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## Imagine There's No Void

*We have been naught, we shall be all.*

(The International)

The world consists of borders. Without borders, there is no world. Not only are borders in between all worldly things, but also everything that *is* potentially meets its own border in everything else that *it is not*. In turn, every *something* is itself the border and the edge of the other and for the other, which it delimits, but also shapes. Every body borders another body, being itself the border beyond which there is the other-than-itself. This is the structure of the world, which operates according to the law of the border, the law of difference.

The world, as pictured by the physicist, is a world of material bodies. But, in trying to find a perfect physical body, the particle of particles, the indivisible, science encounters the flexibility of matter and finally arrives at an infinitesimal reality as much material as metaphor, from oscillating neutrinos to superstrings or quark flavours with their strangeness, charm, beauty, truth, topness, or bottomness. In this material world, as we know it, boundaries are never fixed, since even the rocks are moving, and even within crystals there is motion and change.

The world as pictured by the mathematician is a world of numerical or geometrical bodies. In his dialogue *Timaeus*, Plato outlines his theory of the universe, and claims that everything is made of triangles. These archaic, tiny triangular Platonic bodies are to be identified, without any bias, as a kind of subatomic particle, and are sometimes linked to quarks in contemporary physics. One might say that the three legs of each triangle are the borders beyond which there already lie other triangles.

Although they have borders, both quarks and tiny triangles cannot exist separately or autonomously, but only as constitutive elements of bigger and more complex structures. They do not have any internal structure themselves, or, to

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put it simply, they do not have any consistent inside. Elementary particles – *prima materia* – *do not consist of anything*, but, instead, everything consists of them. Are they not imperceptible pieces of nothing, each being a border between nothing and thing, nothing and something, nothing and everything? Pure Being and pure nothing are the same, Hegel says.<sup>1</sup> What then is the elementary particle, which contains nothing, if not the border of these two, the border of the same, where all difference is produced?

The world as pictured by the biologist is a world of living bodies, which consist of cells. Cells – elementary living bodies – are complex. The borders of their internal structures are cell membranes, and sometimes (in particular, in the case of plants) even cell walls. The world as pictured by the nationalist politician consists of countries, between which there are frontier guards and border controls, whereas the world of the political activist implies borders between classes, powers, privileges, etc. The world as pictured by the sexist or the feminist is made of gendered bodies, where the walls between men and women are to be either built or destroyed. The world as pictured by the humanist consists of humans and other animals, or non-humans (including plants, monsters, vampires, zombies, and aliens), and the boundaries of the human can be either open or closed towards what they call non-human.

The ensemble of borders of the world seems to be all-too-multiple and heterogeneous. However, to put it bluntly, there are three essential kinds of borders:

1. The border between something and something *similar* – between one and another triangle, one and another cell, one and another country, one and another man, one and another grey cat, one and another clone, etc. These are borders within a certain continuity or homogeneity, within a certain dimension or a certain genre, where we rather deal with differences in degree.
2. The border between something and something *different* – between different dimensions, between man and woman, animal and man, dream and reality, organism and mechanism, light and darkness, allowed and prohibited, sacred and profane, external and internal, life and death, good and evil, poor and rich, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Hegel's *Science of Logic*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 82.

3. The border between something and *nothing*. Not easy to imagine or represent, this border goes beyond representation or imagination, towards the particle made of nothing (which cannot be really observed, but only scientifically, mathematically, philosophically deduced from observation of some larger entities captured in certain processes). At this border, one potentially faces the ultimate *edge of the world*.

Things can be measured by all three kinds of borders, in various ways. Thus, in the dimension of morals, on the first level of borders we can think that we choose between different goods, or between the better and the best, but we can also seek for the lesser of two evils. On the second level we encounter what is supposed to be the border between good and evil. And then, there is still another borderline: to cross it means to go beyond good and evil.

We say “borderline” as if it were really possible to draw lines between something and something alike, something and something unlike, or something and nothing. But, in a way, a line as border, such as the side of a triangle, is not anything but the pure in-between of two planes, surfaces, places, bodies, or territories. A borderline consists of nothing, but, nevertheless, has two sides, one shifting into the other. In some spacious reality, there is no line between a window and a cat sitting on it – where the cat ends, the window begins: in between them, there are some mixtures of infinitesimals, belonging either rather to the cat or rather to the window. There is never a proper line.

