (Mills 2002, 60; Berthold 2009, 301). But if madness remains for Freud essentially an individual condition, for Hegel it represents first of all a social one. Not many scholars that compared the two authors stressed this point enough. Louis Sass did it, although in a transient way (Sass 2009, 321). However, in Hegel's early writings, madness is very clearly defined as a social issue:

Once the social character of human beings has been disturbed and forced to throw itself into idiosyncrasies (...), it becomes so profoundly distorted that it expands its strength on this separation from others and proceeds to assert its isolation to the point of madness; for madness is simply the complete isolation of the individual from his kind. (Hegel 2004, 101)

3. Desire, symbol, sign. Is Lacan truly a Hegelian ?

Although he always stated that he was a Freudian, Lacan actually managed to push Freudian psychoanalysis a step further, circumscribing it to a cultural and ultimately philosophical debate. Far from being the domain of nude instincts and repressed/forgotten memories, Lacan's unconscious departs from that of Freud by being the product of language and of "symbolic overdetermination" (Lacan 2006, 88). Lacan distinguishes between language, symbols and signs, arguing that language is much more than simple speech: through speech, language expresses itself in the subject, and not the other way around. The subject is therefore reduced to a medium that allows the interplay between desires and symbols that always signify to other desires and symbols, phenomenologically embodied in accidental subjects (Lacan 1998, 68; Lacan 2008, 88-89).

According to Lacan, the real subject is the Other, the unconscious. The place of desires, many of which the subject is not even aware of, the

unconscious consists also in signifiers that float chaotically and imprint their meanings in the signified, usually the individual, but also different objects as well. Signifiers are desires wrapped around symbols that propel the individual to think and behave in certain ways, recognizable to other signifiers. Through symbols and “chains of signification”, the language of desires is inscribed in the subject, which expresses them as sounds (speech) or signs (writing). Desires are more than simple demands the subject must fulfill in order to carry on with its daily existence; in fact, desire is what persists after a particular demand was satisfied (Lacan 2006; Lacan 1998, 149, 198-199; Lacan 2013, 11-18; Lacan 1990, 8). Here lies a first major departure from Hegel, who considers language a tool of reason, not of desires (Hegel 1979, 114).

Among the most important signifiers is the symbol of the phallus, money, “the signifier that most thoroughly annihilates every signification” (Lacan 2006, 27), and everyday objects that are immersed into multiple chains of signification that produce a variety of effects of which the protagonists of certain situations in which that particular signifier is present are unaware of. This is the case of the famous “purloined letter” that Lacan comments in a rich and eloquent way (Lacan 2006, 6-48).

Not only the signifiers signify, but also the spaces between them (Lacan 2006, 327). Those spaces, those “cuts” between the signifying chains are extremely important: the fate of the subject itself depends on them, on the constant rearrangement of words and the “symbolic lesions” they suffer while leaping from one signifying chain to another (Lacan 2006, 21). In Lacan’s words, “It is the world of words that creates the world of things. (...) Man thus speaks, but it is because the symbol has made him man” (Lacan 2006, 229).

Using Freud’s metaphor of the father of the primitive hoard, Lacan advances the concept of “name-of-the-father” which directly links culture and social organizations with the unconscious. The mythical figure of the father reinstated as law functions as a set of interdictions that generate all sorts of frustrations; through, the arbitrariness of personal power was not overcome. It was institutionalized. The name of the father occupies the place of the unconscious and generates its effects as laws, but those laws are only expressions of the desires and the jouissance of the father, of power, in the end, not of universal reason, as Hegel concludes (Lacan 2006, 230, 479-485). These laws are not strictly confined to the political domain: they are also to be found in every other field of human interaction. Since the name of the father follows us in everything we think and experience, both as law and as interdiction, knowledge cannot be anything but “paranoiac” (Lacan 2006, 77, 91-93).

As every society undergoes alienation and cannot fully comprehend itself, so does every individual; starting with the “mirror-stage”, when the infant is

about six months old and can recognize his image in the mirror, he begins thinking and referring to himself as a body. His perception of himself becomes mediated through external objects, and the child is compelled to negate himself, to think of himself from outside, in order to be allowed to return to himself as himself. This individual alienation is further fathomed by the use of language through speech and between or as symbols: one cannot speak himself entirely, thus one cannot comprehend himself entirely. We can understand now why for Lacan the unconscious is a product of language and it amounts to the personal history of the subject, to which the subject does not and will never have full access to (Lacan 2006, 76-88, 214-217; Lacan 2009, 27; Lacan 1990, 6).

