

OOO: OOOH!

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Introduction

Quentin Meillassoux (pronounced 'may-yuh-sue') will be recognized as one of the most important philosophers of the 21st century. Don't take our word for it: Alain Badiou (Meillassoux's PhD supervisor), Slavoj Žižek and Ray Brassier all agree. Born in Paris in 1967, Meillassoux has a relatively modest oeuvre, but his philosophy is so entirely different from traditional continental thought, that at the outset it seems utterly bizarre. In his best-known book (*After Finitude*, 2006) Meillassoux makes the stunning claim that there is a world outside human thought... and that he can prove it! In his second book (*The Number and the Siren*, 2012), he takes one of the most famously elusive poems of the 19th century –Stephané Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (*A throw of the dice will never abolish chance*) – and claims that it contains within it a secret code. Seriously. That code is the number 707...the number representing infinity! In his third book, *The Divine Inexistence* (his doctoral thesis from 1997), Meillassoux claims there are only four fundamental events in the universe – the creation of *matter*, the emergence of *life*, the beginning of *thought*, and the advent of *justice*. Justice is the only moment in the universe that has not yet emerged, and indeed, may never emerge. In order for that final event to come about, Meillassoux posits a virtual God, who does not yet exist, but who may do in the future!

Our purpose in introducing these ideas so abruptly is to give the reader a sense of how breathtakingly different Meillassoux is for contemporary philosophical thought. His work has given birth to a movement in contemporary philosophy labeled "speculative realism".¹ This is how the project is described in the introduction to the book series by Edinburgh University Press:

Since its first appearance at a London colloquium in 2007, the Speculative Realism movement has taken continental philosophy by storm. Opposing the formerly ubiquitous modern dogma that philosophy can speak only of the human-world relation rather than the world itself, Speculative Realism defends the autonomy of the world from human access, but in a spirit of imaginative audacity. (Graham Harman, series editor, 2011).

¹ Speculative realism has inspired many liked-minded, but often divergent movements in contemporary philosophy that go under the names of speculative materialism, transcendental realism, object-oriented philosophy, and object-oriented ontology. We don't have the space to trace these movements, and here we will concentrate on Meillassoux and 'triple O', hence the title of the chapter. For a comprehensive view of the differences and parallels of these movements, see Peter Gratton (2014) *Speculative Realism: Problems and Prospects*.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. We begin by introducing the ideas that Meillassoux's develops in his book *After Finitude*. In doing so, we explore the massively important legacy of Kantian idealism on our thinking, and explain the dilemma that Meillassoux believes it has left for knowledge claims. We conclude the section by introducing in broad outline his philosophy of speculative realism. In the subsequent section we explore what speculative realism might have to say within the social sciences, especially consumption theory. We do this by introducing the work of Timothy Morton on *hyperobjects* – a project that Morton acknowledges has its foundations in speculative realism. From there we go on to suggest how research in consumption theory might benefit from loosening the constraints that continental philosophy has placed on us.

***After Finitude* – what is the limit of thought?**

Many of the contributions to this book in front of you investigate the single most important construction within social theory – *the relation*. That is the idea that nothing can be said to exist – animate or inanimate – without its having *some* sort of relationship to something else. You have no 'identity' that is 'your own'; 'you' are an orbit of electrons, bacteria, cells – all swirling in a porous mesh with food systems, gravity, keyboards and, of course, other humans. The relation is, therefore, the smallest possible unit of analysis: an observation that the feminist philosopher of science Donna Haraway says is "extremely prosaic, relentlessly mundane, and exactly how worlds come into being" (Haraway, 2008:26). Most relational theory (whether in feminist science, actor network theory, or non-representational theory) tries to get us to see that nothing precedes its *relating* to something else. One reason for theorizing in this way is that it engenders a more humble, more modest attitude in the human observer; no one and no thing exists alone; "all that is, is the fruit of *becoming with*...the worlding game on earth, and that game must be one of response and respect" (Haraway, 2008:17–19). What, then, would we make of a theory that is *non-relational*? How might such a theory even be possible? This is precisely the aim of *After Finitude* – to show that non-relational theory is not just possible, but mathematically provable.