A borderline of the second kind – between cat (as animal) and man – seems even less perceptible and even more abstract (although every line is abstract), but nevertheless something very serious goes on here in between. A dialectics of exclusion and inclusion envelopes this site where a human being either recognizes or does not recognize, either accepts or rejects her own animality and appropriates her own humanity: no less a process than anthropogenesis runs along this line. In this process, the human being creates borders – not only between herself and the animal others, but all borders of all kinds: borders are a human way of positing a difference.

Animals do not know borders, do not respect them, or do not take them into account. However, they can provide us with some striking knowledge regarding what borders are. Thus, borderlines of the second kind can be seen as pass-

ing through different multiplicities, series, or packs. Each pack, according to Deleuze and Guattari, has its anomalous or exceptional individual who runs alongside the pack. It can be a loner, or the leader of a pack, or an outcast, someone who inhabits the edge of a certain whole (like Moby Dick for whales, or the Wolf Man, or sorcerers, who live between villages or at the edge of fields and woods), being itself “neither an individual nor a species,” but “a phenomenon of bordering”:

If you change dimensions, if you add or subtract one, you change multiplicity. Thus there is a borderline for each multiplicity; it is in no way a center but rather the enveloping line or farthest dimension, as a function of which it is possible to count the others, all those lines or dimensions constitute the pack at a given moment (beyond the borderline, the multiplicity changes nature). [...] The elements of the pack are only imaginary “dummies,” the characteristics of the pack are only symbolic entities; all that counts is the borderline – the anomalous. [...] In any event, the pack has a borderline, and an anomalous position, whenever in a given space an animal is on the line or in the act of drawing the line in relation to which all the other members of the pack will fall into one of two halves, left or right: a peripheral position, such that it is impossible to tell if the anomalous is still in the band, already outside the band, or at the shifting boundary of the band.<sup>2</sup>

Exceptional individuals create alliances or blocks of becoming, heterogeneous combinations of the becoming-animal, through which an infinite production of difference is operating. As Catherine Malabou has noted, their “role is to mark out the end of a series and the imperceptible move to another possible series, like the eye of a needle of affects, the point of passage, by means of which one motif is stitched to another.”<sup>3</sup> This super-flexible world of multiplicities and series, where, through the eyes of needles of affects, the anomalous are bordering, is measured by intensities of becoming.

The ultimate borderline of the third kind – the edge of the world – would be, however, the most problematic at this point. How is it possible, if possible at all, to think of bordering on finitude? How is it possible that on one side we have

<sup>2</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005, p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine Malabou, “Who’s Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?” in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 128.

something, but on the other side there is nothing? The third borderline has only one side. This ultimate edge of the world is nowhere, since the nothing cannot be anywhere, cannot really occupy this or that place: everyone knows that only things occupy places – there is stuff everywhere. But if things, surrounded by their borders, occupy all the places, how then is change ever possible? How can one ever shift from one series to another? In the world, which is so packed, how can a pack change its nature?

The paradox is that, in the last instance, everything consists of that which does not consist of anything. As Žižek puts it, “For a true dialectician, the ultimate mystery is not ‘Why is there something rather than nothing?’, but ‘Why is there nothing rather than something?’: how is it that the more we analyse reality, the more we find a void?”<sup>4</sup> Is it not that each elementary particle itself, having neither internal structure nor autonomous existence, but oscillating between various combinations, is a kind of bordering anomalous, which faces nothing and makes an alliance, if not a secret pact, with it? As captain Ahab says about Moby-Dick (quoted by Deleuze): “‘To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me’. The white wall. ‘Sometimes I think there is naught beyond.’”<sup>5</sup>

But if this is the structure of the world, then what about the structure of the void we border? The void is the void because it does not consist of anything. To be more precise, such an exemplary piece of void as an elementary particle does not have an internal structure. However, one could say it has an *external* one. What would this structure look like? Matjaž Ličer comments:

The external structure of an elementary particle is a multiplicity of multiplicities of other particles born from the energy of its field. This external multitude is the particle itself. The particle can only be itself via the detour of its own externality, which constitutes, once more, the particle itself. There is nothing on the particle that makes it what it is. Everything that it is, it is through its surroundings. The corpuscular punctuality, the singularity, the condensation that is the particle, has been transformed by quantum field theories to a pure relation. Nothing that was postulated as an intrinsic quality of the particle is self-subsisting.