This is why thinking can only amplify alienation. “I am thinking where I am not, therefore I am where I am not thinking” (Lacan 2006, 430). Or, in a broader train of thoughts,

In analytic experience, intention (...) turns out to be unconscious insofar as it is expressed and conscious insofar as it is repressed (...). And language, being approached via its function of social expression, reveals both its significant unity in intention and its constitutive ambiguity as subjective expression, admitting something that contradicts thought or using thought to lie. (Lacan 2006, 67)

One can either express itself as a channel of the signifier, either conceptualize what it expresses and thus repress it. Thinking does not help us evade the power of the signifiers; it only allows them to sublimate themselves in other form and to further tighten the grip they already have on us. A distinct anti-Hegelian position, which scholars like Žižek fail to take into account when trying to convert Lacan into a Hegelian. But we will get to that soon enough.

Still, Lacan insists that while the subject is nothing more than an empty place, crossed randomly by desires and signifiers that speak him more than he will be ever able to speak them – he nevertheless exists and resists as much as possible to the symbolic power of the signifiers and also to his desires, to his phantasms that induce specific symptoms.

This is not to say, however, that our culture pursues its course in the shadows outside of creative subjectivity. On the contrary, creative subjectivity has not ceased in its struggle to renew here the never-exhausted power of symbols in the human exchange that brings them to light.

To emphasize the small number of subjects who prop up this creation would be to give in to a romantic perspective by comparing things that are not equivalent. The fact is that this subjectivity, regardless of the domain in which it appears – mathematics, politics, religion, or even advertising – continues to animate the movement of humanity as a whole. (Lacan 2006, 234)

I propose a twofold interpretation of this defense of subjectivity. First, resistance, through conceptualization, for example, is the equivalent of the signifier's cunningness, a maneuver that allows apparently repressed symbols to reappear with vengeance by sublimating themselves outside the subject's direct knowledge, like prince charming that cuts off the head of the hydra and immediately has to face two heads instead, and so on. Second, resistance allows the subject to slide through different chains of signification and, while never being able to elude them completely, offers some consistency to the lack that he ultimately is. Perhaps this second interpretation is the most accurate one, and in its light we can decipher one of Lacan's most ambiguous and cryptic phrases: "no roll of the dice in the signifier will ever abolish chance. This is so because chance exists only within a linguistic determination, no matter how we consider it, whether in combination with automatism or encounter" (Lacan 2006, 758). The subject is usually a physical device used by symbols and affects to communicate with each other, but it can also be a true encounter with something else, something new; his chance is to resist signification within the distances, the cuts between signifying chains and to displace them in more meaningful and rewarding ways. "Resistance, equal in its denial effect despite Hegel and Freud, unhappy consciousness and discontent in civilization" (Lacan 2006, 709; see also Comay 2015, 237-266).

After this short and unavoidable schematic presentation of Lacanian psychoanalysis, we can turn our attention to Lacan's use of some Hegelian concepts like the beautiful soul, unhappy conscience, the law of the heart, the cunning of reason and the master-servant dialectic.

Basically, the main finding of psychology, one that was further nurtured by psychoanalysis, as Žižek observes, is that individuals are not fully transparent with reference to themselves (Žižek 1993). In philosophical terms, as I have argued in the first section of the paper, this is a fundamental tenet of Hegel's understanding of intellect in its insurmountable contradiction with reason. Furthermore, spirit itself is, up to a certain point, a form of self-alienation: societies cannot fully reconcile themselves in political terms, but only in philosophical, religious and artistic terms (Hegel 1983, 176-177; Pinkard 2000, 494, 603-604).

This opacity of the subject with reference to itself allows the subject to think that he is better, above the world around, with all its corruption, intrigues, treachery and violence.

The me (...) of modern man (...) (which Lacan distinguishes from the I, the Freudian ego, the ontological identity of the subject, in contrast with the phenomenological one, the "me", m.n.), has taken on its form in the dialectical impasse of the beautiful soul who does not recognize his very reason for being in the disorder he denounces in the world. (Lacan 2006, 232-233)

Following the law of the heart, the beautiful soul is just a stubborn intellect that refuses a dialectical encounter with the very world that produced and continues to sustain him. For Hegel, stoics, skeptics and romantics were all examples of beautiful souls that tried to reject the world with means they have necessarily extracted from the world itself (Hegel 1977).