The entire project of Western philosophy since Kant has been to investigate not things, but rather to investigate *the human relationship* to things; it has been an *epistemological* rather than an *ontological* project. In other words, pace Kant, we humans must admit that we are unable to discriminate between those properties of the world which are a function of our relation to it, and those properties of the world that exist in and of themselves. Put another way, thought cannot somehow step outside itself in order to compare the world as it is 'in itself' to the world as it is 'for us', and thereby distinguish what is a function of our relation to the world from what belongs to the world alone. We cannot represent the 'in itself' without it becoming 'for us.'

To this feature of continental philosophy Meillassoux gives the name *correlationism*. By correlationism he means 'the idea according to which we only

have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other.’ (2006: 5).

It is impossible, according to the correlationist, to know the *thing-in-itself* without turning it into a *thing-for-us*². Every time we think of the cup-in-itself, the forest-in-itself, the bee-in-itself, we turn them into cups, forests and bees in relation to us. Any attempt in philosophy to reach out beyond this relation has been condemned as naïve, dogmatic, or just plain stupid. We simply cannot jump outside ourselves. Or, in the succinct words of Graham Harman “we cannot think the unthought without turning it into a thought” (Harman, 2011:9). Most contemporary philosophy looks down its nose on what it sees as a naïve debate between *realism* (reality exists outside the human mind) and *idealism* (reality exists only in the mind). Instead, contemporary philosophy (from Kant to Husserl, to Heidegger, and all the way up to postmodernism) takes up a more sophisticated middle position, which always goes something like this: “...of course you can’t think about things-in-themselves! There is no knowledge that is absolute; *all* knowledge is relative – that is, the result of a relationship between human and world. We must be content to practice philosophy within this limit...” This awful dilemma is what is now known in speculative realism as the correlationist circle.

After Finitude is Meillassoux’s attempt to break out of the correlationist circle that incarcerates us in our human finitude. Meillassoux, however, appreciates that we cannot take up some sort of miraculous position outside ourselves. Meillassoux’s strategy is to funnel the strength inherent in the correlationist circle into a source of strength for his own argument: that there is absolute knowledge independent of our thought. In Meillassoux’s words ‘we too must *absolutise* the very principle that allows correlationism to disqualify absolutising thought...we are going to put back into the thing itself what we mistakenly took to be an *incapacity* in thought.’ (2006: 51, emphasis added). To be plain, Meillassoux is looking for the *absolute* – a word that appears repeatedly in *After Finitude*. It is this ambition that makes his philosophy unique today.

Another way of framing the challenge Meillassoux is facing is to recognize the strong anti-realist stance of correlationism; if you speak about something ‘real’ the correlationist will say, you speak about something that is *given* to you, and posited by you. In its weak form, correlationism will allow the possibility that there is a world in itself, but insist that it is beyond our access to it. In its strong form, it denies even that possibility. Meillassoux is trying to find a way beyond these limits. Thus, he says we should recover the one single piece of absolute knowledge that we have: we *absolutely* know that there *might* be something outside thought. This possibility is *absolutely* possible. Or, in Meillassoux’s own words: ‘instead of saying that the *in-itself* could actually be anything whatsoever without anyone knowing

² The term ‘thing-in-itself’ is a concept from Kant, who presented the idea that we can never know the tree-in-itself, the cup-in-itself, the dog-in-itself, because these things will always have to go through a conversion (our humanness) in order to be understood by us. We turn the ‘thing-in-itself’ into a ‘thing-for-us’. This concept he called the ‘Ding-an-sich.’ (Kant 1999).

what, we maintain that the *in-itself* could be anything whatsoever *and that we know this.*' (2006: 65, emphasis added).