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<sup>4</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*. London; New York: Verso, 2012, p. 925.

<sup>5</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 245.

The particle mass, the most substantial property of physical substance, has been transformed by the Higgs mechanism to a pure relation. The singularity of matter, a particle, had been nothing but the way it couples to its surroundings, which it structures. Particle mass, treated as a substance, used to be conceptualized as a product of two infinities, infinitely large (its density) and infinitely small (its volume), which results in a well defined finite value. Quantum field theories have set strict constraints on such claims, but not by affirming the true radical singularity of the old days, but by taming it, renormalizing it, regularizing it. Substance is no longer subsisting, it has been transformed into its own externality, to a relation. But a relation between what? What are the terms of this relation? The particle is a relation between something and nothing, between a finitude, a tamed singularity, and an infinity of infinities of virtual particles, emerging from the field of the central particle. A particle is nothing BUT this relation. It is a singularity bordering on multiplicity, which is, again, the singularity. The multiplicity of multiplicities of virtual particles is what screens the central singularity and normalizes it back to finitude. Without this multiplicity the singularity would remain divergent, unthinkable in the scope of physics. All the structure that the particle has, it owes to its surrounding cloud of virtual particles. All its properties are set and emerge through interaction with the cloud that the particle itself generates.<sup>6</sup>

While an external structure of an elementary particle looks rather *soft*, like a cloud of virtual multiplicities, that of some living organisms, namely, some invertebrates, is a *hard one*. This completely different kind of external structure is called an *exoskeleton*<sup>7</sup>. It supports and protects an animal's body, in contrast to the internal skeleton (endoskeleton) of, for example, a human or other mammal. In popular usage, some of the larger kinds of exoskeletons are known as "shells". Examples of exoskeleton animals include insects such as grasshoppers and cockroaches, and crustaceans such as crabs and lobsters. The shells of the various groups of shelled molluscs, including those of snails, clams, tusk shells, chitons, and the nautilus, are also exoskeletons. Mineralised exoskeletons first appeared in the fossil record about 550 million years ago, and their evolution is considered by some to have played a role in the subsequent Cambrian explosion

<sup>6</sup> These three paragraphs are written by Matjaž Ličar as a commentary on my paper, resulting from our productive dialogue around the void.

<sup>7</sup> The metaphor of exoskeleton was suggested by Rasmus Ugilt, who was commenting on the first draft of this paper.

of animals, or, as it is also called, *a skeleton revolution* (the relatively rapid appearance of most major forms of animal life as we know it<sup>8</sup>).

Indeed, as applied to the void, this metaphor may seem very rough, since here the shell is the shell of something, and a lobster is definitely not nothing; however, it gives us a certain idea of an external structure – the shell constitutes the border of a lobster. It is living there, within its own borders; it *inhabits itself* as the sole citizen of its lobster-land, and at the same time through its border it comes into relation to the other-than-itself – to the other lobster, to the other-than-a-lobster, but also to the nothing. After all, we remove the shell and devour the lobster, similarly as those beasts from Hegel's "Phenomenology of Spirit", which, just like initiates of the Eleusinian mysteries, desperately negate things by devouring them<sup>9</sup>.

But imagine there is no lobster. Is it not that, in a way, a void can hide itself in a shell, too? Furthermore, what if everything that is is either a virtual cloud, or a shell of the nothing: the multiplicity of being as an external structure of the void? And, finally, can we remove the shell and devour the void, as we devour the lobster? This last question would bring us to the notorious logic of the commodity, the logic of the little nothing as a surplus on top of the use-value of what we consume. However, the void cannot be reduced to a commodity. Commodity-void is just a small part of an entire void-complex. In the large, I propose to consider at least three essential kinds of void:

1. The void as *substance*;
2. The void as *subject*;
3. The void as *universal*, or *real*.

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In order to approach the first kind of void – the void as substance – I will refer to one example from recent Russian literature, namely a book by Victor Pelevin entitled *Chapaev and Pustota*<sup>10</sup> (which was translated into English as *Buddha's Little Finger*). This book was written in the 1990s, the time of the onset of gallop-

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambrian\\_explosion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cambrian_explosion).