But the cunning of reason, Lacan argues further, is the way reason as universal totality of mediations projects its signifying lack into the beautiful souls, poignantly and slowly making them understand themselves as parts of the world and, more importantly, as reasons for the disorder that they fear and condemn in the first place (Lacan 2006, 710; see also Macdonald 2014, 7-9). While Lacan uses the cunning of reason for psychoanalytic, individual purposes, Hegel advanced it as an ontological problem: reason makes its presence felt in history under the form of less and less alienated societies, aware of both their internal and their external mediations, but also as an absence, bringing forward its (partial or complete) negation: wars, conflicts, racism, colonialism, capitalism etc. In this manner, by hiding and giving way to reprehensible events, reason presents itself as indispensable to individual consciousnesses, to intellects, and thus dialectically moves forward (Hegel 2011).

But the most important proof of Lacan's non-Hegelianism resides in his understanding of the master-servant dialectic. The relation between the two parts stops being a social one and becomes an intrapersonal one: the master is for Lacan the Other, the name of the father, the sum of signifiers, while the servant is the signified, the subject forever reduced to the symbolic power of the Other.

The Other, as preliminary site of the pure subject of the signifier, occupies the key (...) position here, even before coming into existence here as absolute Master – to use Hegel's term with and against him. For what is omitted in the platitude of modern information theory is the fact that one cannot even speak of a code without it already being the Other's code; something quite different is at stake in the message, since the subject constitutes himself on the basis of the message, such that he receives from the Other even the message he himself sends. (Lacan 2006, 683; Lacan 1991, 29-142)

Even if the struggle in which the infant acquires his identity against and according to the rules imposed by the father resembles the historical master-servant dialectic, the advancement of liberty through necessity (Casey, Woody *apud* O'Neill 1996, 229-230), to convert the master into the unconscious means to make use of this concept in a very different way than Hegel intended it: for him, both master and slave possess a certain form of incomplete consciousness, but their struggle is a phenomenological, social, economic and political one, not a psychological one (Hegel 1977; Hegel

1979, 125-126). Lacan is pretty aware of that and he undoubtedly recognizes that he uses “Hegel's term with and against him”.

Still, more important than this psychological reduction of the master servant dialectic is the fact that Lacan links this struggles for recognition between master of servant to a desire for recognition and, dialectically enough, to a recognition of desire:

Man's very desire is constituted (...), under the sign of mediation: it is the desire to have one's desire recognized. Its object is a desire, that of other people, in the sense that man has no object that is constituted for his desire without some mediation (Lacan 2006, 148). Reason and desire thus become inextricably mixed, a fact that Hegel himself acknowledged. (Whitebook 2008, 384; see also Kojève *apud* O'Neill 1996, 50)

When trying to present Lacan as a Hegelian, Žižek generally argues that the split that occurs between the intellect and its social environment, or between liberty and necessity, is not resolved by passing into another, superior stage of freedom, but by reconciling the individual, the beautiful soul, in the last instance, with the exterior reality. Through a supposed simple mental operation, the subject miraculously understands its place within actually existing necessity and thus realizes the freedom he craved for, even if only at a mental level, only through thinking (Žižek 2014, Žižek 1993). Richard Chessick is more direct: “Hegel insists that social action and revolution will not overcome alienation; it has to be done by changes in attitudes purely within one's consciousness. This implies an acceptance of the status quo” (Chessick 2008, 702). Žižek's Hegel and Žižek's Lacan are fully endorsing the absence of the subject; moreover, if in the case of Lacan things are debatable to a certain extent, when it comes to Hegel, Žižek is certain that the philosopher understands the sublation of necessity by embracing it until it no longer represents a negation of the signified subject.

Is this truly Hegel's political philosophy, opportunism disguised as dialectical maturity? Let's take a closer look. In Hegel's youth, for example, absolutist monarchies were crumbling, and the French Revolution marked the end of history as the beginning of a more free and meaningful history in which the old metaphysic of the divine right was replaced by republics or constitutional monarchies. “The beginning of the French Revolution must be considered as the struggle of the rational right of the state against the mass of positive rights and privileges which had oppressed it” (Hegel 2009, 65; see also Hegel 1984, 122-123). Had Hegel until then passively accepted the status-quo of absolutist monarchies ?

“Old right” and “old constitution” are such grand and beautiful words that it sounds like a sacrilege to rob a people of its rights. However, whether that which goes by the name of the old right and constitution is right or wrong cannot depend on its age. The abolition of human sacrifice, of slavery, of

feudal despotism and of countless infamies was also always a cancelling of something which was an old right. (Hegel 2009, 65)

Are this the words of someone who embraced the pre-revolutionary way of doing politics and confined freedom strictly at the level of his abstract consciousness ?