Meillassoux is searching for the characteristics of this absolute knowledge about the universe, in contrast to the correlationist who says that we cannot decouple being and thought, and therefore we cannot access absolute knowledge. The strong correlationist is anti-absolutist in principle, and is committed to what philosophers call facticity. Facticity is the idea that we cannot find an ultimate reason, a final ground, for why some things are the way they are. We cannot track the universe down to a 'god' or 'spirit' or 'Higgs Boson'. This is regarded as a *lack* in human thought philosophically speaking – we simply cannot reach to a final resting place of meaning. But, in a remarkable move by Meillassoux, this lack of a necessary ultimate cause becomes itself *ontological* – that is, *the* fundamental source of being. Or, in Graham Harman's words, 'If facticity can be taken to mean that there is no necessary reason for any feature of experience, the hidden surprise here is that *facticity itself is necessary.*' (Harman, 2011: 30, emphasis in original).

If facticity is the fundamental character that pervades the universe, then we could say that a certain contingency is the root in everything; and if contingency is absolutely necessary in the universe, then it follows that no 'higher' or 'supreme' force or reason (metaphysical, physical, spiritual) is guiding it³. This leads to a universe where there is no higher reason for something. This total – ontological – absence of a necessary higher reason (God, Science, Laws of the Universe) is called the *principle of unreason*. Everything in the universe is without reason and is therefore capable of becoming otherwise without reason. So, strangely, we live in a universe where the only absolute is something that we don't normally recognize as absolute. This apparent contradiction is reflected in the subtitle of *After Finitude*, '*An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*'.

It is important at this juncture to emphasize that Meillassoux is a rationalist (that is, he is committed to the capacity of reason to arrive at truth directly and on its own terms)⁴ and a realist (searching for the principles of the universe outside the glass prison of human cognition). When we hear so many claims to "the absolute", the reader might worry about the possible dogmatism, or even totalitarianism of this philosophical project. However, *After Finitude* ends by showing that the characteristics of the absolute are much weirder than we could have possibly bargained for. For starters, the single fact in the universe that is absolute is...

³ Meillassoux rejects the principle of sufficient reason. This principle, well established in philosophy, argues that, for everything that exists, there is a *reason* for it existing as opposed to not existing. All things can then be traced back to ultimate reasons. Meillassoux really dislikes this idea, saying that 'So long as we continue to believe that there must be a reason why what is, is the way it is, we will continue to fuel superstition, which is to say, that there is an ineffable reason underlying all things.' (2006: 82)

⁴ Thus, Meillassoux turns to the set-theoretical principles of intotalisation as propounded by Cantor, to prove his thesis around the absolute ontological necessity of contingency, but we do not have the space to discuss that here. See 2006:104–110.

contingency. On the face of it, this is a contradiction: how can something that is contingent be *absolutely* necessary? The first thing to realize is that the contingent does not mean unstable. For example, the laws of nature are contingent – that is, there is no reason whatsoever for them to remain the same. But that doesn't mean that they won't remain the same, potentially forever. Meillassoux is therefore philosophizing at a level beyond the laws of nature themselves – the level at which we question what makes them laws in the first place. Just because the laws of nature have not changed in observable time is not *proof* that they will never change. That's why Meillassoux is able to say that everything in the universe that obeys the laws of nature will go on doing so; but there is no reason why the laws of nature *themselves* might not change, for no reason whatsoever. So, in the fourth chapter of *After Finitude*, Meillassoux brings us to a time and place when the laws of nature themselves change, and two billiard balls strike into each other, resulting in 'both balls flying off into the air, or fusing together, or turning into two immaculate but rather grumpy mares, or into two maroon but rather affable lilies.' (2006:97).

Can we honestly say that these types of events haven't happened before in the history of the universe? Think again. What about those leaps in the universe where new sets of laws emerge from nowhere (in the sense they are not contained in the previous laws, or emerge from previous systems)? What about the Big Bang? About the moment when non-life became life, where the laws of biological life were not contained in the pre-life world⁵? To be sure, these contingent leaps are few and far between, but the exception proves the rule of contingency, to say nothing of the fact that the universe is only a few billion years old, and, whatever happens, it will be around for another 100 trillion or so.