<sup>9</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller. Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup> In Russian, "pustota" means "void".

ing capitalist development in Russia. The protagonist of this novel, whose name is Pyotr Void (Pustota), is a patient at a psychiatry clinic. He identifies himself with Petka, an assistant of Chapaev.

Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev was a celebrated Russian soldier and Red Army commander during the Russian Civil War. After the Soviet Union had been established, Chapayev was immortalised by Soviet propaganda as a hero of the Russian Civil War in a popular book by Dmitry Furmanov and in a 1934 movie by the Vasilyev brothers. In later years, Chapayev became a recurring character in numerous Russian anecdotes. Pelevin's book is set in two different times – right after the October revolution and in modern post-socialist Russia. In the post-revolutionary period Pyotr Pustota is a poet. He meets a strange man named Vasily Chapaev, who is some sort of an army commander, but also a kind of a Buddhist guru. Pustota spends his days drinking home-distilled vodka, sniffing cocaine, and discussing metaphysical questions with Chapayev. Here is one of their dialogs, in which Chapaev persistently interrogates Pustota about what he thinks he is:

What do you call “I”? – Clearly, myself. – Can you tell me who you are? – Pyotr Voyd. – That’s your name. But who is it bears that name? – ...If you have no objection, then I regard myself as ... Well, let us say, a monad. In Leibniz’s sense of the word. – Then just who is it who goes around regarding himself as this gonad? – The monad itself... – ...Tell me, where’s it live, this gonad of yours? – In my consciousness. – And where is your consciousness? – Right here,” I said, tapping myself on the head. – And where is your head? – On my shoulders. – And where are your shoulders? – In a room. – And where is the room? – In a building. – And where is the building? – In Russia. – And where is Russia? – In the deepest trouble, Vasily Ivanovich.<sup>11</sup>

A little later in the same episode Pyotr manages to give a properly correct answer to Chapaev’s question “Where are you?” – “Nowhere”.<sup>12</sup> The void is not only the name of a protagonist, but also a central category of this novel, whose main characters are in search of a kind of inner void within the shell of a deeply pathological, disturbing, and annoying post-Soviet reality. This book by Pelevin

<sup>11</sup> Viktor Pelevin, *Bhudda’s Little Finger*, trans. by Andrew Bromfield. Penguin Books, 2001, pp. 139-140.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.



is one of the major examples of Russian postmodern prose of the 1990s, the background and entire paradigm of which is quite clear: after the collapse of the Soviet Union the ideological structure of society is changing so fast that the subject cannot grasp even the shadow of the core of some consistent external reality. The idea that it hardly exists at all actively penetrates consciousness together with different new-age ideas, Buddhism, and other, say, oriental wisdom with its essential search for a void.

At the same time, the previously forbidden French philosophy of the twentieth century finally enters Russian culture and takes there a paradoxical twist. Phenomenology, post-structuralism, deconstruction, the entire combination of anti-totalitarian struggles, resistances, and reflections labelled as the thought of May '68, and what Benjamin Noys now characterises as the affirmationist consensus or even as the affirmationist doxa (with its hostility, first of all, to negativity, dialectics, subject, truth, etc.)<sup>13</sup>, together with the aforementioned oriental wisdom, are investing in the widespread nihilism of a nascent Russian capitalist society.

In this context, the void is represented as a kind of positive *substance* – albeit the inner self as an empty place, deprived of any content, or an external reality that does not deserve to be believed in (like Russia in trouble), or an ideal utopian place, where there is only a void as a permanent condition of happiness, satisfaction, or nirvana. It is a reversed dialectics of the *subject becoming substance*. The subject seeks for the void of his inner self, which will finally allow it to be absorbed by the outer emptiness of the Universe.

