

OBJECT-ORIENTED ONTOLOGY AND NEOLIBERAL CAPITALISM: A MATERIALIST-DISCURSIVE CRITIQUE

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ABSTRACT. *Object-Oriented Ontology and Neoliberal Capitalism: A Materialist-Discursive Critique.* Object-oriented ontology [OOO], alternatively known as flat ontology or as a branch of speculative realism, has recently been developed and presented as a non-anthropocentric attempt to construct an ontology, a metaphysics, or both. In this paper, I will look at the texts of Graham Harman, probably the most vocal of all the theorists working within the framework of OOO, in order to show that the many flaws of this approach end up legitimizing a neoliberal capitalist worldview and reinforcing its contradictions. Also, one of my goals is to answer a current misunderstanding of object-oriented ontology as posthumanism; OOO is not a posthumanism because it rejects any political discourse and criticism. On the contrary, as we will see, OOO explicitly opposes the new posthumanist materialisms.

Keywords: *object-oriented ontology, posthumanism, new materialisms, neoliberal capitalism*

REZUMAT. *Ontologia orientată pe obiect și capitalismul neoliberal: o critică materialist-discursivă.* Ontologia orientată pe obiect [OOO], cunoscută și drept ontologie plană sau ca ramură a realismului speculativ, a fost dezvoltată și prezentată recent drept o tentativă non-anthropocentrică de a construi o ontologie,

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o metafizică sau ambele. În acest text, voi analiza textele lui Graham Harman, probabil cel mai vocal dintre teoreticienii care lucrează în cadrul OOO, pentru a arăta că multe probleme ale acestei abordări ajung să legitimizeze o perspectivă capitalistă neoliberală și să îi întărească contradicțiile. De asemenea, unul dintre obiectivele mele este să răspund la o neînțelegere curentă cu privire la ontologia orientată pe obiect drept postumanism; OOO nu este un postumanism deoarece respinge orice discurs politic și orice critică. Dimpotrivă, după cum vom vedea, OOO se opune explicit noilor materialisme postumaniste.

Cuvinte-cheie: *ontologie orientată pe obiect, postumanism, noi materialisme, capitalism neoliberal*

Object-oriented ontology, abbreviated OOO, is a recent development in contemporary philosophy and part of a wider non-anthropocentric shift, which also includes new materialisms, critical posthumanism, and agential realism. In this paper, I will try to outline the characteristics of object-oriented ontology in an effort to understand the deep issues that it presents, especially from the point of view of materialist and critical posthumanism. Object-oriented ontology, as conceptualized by its most famous and prolific proponent, Graham Harman, promotes a neoliberal capitalist worldview, with its focus on independent and autonomous objects and on its refusal to acknowledge the relations between things. Even if posthumanism is not a fixed concept and it can mean various things in different fields of research, from animal studies to ecology, I would like to reconnect initial critical posthumanism, which developed a critique of the modern Western concept of “human,” with the critique of capitalism from socialist and feminist standpoints in order to underscore the major differences between posthumanism and object-oriented ontology.

Objects: here, there, everywhere!

Harman’s object-oriented ontology begins with a refusal of *critique*, understood as (Leftist) criticism of social institutions of *Aufklärung* origins (Harman 2014c). Instead, Harman insists that he recuperates *philosophy*, understood as the Greek “love of wisdom” (Harman 2014a), through object-oriented ontology, which is synonymous with metaphysics (Harman 2017, 12). Together with critique, OOO also refuses any political engagement, a move derived from Harman’s underlying assumption that philosophy should more or less strive for universalization (Harman 2014b, 2017, 23), in the long run, and should not be related in any way to its context. This perspective is entirely consistent with the more detailed explanations that comprise object-oriented ontology.