The important thing to say at this point is that everything we have so far talked about is in the realm of philosophy. The question that we now face is to explore where, if at all, speculative realism connects with the social sciences, and consumption theory in particular, in a way that retains its particular radicalism. Our initial view is that speculative realism will be hugely liberating for the social sciences. Social scientists are notoriously restrained about what they feel confident asserting from their research; they agonise about the ontological status of their 'objects' of enquiry, and the epistemological status of their knowledge claims. They constantly obsess with the line between subject and object, discourse and reality. In our view, the problem is the *questions we have asked*. When we engage in epistemological questions – those concerning our knowledge about the world – we can find ourselves in a maze of critical debates that leave us in a state of stasis. For a long time, consumer research has been shepherded into 'mid-range' theory. We consumer researchers are experts at taking grand theory and practice, and mixing it together in the middle. Speculative realism would suggest that, for starters, we need to escape this epistemological maze and *go ontological*. One of the reasons for doing so is because the things we are agonizing over are outpacing

⁵ Email communication with Paul J. Ennis, July 2014.

analysis; to give an example, we are going to talk about Timothy Morton's OOO work on global warming. Second, following from this turn away from the epistemological, speculative realism offers the means to energise ourselves by actually narrowing down our idea of relationality; and thus forcing us to conceive of radically new, non-anthropomorphic ways to think about the 99.99999% of stuff in the universe. We will look at each of these in turn, beginning with consumption and global warming.

The dawn of the hyperobject

What would the world look like if objects really did take center stage? Timothy Morton's concept of the hyperobject (Morton, 2013) is an interesting one for consumption theory to explore. A hyperobject, in Morton's eyes, is an object that is, relative to humans, massively distributed in space and time. There are lots of hyperobjects when you think about entities in these terms – bacteria, Styrofoam, the Internet. The particular hyperobjects that Morton is concerned with are global warming and nuclear material (particularly plutonium). Hyperobjects seem to have some fascinating qualities: qualities that are speculatively real. They are viscous (they are literally, really real, really sticking to us; when I sit too long outside and get sunburnt, that's a real thing); they are non-local (we cannot point to the "rain" and say "that is global warming"; they are larger on the inside than they are on the outside⁶; and they call for forms of justice, ethics, politics and reason that are beyond humanist economies of identification and representation – that is, we cannot simply reach for the categories of time, space, boundedness or structure that we are used to in social science to talk about them. What would Meillassoux say? We guess he would say that global warming is an instance of how our social constructivism has caused a 'religionising of reason', whereby everybody's concept of global warming becomes legitimate. Such religionising of reason gives equal status to everyone's interpretation of the real, which, in Meillassoux'

Speculative realism encourages a reaching out to the real, in the sense of speculation be more radical with our research sites and ranges. Why would consumer researchers replace the telephoto lens on their research sites with a wide-angle one – one that would understand the world at the level of the hyperobject? One reason why is because we are creating (consumer) objects that are massive in scale and temporality – nuclear material, plastic bottles, mobile phone batteries. Consider, as Morton does, plutonium -239, which has a half-life of 24,100 years. When we speak about sustainable consumption, we use the concept of 'inter-generational justice' – imagining our grandchildren, or great-grandchildren. But imagining the world 24,000 years from now requires a strategy of imagination that we have not yet created. It is an event that is, in Meillassoux's words, *diachronic*⁷ (Meillassoux, 2006:112). Every time I use a Styrofoam cup, I am

⁶ Morton describes hyperobjects as TARDIS-like, drawing on the time machine of the same name in the TV series *Doctor Who*, where the interior of a TARDIS is much larger than its exterior.