Of course, Russia is not the only place where one can find numerous examples of such voids as the ultimate capitalist wisdom. They can be found everywhere. What capitalism attacks, what it cannot tolerate, is the other kind of void. This, I would say, negatively active void appears only in retrospect. This other void is perfectly resumed in a formula from The International: “We have been naught, we shall be all.” Capitalism replaces this void to fulfil it with the abundance of commodity behind which the subject is seeking the thing and enjoyment: in the shell of commodity, capitalism sells us an *unlobster* to devour. We devour

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13 See: Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*. Edinburgh University Press, 2010.

the void, but are never satisfied, never become full – and the void devours us. The emptiness of the new-age utopia is one of those commodified objects that pretend to be the substantial *all* of the world. Thus the ideological emptiness clothes itself in the mantle of an ontological completeness.

Let me now continue with the second kind of void – the void as *subject*. This kind of void can be described not as emptiness, but rather as *loss*. One can easily recognise here the language of contemporary psychoanalysis, which still provides us with one of the most convincing and advanced theories on the subject. Thus, one of the principal stakes of *Less than Nothing*, as well as of the rest of Žižek's recent work, is its proclaimed materialist account of subjectivity, which emerges from the encounter of Hegelian and Lacanian subjects to find its determination in a profound indeterminateness – as a constitutive rupture, a cut, a split, or a void in the chain of a certain determinate reality or certain processes. The Žižekian subject is a monstrous creature of both Hegelian negativity and the Freudian death drive.

In Žižek's broader ontology and philosophy of nature, all material reality the subject deals with seems to constitute itself through the void. The more material and bodily is the Žižekian subject, the more it faces and borders nothing. Now, through the mediation of the void, the substance becomes subject. It is not that thought just intervenes into being with the mediation of nothing, but it is the void of being itself that is opened up by the gap of the subject. As Žižek specifies, "This nothing is not the Oriental or mystical Void of eternal peace, but the nothingness of a pure gap (antagonism, tension, "contradiction"), the pure form of dislocation ontologically preceding any dislocated content."<sup>14</sup>

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To return to the aforementioned capitalist commodity, what it proposes to us is a fetish that promises in vain to fulfil the void opened up by this gap, the void that the subject experiences as the loss of the thing itself, and which capitalism sells her in the shell of the thing. It attempts to close the negative void as subject with a void as a positive substance. The void as subject depends on this idea of the lost and forgotten, and at the same time unforgettable, since an experience of this loss constitutes the subject's very being, and the very being thus shows up as the void.

<sup>14</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, p. 35.

Joan Copjec, in her great feminist account of Lacan's ethics of psychoanalysis, in the book called *Imagine There's No Woman*, emphasises the affinity of this experience to the loss of a primordial mother and the primordial enjoyment attached to her.<sup>15</sup> But, of course, it can also be the loss of a primordial father, which makes the absent law absolutely repressive and opens up a kind of ultimate injustice and the arbitrariness of it, etc. In brief, the subject of psychoanalysis is an orphan child. A Lacanian subject is always in a lack, missing something essential, the thing itself, the enjoyment itself, and even if we hand him the entire world on a silver platter, he will never get any happier, because he knows that the world is *not all*. On the other hand, one can say that he is overwhelmed with the too-much-ness of the not-all of the world: it is always too much, but it is never all.

But what about the void of being itself, introduced by the orphan subject? I can only schematically approach this third kind of void, the void as *universal*. Think about Joan Copjec's title. In the introduction to her book she explains why she chose it by referencing Lacan's quotation from Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Roi*: "Long live Poland, for without Poland there would be no Poles!"<sup>16</sup> According to Copjec, "Lacan is recommending a new ethical imperative: 'Imagine there's no Poland!'."<sup>17</sup> This formulation runs across his essay "Kant with Sade", where the Père Ubu quotation plays a decisive role. In his *Encore*, Lacan, as Copjec emphasises, rephrases the imperative to counter Ubu's as "Imagine there's no woman!" Here no less than universals are at stake. Of course, there is no woman as such, but only particular women, but how is the existence of these particular women ever possible without *the* woman herself? Copjec explains:

Lacan does not argue that there are no universals, only particular things; rather, he maintains that *universals are real*. To limit one's observation only to appearances, to particular things, is to overlook the existence of the real, which is precisely what makes an all of being impossible. In other words, if there are only appearances in their particularity, this is due to the fact that the real, a by-product or residue of thought, detaches itself from thought to form its internal limit. This limit has both a synthesizing function that universalizes by causing thought to revolve around it and a detotalizing function, since it subtracts itself from thought.