Furthermore, Hegel insists in his logic that man is the result of his own reason, and that reason cannot be reduced to thoughts and/or words alone. As concept of reality, reason does not exist only in the minds of men, as an inconsistent abstraction, but also in their actions and the type of societies they build for themselves. In fact, thoughts are deeds as deeds are thoughts; they only exist in their speculative mutuality, not in themselves (Hegel 2010). Moreover, philosophy is possible only in states where political freedom exists, to a certain extent (Hegel 1995). If philosophy, the contextual and historical method of acceding to reason, is impossible in the absence of political freedom, it follows that reason itself is impossible or at least incomplete in the absence of political freedom. And even if reason construe itself slowly and with the help of unconscious intellects, it most certainly does not exclude the benefits derived from the work of superior consciousnesses in this process. Finally, although Hegel is constantly worried of the dangers revolutions and civil wars can entail, inducing a split between particularities and the universal, the state, he also recognizes the right of the citizens to revolt if authoritarianism becomes unbearable, putting the development of reason in danger (Hegel 2011).

We can conclude by now that the Hegelian subject, although restricted by dialectical reason and also acting as a vehicle for its advancement, more or less conscious, is more articulated than the Lacanian subject. And so, despite Žižek's (and Lacan's) efforts to turn Hegel into an optimist conservative, or into a vigorous structuralist of Spinozist extraction, Hegel's philosophical system – which this article never intended to present in detail – withstands the Other, the name of the father, the chains of signification, the unconscious and, overall, psychoanalysis. It does so not by expelling the unconscious, but by recognizing it as the *nec plus ultra* of reason: its limit, its negation, its dialectical driving force.

4. Conclusion: desire with dialectic, Freud and Lacan with Hegel

With the help of Hegel's logic, and also using his political philosophy, the present article intended to offer several new insights to the relation between the speculative philosophy of this highly influential thinker and the works of Freud, on one hand, and Lacan, on the other hand. First of all, it stressed out that the unconscious, far from being an obstacle for Hegel's

system, is actually substance, quantity unaware of itself, that gives birth out of itself to quality, to consciousness, and thus manage to go beyond itself, as liberty goes beyond necessity and it also arises from necessity. Simply put, the unconscious cannot be eliminated, because alienation itself, individual and political as well, is permanent. However, it can be superseded. The ego is not master in his own house, as Freud wrote, but he is nevertheless at home, even if being at home is tantamount for Freud with discontent in civilization (neurosis), for Lacan with the Other expressing itself through the empty vessel of subjectivity (symptom) and for Hegel with an unavoidable contextualization of spirit in the historical dynamic of its self-achievement (reason).

Psychoanalysis vacillated the rushed certitudes of modern philosophy and secured an important place for non-rationality, desire, *jouissance*. After Freud, civilization becomes incomprehensible in the absence of the unconscious, just like after Lacan, Kant cannot be understood without Sade: law cannot abolish desire, because law itself is a form of desire (Lacan 2006, 645-668; Lacan 2013, 50; Lacan 2009, 275-276). After Hegel, however, nothing can be understood in the absence of dialectic, especially the unconscious and its language of desires, of pulsating *jouissance*. Civilization is not necessarily the death instinct, the suppression of life instinct, of sexuality, as Freud considered; after all, Freud himself recognized that creativity and human development in general are impossible without circumscribing the id, without maintaining it under some form of control (Freud 2017a, 348-357). Civilization is the respect and acceptance of *jouissance* without allowing it to become dominant. This is why Hegel insisted that states should not preoccupy themselves too much with the morality of their citizens as long as it does not affect their ethical (political) behavior.

Not as a state, but only as a moral entity, can the state demand morality of its citizens. It is the state's duty not to make any arrangements which contravene or secretly undermine morality, because it is in its own greatest interest, even for the sake of legality (its proper aim), to ensure that its citizens shall also be morally good. But if it sets up institutions with a view to bringing about this result directly, then it might issue laws enacting that its citizens ought to be moral, but they would be improper, contradictory, and laughable. The state could only bring its citizens to submit to these institutions through their trust in them, and this trust it must first arouse. (Hegel 1961, 97-98)

What is this but a blunt recognition of Sade's principle that lies at the core of psychoanalysis and according to which *jouissance* is indispensable for a proper political society ?

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