⁷ By this, Meillassoux means an event that occurs after the possible end of human thought – that is, tens of thousands of years from now.

distending my consumption tens of thousands of years into the future. Morton, like a few others in consumer research (see, especially, Bradshaw and Canniford, 2010) argue that in an age of hyperobjects, there is no 'away' to put the stuff we don't want. We cannot put global warming 'away'; it is globally viscous. Neither can we put bacteria 'away'; it has returned with virulence to warn us that we don't stand 'outside' of it (see Campbell and Deane, forthcoming). We cannot put plutonium 'away'; our sequestering techniques will not last 24,100 years. All that remains is to co-exist. Morton here has a good example of a building in Mexico that has a coating which captures the pollution of the city that surrounds it; instead of trying to squirrel the dirt 'away', it wears it, like a big dusty jacket. Another example is the idea of covering plutonium in gold, which would protect its environment from gamma rays, and function as an art object.

The hyperobject encourages a different unit of analysis for consumer research, one that channels different times and spaces of interest. Political theorists (like Jane Bennett, 2012) and sociologists (like Myra Hird, 2012) go into landfills and nuclear sites to find out what's happening with consumption as a speculatively real force. Hird discovers an object – leachate – that putrescible liquid that leeches from all types municipal waste. Her project is to follow leachate through its complex geo-bio-social networks. She points out that landfill design is measured in human time, which means engineering sites suitable for the next 100 years: "a mere moment in geological and bacterial time" (Hird 2012: 465). Waste, in her eyes, is a problem in *inhuman knowing*; mass excavations of waste sites for once discarded and now valued material and space is testimony to our human inability to imagine materiality as massively distributed and constantly evolving. The issue here is that as consumer researchers, we locate our research sites where human consumption occurs (in offices, music festivals, deserts, rodeos, and so on). An OOO philosophy would encourage consumer researchers to go to where the human is not, in order to tell alternative stories of human consumption. These sites might be landfills, but they also might be other planets, oceans, factories, farms, nuclear processing plants or biomedical facilities. This is not to say that we are then merely looking at production, but that the realm of consumption is, as we always knew, more than the moment of when some human consumes.

Inter-object consumption

Presented with the concept of consumption, most people intuitively think of all the ways in which we humans assimilate or act on objects. However, should we imagine that consumption is a *human activity, for humans alone*? This is not simply to say that animals should be included in the consumption story – (human to animal consumption), but that non-human to non-human interaction must be understood in terms of consumption. Have we inadvertently narrowed consumption to the act of absorbing stuff through our mouths and our brains? A feature of OOO that seems to be emerging is object-to-object agency, or interobjectivity (which originally is formulated by Latour in 1996)⁸. For too long, we

⁸ "The phenomenon we call intersubjectivity is just a local, anthropocentric instance of a much more widespread phenomenon, namely interobjectivity." (Morton 2013: 81)

could argue, we have thought about life-in-between-humans, but 99.9999999% of the relations in the universe are object-to-object interactions. This interobjectivity seems to be a central preoccupation of OOO, one that elaborates and extends Merleau-Ponty's famous dictum: objects look at me just as I look at objects....and objects look at each other (Harman, 2005:67). Thus, the job of OOO "put[s] object-object relations on exactly the same footing as subject-object relations" (Harman, 2010:140). As the computer scientist Ian Bogost asserts, OOO is trying to think about the nature of agency, rather than the human theorists' approach to it. OOO is thus interested in what objects experience, and how we might think about their "alien phenomenology" (Bogost, 2012). Similarly, we could argue, OOO ultimately reveals consumption to be a metaphor – and an inadequate one at that – to understand assimilation, incorporation and interaction, be it human or otherwise. What might non-human 'consumption' look like? Perhaps Ian Bogost's example of the *Aware Home* project is a possible lead. Designed by Gatech in Atlanta, *Aware Home* is a project to design a home environment that is aware of its occupants whereabouts and activities. As Bogost points out, this design implicitly assumes that the only thing a home can do is serve its human occupants.