As the name says, OOO is a philosophy of flatness, that is, the world is made of “objects [that are] equally objects, though not all are equally real.” (Harman 2016, 3) Thus, the “human,” an object among many others, is decentered, allowing Harman to promote this theory as non-anthropocentric; however, to make this work, he resorts to the venerable tradition of the Kantian thing-in-itself. Objects are equal and autonomous in *reality*, that is, in ontological status, but they are dependent on an observer when they are perceived. The distinction he makes between real and sensuous objects means that objects are not knowable – they are constantly withdrawing, as Harman says, so that an observer only has access to some part of them but never to objects in their entirety. For Harman, this comes to solve two issues in Western philosophy, collectively named “duominning” (Harman 2016, 7; 2017, 41-52): the first, “overminning,” refers to the practice of thinking about relations and effects, not about the objects-in-themselves; the second, “underminning,” refers to the practice of thinking about constituent parts and histories, not about the objects-in-themselves (this “duominning” is also the point of departure for Morton’s development of “hyperobjects” [2013, 14-15]). Using these tools, Harman seems to be able to accuse (and reject) both physics and materialism of not taking into account the *reality* of the object. According to Harman’s OOO, this *reality* is that objects are autonomous, independent from one another and thus from their context and historicity, always evading understanding. However, the objects of OOO range from protons to bacteria, galaxies, Ford Model T, Artificial Intelligence, Hashimoto thyroiditis, Sophocles’s Oedipus, Chairman Mao, Zen Buddhism, tetrahydrocannabinol, the President of the United States, the pancreas, the Second World War, object-oriented ontology, and everything in between, which we must admit is an exceedingly long list predicated on the claim that anything is an object.

As we have already seen, Harman explicitly refuses to include any sort of politics within his philosophy, trying to keep it pure as metaphysical ontology. At the same time, he needs to give some sort of account of relations between objects because he cannot just do away with relations altogether (unlike Bryant, who explicitly rejects any relations between objects [2011, 26], and Bogost, who mysteriously asserts that “things are independent from their constituent parts while remaining dependent on them” [2012, 23]). For Harman’s OOO, this translates into two main points. Firstly, Harman insists that objects do *sometimes* relate to one another in a meaningful way. He explicitly borrows the concept of “symbiosis” from Lynn Margulis to prove his point, citing her work in developing the theory of endosymbiosis but also mentioning that (his) symbiosis is “often non-reciprocal” (Harman 2016, 46). Thus, according to Harman, an object passes through few such major events of symbiosis during

its lifespan – symbioses exist only insofar as they “change the reality” of one of the participants (49). Secondly, and also as an attempt to make sense of relations within OOO, it seems that Harman wants to claim that objects have a certain lifespan, beginning with their “birth, ripeness, decadence, and death” (107), and that these stages of life are determined by the major events he calls symbioses. In a sense that is not always made explicit, this concept of symbiosis is a cornerstone of object-oriented ontology. A consequence of the very limited understanding of symbiosis as “few major events” that account for the transition of an object from birth to death is the fact that objects are completely detached from their context, historicity, and materiality *except* for these symbiotic moments.

Since Harmanian object-oriented ontology focuses on autonomous objects and rejects relations (outside the few “meaningful” and often unidirectional symbioses), it proposes that art should be judged autonomously in terms of beauty, once again following Kant. For Harman, not only is there no difference between metaphysics and ontology as philosophy, but there is also no difference between philosophy and aesthetics, which allows him to posit the venerable “disinterested contemplation” as a method of doing both. It is no surprise that Harman ends up reading, for instance, Dada, through the lens of one of the most influential conservative art critics of the twentieth century, Clement Greenberg, who emphasized the intrinsic or internal characteristics of a work of art completely disconnected from its context (Harman 2020, 145) and any political implications. Like Greenberg, Harman likes to look at the qualities of the autonomous work of art, not at the way, for instance, Duchamp’s *Fountain* criticized the institution of art and the bourgeois concept of “art for art’s sake.” In a similar vein, when faced with the political question, Harman begins by analyzing the traditional divide between Right and Left in terms of Power politics and Truth politics, only to advocate for a move beyond this model, towards an “object-oriented politics [...] grounded in reality” (Harman 2017, 146). As objects, political issues cannot be accessed by knowledge, so traditional political discourses are wrong in claiming primacy over reality. Object-oriented politics, on the other hand, wants to treat climate change or the refugee crises as objects, with OOO commentator Steven Shaviro actually dismissing Benjamin’s warning that fascism aestheticizes politics (Benjamin 2008, 42) in order to promote a return to Kant’s disinterested aesthetic judgment (Shaviro 2014, 13, 150-151).

The Che Guevara T-shirt & the long road to segmentarity

Harman’s object-oriented ontology has been criticized from various points of view (Galloway 2013; Wolfendale 2014; Povinelli 2016); in what follows, I would like to add a critical posthumanist and materialist perspective,

mostly because of the danger of conflating OOO with posthumanism solely based on the rejection of human exceptionalism. Non-anthropocentrism does not make any theory a branch of posthumanism. In a way, the tension between materialist posthumanism and Harman's insistence on his rejection of materialism in favor of "immaterialism" or speculative realism shows that there is a clear divide between the two. Moreover, I believe there is another way to criticize object-oriented ontology, and that is from a perspective that is more consistently posthumanist. If I were to summarize my criticism in a few words, I would say that Harman's main issues stem from his attempt to divorce critique from philosophy and give a "theory of everything," a universal metanarrative. The flatness of object-oriented ontology as equality, autonomy, and independence from relations, contexts, historicity, and materiality is an outcome of this fundamental claim.