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<sup>15</sup> See: Joan Copjec, *Imagine There's No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2002, p. 32 and elsewhere in the work.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This subtraction, in turn, “establishes a fracture, a bi-partition, a splitting” in the order of being as appearance.<sup>18</sup>

Let us borrow from Žižek another example of a universal as real. In the chapter of his *Less than Nothing* “The Animal that I Am” he develops his critique of Derrida’s deconstruction of the distinction between human and animal. I must point out that his paper on the same topic, which has been presented elsewhere,<sup>19</sup> was entitled “The Animal Does Not Exist”. This title shifts from Derridean to Lacanian mode and actually brings the same formula: “Imagine there’s no animal!”. On Derrida’s general dismissal of a binary logic presupposed by this distinction, Žižek replies in Hegelese:

It is not only that, say, the totalization effected under the heading “the animal” involves the violent obliteration of a complex multiplicity; it is also that the violent reduction of such a multiplicity to a minimal difference is the moment of truth. That is to say, the multiplicity of animal forms is to be conceived as a series of attempts to resolve some basic antagonism or tension which defines animality as such, a tension which can only be formulated from a minimal distance, once humans are involved.<sup>20</sup>

Going back to the idea of commodity, at this point Žižek recalls the Marxian elaboration of the general equivalent from the first edition of the first Volume of *Capital*:

It is as if, alongside and external to lions, tigers, rabbits, and all other actual animals, which form when grouped together the various kinds, species, subspecies, families, etc., of the animal kingdom, there existed in addition the animal, the individual incarnation of the entire animal kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

Žižek asks: “Does not this image of money as ‘the animal’ romping alongside all the heterogeneous instances of particular sorts of animality that exist around it capture what Derrida describes as the gap that separates the Animal from the

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> It was presented at the conference *Human Animal* in Berlin in December 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, p. 408.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Marx, *Value: Studies*, trans. Albert Dragstedt, London: New Park, 1976. Quoted from: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/commodity.htm>.

multiplicity of actual animal life?"<sup>22</sup> What he is interested in is precisely this gap, since "what man encounters in the Animal is itself in the oppositional determination: viewed as an animal, man is the spectral animal existing alongside really existing animal kinds."<sup>23</sup> In its alongsideness, *the* animal borders the nothing. It hardly exists, but it embodies the border between the void and the multiplicity of existing animals, being at the same time a kind of inexistent element of this very multiplicity.

Let us now take a turn from this inexistent element of a multiplicity to an anomalous, which runs alongside each pack and, being not at all representative of this multiplicity or pack, nevertheless forms its border. This brings me back to one of my initial points: *prima materia* consists of elements which do not have autonomous existence, the elements which are themselves the borders of the void and which constitute its external structure. The *prima materia* is like a sorcerer, who, as they say, does not have a backside, because it literally sits upon the void of nothing.

Is it not that this totally imperceptible one-sided borderline is a grain of freedom, which withdraws every piece of matter from the void? If so, then the edge of the world is everywhere. Insofar as we border not only something, albeit something similar or different from us, but also nothing, which opens up our horizon of similarities and differences, we are the edge of the world. All of us – particles and antiparticles, men, cells, cats, windows, Poles, women, subjects, bodies, lobsters, sorcerers, triangles, and others – are involved in this risky bordering, where actual movements and potential changes are at stake. Of course, the anomalous animal of the universal void appears only in retrospect, when we are supposed to withdraw it from the shell of things which are. But imagine there's no nothing! A world with no nothing would be nothing but a world with no borders and no difference, ruled by an ideology of the false emptiness to devour, where any motion brings the same back to the same, and where Russia will remain forever in its deepest trouble.

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<sup>22</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, p. 408.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*