An additional project of the *Aware Home* was one called *Tableau Machine* – a plasma screen mounted in the home that interprets the flows within the home and depicts them as a sort of abstract art. With one important caveat: it does not depict this information in a fashion meant for human legibility, as an information visualization might do. By avoiding the simple one-to-one mappings of sensed data and output, it instead senses and visualizes the flows between objects in the home. So, *Tableau Machine* encourages us to think about computer-home agency, rather than computer-home-human agency. It avoids the familiar circuit of human-nonhuman relations that characterize much contemporary relational theory. This example, while important, I think is not profound enough: it makes interobjectivity sound like a superficial design issue, while the contrary is the case. The vast majority of interactions on this Earth at this very moment are technology-to-technology, system to-system interactions, which vastly confound and exceed human classificatory philosophies. Consider, for example, the Radio Frequency Identification Device [RFID]. Such chips are embedded in objects as diverse as clothing and food products, and can receive and send information about the object's temperature, location, delivery route, and so on to other devices. Each RFID chip, smaller than a grain of rice, contains a unique 696 Bit electronic code. This is sufficient to generate 80,000 trillion unique identification numbers – probably much more than one for every object on the planet (see Hayles 2009). It is this object-to-object infrastructure that steadily produces reality for humans⁹. In the next section, let us then briefly overview how objects have become the central unit of reality for some speculative realists.

Object Oriented Ontology

⁹ It is now a cliché to say we are increasingly interconnected. This is not strictly true. Technology is increasingly interconnected, producing modes of being in humans which we confuse with interconnection.

OOO begins with the assertion we tend to undermine *and* 'overmine' objects (Harman, 2010). By undermining, we tend to claim that objects are not *fundamental*; we feel the need to reduce them to their atomic level to derive generalized theory. We keep looking for the 'unit' or 'level' from which all objects come...and hence our preoccupation with the nano, the Higgs Boson, and so on. By 'overmining' objects we elevate objects to conceptual constructions of the human mind, as being effects of and for the human mind and body. Ian Bogost calls these two positions scientific naturalism (where things are usually taken as the aggregation of smaller bits) or social relativism (as constructions of human behavior and society). So in Bogost's words, "The scientific naturalist holds that some fundamental material firmament sustains and thereby explains all that is...The social relativist argues that all things exist through conceptualization; they are really just structures within the temple of human cultural production." (2012:13). As an antidote, OOO places objects at the root of all philosophy. OOO wants to place objects on the same ontological (not necessarily ethical) footing as all other things, be they "quarks, Harry Potter, keynote speeches, single-malt scotch, Land Rovers, lychee fruit, love affairs, dereferenced pointers, Mike 'The Situation' Sorrentino, bozons, horticulturalists, Mozambique, Super Mario Bros..." (Bogost, 2012:12). Whether states, concepts, imaginary, or material, in OOO not one is more "real" than any other. They all have the same ontological status.

This ontologically-level playing field is a strange challenge to social scientists. The challenge is to understand what difference it makes to research questions, modes of investigation, and theory development. We have done some work with colleagues, which makes the case that service-dominant logic *undermines* objects, and conceptualises service as an intangible value that humans can uniquely extract from (passive, secondary, inert) stuff (Campbell et al., 2013). "What is changing today", as the forefathers of service-dominant logic assert, "is not the sudden emergence of service, but, rather, the increasing ability to separate, transport, and exchange information, *apart from embodiment in goods and people*" (Vargo and Lusch, 2008:4, emphasis added). However, an OOO approach would no doubt argue that the type and quality of the operant resource ('value', 'service') is entangled with the type and quality of its material architecture and substrate. This means that goods (objects, materials, stuff) actually precedes and is more fundamental than service: the opposite claim to service-dominant logic. While there are many differences between speculative realism and OOO, there is an abiding sense that objects are more than naturalist or humanist trophies. To build his own case, Meillassoux takes the 'arche-fossil' as an object to think deeply with. Arche fossils are the names he gives to those objects existed aeons before humans; they are witnesses to the universe in a way that humans can never access. And philosophy, according to Harman, has always been one obsessed with our 'access' to the universe, with what it means to us. Arche fossils are an insult to the philosopher of human reason. OOO and speculative realism herald a new era of posthuman philosophy. What this looks like is at yet unclear, but its first steps seem to be intent on actually removing this access, rather than securing it. In the next section we will understand why consumer researchers can never access objects, from a philosophical perspective.