It is always surprising that Harman never dwells or elaborates on his pretense that objects are equal, that ontology is flat. He simply takes it as a given within a certain strand of Western thought, which is also why he fails to provide a convincing argument for an object-oriented politics. Objects are never equal, but it is too dangerous not to pretend that they are. For instance, the philosophy of flatness is not interested in the relatively long history of humanism as human exceptionalism in which "human" simply means a Western, white, Christian, heterosexual, mature, able man who owns property in the form of land, things, precious metals, money, women, children, animals and so on, that is, in capitalist humanism. The ontological autonomy, singularity, and equality of objects, translated in socio-political and economic terms, smells like the neoliberal hypocrisy dubbed "equality of opportunity," used to legitimize the dissolution of society in a prescriptive Hobbesian war of all against all – generalized competition. There is no such thing as society for Harman's OOO, just as it was the case for neoliberal Prime Minister Thatcher back in the 1980s, only objects and individuals.

We have seen that Harman uses the concept of "symbiosis" to denote the relations in which objects engage but mentions that it is non-reciprocal, which is a blatant hijacking of a posthumanist concept. In 1924, Russian biologist Boris Kozo-Polyansky published a book on symbiogenesis in which he stated that a cell is a cooperative of multiple bodies (Kozo-Polyansky 2010, 109-110). In the 1960s, Lynn Sagan (Margulis) developed her theory of endosymbiosis – the fact that chloroplasts and mitochondria were bacteria working together within prokaryotic cells to construct the eukaryotic cell (Sagan 1967). After her joint work with Lovelock, the famous proponent of the Gaia theory (Lovelock 1979), Margulis concluded that Gaia is the "interweaving network of all life" on a symbiotic planet (Margulis 1999, 158) where living things, in their local

environments, constitute global patterns. Later, Haraway used the concept of symbiosis under the name of *sympoiesis* to give a political account of how “critters – human and not – become-with each other” (Haraway 2016, 97). Since Harman is not interested at all in what, how, and by whom are objects produced, his ontology had to strip all the deeply ecological and posthumanist meanings from the term “symbiosis” in order to reduce it to an oftentimes univocal relation. On the other hand, Margulis and Haraway talk about symbiosis as trans-species entanglements that actively construct the world. In this sense, “objects” are always in relation with one another, they co-exist, they co-constitute themselves permanently, not just during some isolated phases of birth, decadence, and death.

Stemming from the idea that objects are autonomous singularities with no context, Harman’s autonomous artwork and Kantian aesthetics of the beautiful revives the bourgeois tradition of modernity. At the end of chapter three of *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything*, Harman mentions that object-oriented politics is against *escapism*, that is, against the practice of ignoring pressing issues, as exemplified by former U.S. President Donald J. Trump (Harman 2017, 146). At the same time and in accordance with the aesthetic theory of OOO, he defends the modern “art for art’s sake” which itself was a form of escapism, of ignoring the issues of everyday life, as it is shown by Marcuse’s critical theory of bourgeois culture (Marcuse 2007, 89-90), cited by Bürger in his explanation of art as an ideological institution of bourgeois society (Bürger 1984, 14-15; 47-49). Harman’s autonomous object is, if anything, an ideological object of capitalism and even neoliberalism, since the relations of production and consumption are not considered, which leads me to my final point: politics.

According to object-oriented ontology, a Che Guevara T-shirt is an independent, autonomous, and isolated object. But from a materialist point of view, the T-shirt is a complicated thing: it is made of cotton, which is usually harvested from the plantations of the Global South, and produced by poorly paid laborers in the underdeveloped world; cotton cultures use the largest amount of water of all crops, leading to freshwater loss (Chapagain et al 2006); cotton production involves the use of generous amounts of pesticides, affecting biodiversity and workers’ health (Ferrigno et al 2017); seventeen to twenty percent of the toxic chemicals used in the textile industry for processing and dyeing end up in local waters, contaminating them, killing fish populations, and impoverishing local communities (Rabby 2017); the working conditions in the textile factories are extremely poor, including low wages, high risks, and child labor (*Workers’ Conditions* 2014); it enters consumer culture but is quickly discarded and becomes waste, ending up in a landfill, once more, in the

