

Thinking Thinghood: Discreteness and Withdrawing in Object-Oriented Ontology

Abstract

- Abstract: This thesis, situated at the juncture of Speculative Realist thought, particularly in the thought of Object-Oriented Ontology, is an attempt to think the ontology of objects, and conceptualize the object through the entanglements of thinghood, discreteness and withdrawing. Through a close reading of Graham Harman's metaphysics of the object – particularly the notion of the 'withdrawn object' derived from early and late Heideggerian thought – this thesis attempts to take forward the articulation of objects as both open to phenomenal perception as well as withdrawing into an autonomous 'real' core, into a rigorous conceptualization of 'discreteness'. I read the notion of the withdrawnness of the object not as a closing but an ontological opening. This thesis maintains that objects continue to have a discrete ground of their own, that must be the basis of thinking reality. This notion of 'discreteness' however, can no longer be thought of in a naive realist sense, but this thesis advances a notion of discreteness that is singular, and the ownmost core of the object, yet open, and inherently relational. The contribution of this thesis project has been to reformulate Harman's discrete objects, in a way that both discreteness and relations are thought of as ontologically primary, and by theorizing discreteness as both separateness and entanglement, the thesis project rearticulates the ontology of the object as a site of a new 'world-building' with its inherent and constitutive tensions, one that holds together autonomy and relationality in an 'odd' mode of being.