Withdrawal – the sadness of objects

“My perceptual, practical, theoretical, and philosophical relation to a chair can never fully exhaust what a chair is; there is just something that we humans can’t get at. My knowledge of a chair is not a chair.”

(Harman, 2005:91)

The above quote is an important observation of OOO: that we can never access an object; no matter how much we try and ‘know’ a table, (we can build it, clean it, discourse on it, describe it, lick it), there is something leftover about the chair that we can never get at. Objects *withdraw* infinitely from humans. In other words, there is a reserve that exists in all objects – in Parma Violets, Roy Keane, the Gobi desert – that surpasses any relation I may have to it. This radical withdrawal of all objects in the universe from us has always been framed in philosophy as something that’s uniquely sad and lonely about our human fate – we humans with one foot in animality and the other in consciousness (cf. Moss, 2005; Becker, 1973). OOO elaborates this argument, saying that, yes, objects have a habit of withdrawing from humans, but they also withdraw from each other: when fire burns cotton, it cannot access the totality of the cotton, which exists apart from any relation (Harman, 2011). This is the difference between substance and sensuousness, which insists that there is a radical difference between an object and how it appears to, or relates to something else. These are two, entirely distinct worlds of the object. Objects never directly interact; they can only do so vicariously (Harman 2007).

This seemingly minor or even obscure point will probably have big consequences for the movement’s philosophical development, as well as for thinking through how withdrawal plays out in social theory. On the one hand, some work in OOO embraces the universality of withdrawal, and lays importance at this amazing ability of all objects (human and non-human). Such work, in Harman’s words, is “a frank *realism* which views objects or things as genuine realities deeper than any of the relations in which they might become involved” (2012:196). From this vantage point, there is a need to acknowledge that we are always (and can only) relate to objects *sensuously*, and this is the deepest level in which we humans can access. So we should respect it. OOO is particularly taken with the phenomenology of Alphonso Lingis, whose work emphasizes the pre-cognitive, atavistic, technological, and deeply embodied modes in which we respond to the world. His 1998 book *The Imperative* argued that our worlds are filled up with imperatives that summon us. Such imperatives are often human, but mostly non-human: “When we look at the sequoias, our eyes follow the upward thrust of their towering trunks touching the sky and their sparse branches fingering the mist. We comprehend this...not with a concept-generating faculty of our mind, but with the up-righting aspiration in our

vertebrate organism which they awaken” (Lingis, 1998:65, in Morton, 2013:60; see also Dickinson 2009 for an interesting example of bird watching as a way to literally entrain humans to look upwards and thereby develop an elevated consciousness). One of the challenges that remains is how to represent these enmeshed pre-cognitive, atavistic, technological, embodied modes without recuperating it into our existing pallid models of sociology.

Withdrawal as a concept might also have an interesting flipside. Thinking of withdrawal as a literal flight from the world, many scholars in political theory and philosophy have started to counsel that Capital is such an extraordinarily force (in the sense that it has definitively overthrown any imagination of an alternative), that there is no possibility of ‘intervention’ in Capital. So, to withdraw in this context means absolute retreat from the mode of production (Camatte 2014), and, we might also contend, consumption. An eclectic mixture of people has been working on such an inside-out radicalism, loosely brought under the name of accelerationism. Accelerationism makes ‘a different analysis of the ambivalent forces at work in capital, [and] insist[s] on the continuing dynamism and transformation of the human wrought by the unleashing of productive forces [i.e. capital], arguing that it is possible to align with their revolutionary force [that is, the technology, organizing capacities, globalizing modes of capital] but against their domestication, and indeed, that the only way ‘out’ is to plunge further in.’ (McKay and Avanessian, 2014). In other words, withdrawal from capital can only come from passing through the eye of the needle, and bring its unconscious force up, and use them against it. To exit the world has always been a dream of humans, but the implicit key to this dream – as it has been expressed in philosophy, political economy, science and science-fiction – has always been a flight from *consumption*. Evident in transhumanist, lifehacker, accelerationist and many other contemporary embryonic social movements is an intense preoccupation with consumption. Withdrawal, in its literal manifestation, speaks of the end of consumption.