underdeveloped world; it is an example of commodification of the anti-capitalist, socialist revolution, and also a testimony of capital's capacity to engulf opposing discourses. And we could similarly explain plastic bottles, transatlantic cruise ships or bacteria, because things are not as simple as the singular, individualized objects of OOO would have us believe. The point I want to make here is that this focus on separate objects is entirely consistent with something we might call segmentarity (after Deleuze & Guattari 208), not only as the capitalist practice of constructing individuals, but also the practice of fragmenting, separating and isolating environments; in the terms of Deleuze and Guattari, we may say that capitalism needs to create a "striated space" (474): collectives turn into individuals, common lands are enclosed and become private, a mountain is split into various kinds of "resources" (timber, game, metals, stone, waters), a person is divided into a medical history, an academic certificate, a bank account, genetic information, social media identities etc. Object-oriented ontology legitimizes neoliberal capitalism.

Webbed by design: domestic implements & pieces of cloth

As I have previously shown, commonplace objects are complicated things. Here, I would like to look at a few examples, some of which are familiar to cultural historians and other scholars, and one which is perhaps less known. In 1917, Marcel Duchamp submitted his famous urinal, the *Fountain*, for an exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists in New York, and a small scandal ensued over the nature of the thing as "art." Duchamp's artistic questioning and commentary on what is art, performed using everyday items (the urinal being the most notorious example, but also including a bicycle wheel and a bottle rack), was refined by Andy Warhol's Pop Art works, the Brillo boxes and Campbell soup cans, which were far less scandalous in the 1960s than Duchamp's works had been in the 1910s. In 1964, Arthur C. Danto published a short paper in which he tried to make sense of the Duchamp-Warhol developments by proposing that a theory of art, an ideology, is what allows commonplace objects to be exhibited as art (Danto 1964). Moreover, this theory of art functions within an "artworld," so that a Campbell soup can or a bicycle wheel become art only when they enter a web of deep political relations with theories, institutions, and so on. Following Danto, George Dickie elaborated these ideas in a 1969 paper, "Defining Art," where he stated that a work of art is "an artifact upon which some society or some sub-group of a society has conferred the status of candidate for appreciation" (Dickie 1969, 254), setting the stage for the institutional theory of art.

Dickie's definition raises a number of questions. For instance, what or who has the prerogative to confer the status of "artwork" to an artifact? Is this artifact the same as an object? What is "appreciation" and who wields it? The answer to the first question is, of course, Danto's concept of "artworld," very similar to Bourdieu's "artistic field" (Bourdieu 1993, 29). An artifact becomes a work of art, as Duchamp masterfully revealed, when it is accepted as such within the field of social and political relations that make up a specific part of society. Dickie's "sub-group of society" is the bourgeoisie from Bürger's definition of the Avant-garde as "self-criticism," a stage in which the complete detachment of art from real life is revealed and in which the aesthetic is "a distinctive sphere of experience" (Bürger 1984, 23). Harman, on the other hand, looks at Duchamp's readymade works by way of a rhetorical shift: within the artworld, they are "not objects at all, but merely bundles of literal qualities" (Harman 2020, 162), in keeping with his OOO position that "the existence of an artwork requires *beauty*" (Harman 2020, 140, original emphasis). In short, for Harman, the readymade is not a work of art because it lacks the supposed tension between what he refers to as "the real object" and its "sensual qualities" (Harman 2020, 140). This also answers our second question: for OOO, not all of Dickie's artifacts are objects because some of them do not qualify for Harman's definition of the beautiful. However, Danto, Dickie, and the institutional theory of art in general take the political and social aspects of the artworld very seriously. "Beauty" (even in Harman's sense) after (and probably even before) Dada is no longer relevant as a means of judging art because art is revealed to be a social relationship not only within the artworld, but also within the entire society, which brings us to our third question. "Appreciation" is actually another word for legitimacy. So, who has the power to legitimize an artifact or an object as an artwork? This is the foundational question of the institutional theory of art and Dickie's answer seems to simply be the institution conceptualized by Danto as "the artworld" (Dickie 1969, 255-256), using the rhetorical and pragmatic device of "christening" or naming something as a work of art. Consequently, an artwork is not an isolated object of beauty, it literally depends on the existence of institutional structures that legitimize its character as "art."