Conclusion: Speculative Consumption

Is there something fundamentally *relational* about the act of consumption? In its essence, all relational theories (which is the dominant mode of analyzing the social world today) produce a correlationism that we believe is deeply humanist. Marketing and consumer research are very much embedded in a correlationist vision of humans doing things in the world to inanimate objects to make immaterial effects happen. Where marketing scholarship has taken up the case of materiality, interest has lain not in stuff, but in our human relation to it or, better put, human *access* to it. The problem with this is that it narrows the study of consumption and markets to humans interacting with humans (for exceptions in consumer research, see Bettany 2007; Giesler and Venkatesh 2005). This chapter reviews some work in philosophy that has hinted at where we might begin to think about the social theory implications of OOO. It argues that a non-relational theory like OOO could project us to spaces, times and scenarios that relational modes of enquiry cannot. In this chapter, we also acknowledged that 99.999999% of

interaction in the world is non-human-to-non-human interaction, so the lens of investigation in consumer research should open to include interobjective consumption.

This chapter examines an alternative philosophical gaze to relational thought. As a final word, there are ethical quandaries that a concept of non-relation brought into social theory, can produce. Non-relationality imagines the non-human as some sort of 'great outdoors'; in other words, as something 'out there' in the cosmos, despite the fact that, as many other philosophers have argued, the non-human Other is actually deep within the core of the human. In its elevation of the Other to the rarefied spaces of mathematics and the cosmic future, the non-relation, brought into social theory, may represent yet another posthuman fantasy that forgets the body – the body that produces and consumes, producing its own non-human-non-relation in this very act.

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oooh. see woo. sound i make when something feels too good. Fine girl walks by Me: oooh. Jumper nothing but net Me: oooh. by pascal
July 24, 2004. 116. 43. Flag. Get a oooh mug for your buddy James. Mar 14 Word of the Day. vaxhole. Melanie Thornton - Oooh Oooh.
Terms of Service. Share: Makin' Oooh Oooh (Talking About Love). Artist: Melanie Thornton. Album: Best of La Bouche and Melanie
Thornton, 2002. Oooh, Shinies! This quest was marked obsolete by Blizzard and cannot be obtained or completed. Griftah wants you to
take Griftah's Note to Budd in the Ghostlands, just outside of Zul'Aman. Griftah's Note (Provided) (1). Relevant Locations. This quest
starts in Shattrath City. Tip: Click map to zoom. "Aaaah, you're Satan, hahaha oooh!" oooh, what's under that? Hey, look at that woman.
oooh." Ah oooh # - # The life we # - Oh oh oh. Ooh, ooh-oooh, oooh! It's almost like he's in the room or something." "Aaaah, you're Satan,
hahaha oooh!" oooh, what's under that? Hey, look at that woman. oooh." Ah oooh # - # The life we # - Oh oh oh. Ooh, ooh-oooh, oooh!
And of Course, They loved Their ooohs, We just SO oooh'd Them, And of Course, They loved Their ooohs, We just SO oooh'd Them
"Oooh." is the first single from De La Soul's fifth album, Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump, released in 2000. The song was
produced by their longtime collaborator, Prince Paul, after a seven-year hiatus, and featured a guest appearance from Redman. The
album version of the song features a verse at the end by Pharoahe Monch, although he goes uncredited.