In societies dominated by neoliberal capitalist conditions of consumption, life presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities. Treating these commodities as independent, isolated, and autonomous objects theoretically removes them from the webs in which they are entangled in the name of ontology and metaphysics, but this does not mean that they are no longer within those webs. One example I would like to look at here is a piece of cloth called a keffiyeh, in order to show how this removal of objects from their webs employed by OOO is a neoliberal capitalist strategy of commodification. The

relationship between clothing and politics is relatively well established within academic discourse, especially in what the Middle East is concerned. The rectangular piece of cloth, the keffiyeh, had been worn almost exclusively by the Bedouin as a handy clothing item to protect the head and the face from the elements in the harsh climate of the desert until the 1920s, when it was adopted on a larger scale to represent Palestinian nationalism (Shirazi-Mahajan 1993, 57). Made popular by Yasser Arafat after 1967, the black and white webbed keffiyeh became a symbol of Palestinian liberation. In the West, during the 1970s and the 1980s, pro-Palestine, anti-war, and anti-apartheid protesters had worn the keffiyeh, dwelling on its symbolism (Schwartz-DuPre & Scott 2015, 341). However, in recent decades, the keffiyeh has had a twisted fate: on the one hand, it is associated with terrorism “by way of anti-Arab racism” (Renfro 2017, 3-5); on the other hand, it is completely devoid of its context and its political meaning and reduced to a fashionable item (Renfro 2017, 5). Popular street clothing brands began selling the keffiyeh in the 2000s and celebrities began wearing it as part of a fashion trend, without any political connotation (Schwartz-DuPre & Scott 2015, 344). Orientalism (identifying the item using any of the dominant narratives in the West regarding the Middle East), postcolonialism (the struggle towards a Palestinian identity), geopolitics (the wider interests regarding the region), Islamophobia (especially after 9/11), globalization (fashion brands selling keffiyeh made in China, for instance), and capitalism are interweaved in a singular piece of clothing. This, just like any other object, is not autonomous, individual, and independent except in the fantasy world of neoliberal capitalist commodities and in that of object-oriented ontology. So, what is to be done?

Flux it!

As we have previously seen, the artwork and the keffiyeh are always constructed within relations in a web, in opposition to OOO’s isolationism and capitalism’s processes of commodification. In this final section, I want to question the nature of this web using critical posthumanist and materialist concepts, returning to an understanding of posthumanism that stems not only from the Western philosophical and political tradition, but also from fields such as life studies and geology.

One question from which any critical posthumanist alternative should begin is that of the *Anthropos* of the Anthropocene, or the *human* of humanism. For instance, one of the starting points is Descartes’ distinction between nature (*res extensa*) and the rational mind or the soul (*res cogitans*), a differentiation that was perpetuated in Western thought until the beginning of the twenty-first

century (Badmington 2003). Consequently, the rational and self-interested pursuit of property and wealth acquired through labor was the definition of the human in classical liberalism (Locke, Smith) and early capitalism, a kind of “mind/reason/labor over matter” ideology or, as it became known in early modern Europe, natural law. The first encounters with the indigenous peoples of the Americas and subsequent European debates on whether or not they were human (Anievas & Nişancıoğlu 2015, 124), but also the status of women, children, etc. prove that “human” was not such an all-encompassing category. The *Anthropos* (in “the Anthropocene”) is the political and philosophical heritage of humanism and capitalism; it does not refer to the entire genus *Homo*, but only to a tiny fraction of it, those few privileged ones who also bear the responsibility for the Anthropocene. It is in this context that we will find, for instance, ideas such as Haraway’s cyborg, a political feminist irony meant to construct an ontology that rejects the modern opposition between nature and the rational human (Haraway 1991). The cyborg is a declaration of the continuity between natures, animals, and technologies (hence, naturecultures) that always takes place on a local level and against a globalized capitalism, through posthuman politics of alliances, coalitions, and symbioses. While it may seem that object-oriented ontology is trying to do same, by leaving out politics and critique, it only manages to play into capital’s hands.

On these building blocks, a number of posthumanist views appeared in recent decades, most of them materialist, but also Barad’s agential realism, which is probably the most likely contender to object-oriented ontology. Reading Barad as a kind of cyborg politics (Barad 2003), one may encounter the surprising fact that she begins with a critique of representationalism, the tradition of “splitting” the object into some knowable aspect and some incomprehensible or withdrawn essence (which is what OOO does). But she goes even further, trying to construct an agential realist ontology and metaphysics of sorts, grounded in materiality *and* historicity (hence, a material-discursive approach), and proposing that there cannot be any separation between relations and the objects that participate in them (intra-action as the “*mutual constitution of entangled agencies*” [Barad 2007, 33, original emphasis]). For Barad, the world is a dynamic flux of intra-activity, an “inescapable entanglement of matters of being, knowing, and doing, of ontology, epistemology, and ethics, of fact and value” (3). The eukaryotic cell, the artwork, the Che Guevara T-shirt, and the keffiyeh are examples of how things (or objects, if one wishes to call them so) are co-constituted in this dynamic material-discursive flux (Donica 2021, 171). In the words of Coole and Frost:

Our existence depends from one moment to the next on myriad micro-organisms and diverse higher species, on our own hazily understood bodily and cellular reactions and on pitiless cosmic motions, on the material artifacts and natural stuff that populate our environment, as well as on socioeconomic structures that produce and reproduce the conditions of our everyday lives. (Coole & Frost 2010, 1)

This theory, which is consistent with symbiosis and Haraway's cyborg, influenced some of the new posthuman materialisms such as that of Bennett, vital materialism, or Alaimo's feminist materialism.

Vital materialism begins by borrowing the relational/symbiotic concepts of rhizome and assemblage from Deleuze and Guattari and insists that there is a "vibrant matter," an agency of assemblages in the sense that they (intra-)act within the flux of matter-energy and have onto-stories, that is, accounts of their material-discursivity (Bennett 2010). In a relatively similar way, Alaimo uses the concept of "trans-corporeality" (Alaimo 2016, 77) to denote the interconnections between bodies, things, and environments, much like Guattari does in his ecosophy (Guattari 2000). These materialist-posthumanist alternatives to object-oriented ontology answer the question of ecology in the Anthropocene in a far more suitable and direct way, in a manner that is completely opposed to how Harman, in doing away with relations and context, treats climate change as an object *without* ever questioning the causes and the circumstances that have led to the current ecological crises. These are only a few examples of posthumanist theories that prove beyond all doubt that object-oriented ontology is not a posthumanism, in spite of its claim of rejecting human exceptionalism. In the end, what makes good theory and good philosophy is the ability to adapt to new issues, to criticize power relations, and to come up with alternative ways of looking at the world, even from an ontological point of view. Refusing all these in favor of an illusory sense that philosophy should be universal and timeless is ultimately just another reproduction of modern contradictions. In the famous words of Marx: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to *change* it." (Marx 1974 ,123, orig. emphasis).

Conclusion

We have seen that object-oriented ontology's starting point is the supposed need for philosophy to be truly universal and pure, as metaphysics. In the current context, this pretense strikes as a very Western-centric assumption, that is, based on the same tradition that invented the white Christian propertied man's exceptionalism under the guise of "human" exceptionalism and anthropocentrism. In effect, Harman's universalism, lack of social and political

nuance, and rigid focus on aesthetics conveniently simplify things to the extreme. Unfortunately, Harman's OOO cannot offer any account of major planetary disruptions such as climate change, poverty, war, pandemics, and so on because these are probably the clearest examples that the world is made of interconnected co-constituted things, and not isolated and autonomous objects. I have given here a number of examples, from the work of art to cotton T-shirts, that prove the fact that metaphysics is useless in explaining processes and flows which always have a material basis and a discursive component. Object-oriented ontology, isolating the objects from their contexts and the relations that make them, reinforces neoliberal capitalism for which working conditions in Bangladeshi textile factories are of no importance, the sterilization of workers on banana plantations in Central America due to the use of pesticides is of no importance, the children scavenging for valuable metals in the huge landfills of countries like Ghana and Nigeria are of no importance, the destruction of the Amazon rainforest and the displacement of local peoples to make way for cattle pastures and agricultural land are of no importance, and the fact that microplastics are found in the air, waters, land, and even in human blood is of no importance.

In this paper, I may have not done justice to ontology as a way of thinking with the world. For the particular flavor of posthuman discursive materialism presented here, ontology is nevertheless important, especially since its cornerstone is the refutation of Cartesian dualism. In line with Deleuze's immanence (Deleuze 1997), critical posthumanism presents an ontology that has the potential of becoming political. As we have already seen, objects are not isolated, nor autonomous; they are relational, interdependent, and co-constituted. Margulis, Lovelock, Haraway, and Barad are the founders of this new ontology, not object-oriented, but flux- and process-oriented. At the same time, this is an anti-capitalist, feminist ontology, where there are no individuals, no segmentarity, and lastly no fascism.

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