

## Object-Oriented Ontology and Its Critics

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# The Ontographic Turn: From Cubism to the Surrealist Object

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**Abstract:** The practice of Ontography deployed by OOO, clarified and expanded in this essay, produces a highly productive framework for analyzing Salvador Dalí's ontological project between 1928 and 1935. Through the careful analysis of paintings and original texts from this period, we establish the antecedents for Dalí's theorization of Surrealist objects in Cubism and Italian Metaphysical art, which we collectively refer to as 'Ontographic art,' drawing parallels with the tenets of Graham Harman's and Ian Bogost's object-oriented philosophical programmes. We respond to the question raised by Roger Rothman concerning Object-Oriented Idealism in Dalí's work by showing pivotal changes to Dalí's ontological outlook, from Idealism to Realism, across the aforementioned period, positing the Ontographic intentionality of Dalí's ontological project in Surrealist art.

**Keywords:** Ontography, Ontology, Surrealism, Cubism, Dalí, Realism, Idealism, Kant, Objects, Art, Anachronism

## 1 Introduction

Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) draws on José Ortega y Gasset's 1914 "Essay in Esthetics by Way of a Preface" to establish the privileged position it affords to art.<sup>1</sup> Ortega's essay is discussed variously by Graham Harman and is noted for presaging the 'tool-analysis' later posited by Martin Heidegger, forming the cornerstone of OOO.<sup>2</sup> In his essay, Ortega explains that "a work of art affords the peculiar pleasure we call esthetic by making it *seem* that the inwardness of things, their executant reality, is opened to us."<sup>3</sup> Here, Ortega assigns a specific ontological function to art, and one may easily imagine that artists might indeed have Ontographic ambitions for their works. Such Ontographic intentionality – the desire to produce objects that make it seem that the withdrawn and alluring 'real object' is opened to us – can be read directly in Salvador Dalí's 1930s theorization of Surrealist objects and the objects of Metaphysical art and Cubism that had emerged in the two prior decades.

Drawing a connection between the texts of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, Alberto Savinio and Dalí, we have designated the term 'Ontographic art' to describe the sub-genre of Cubism, Metaphysical art and Surrealist objects where ontological ideas are prominently foregrounded. Our description of the development of Ontographic art commences with Kahnweiler, who was Picasso's art dealer during his Cubist period, and

1 Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way Of A Preface," 127–150. (First published 1914.)

2 Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 79.

3 Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way Of A Preface," 139.

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who wrote that the Cubism of 1910 gave visual expression to the withdrawn Kantian thing-in-itself.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by Dalí's description of Giorgio de Chirico's Metaphysical objects in terms of the Kantian categories of space and time, before Dalí went on to eventually explain his own famous soft watches as the unification of space and time.<sup>5</sup>

Acknowledging the Ontographic ambitions of these artists in this period, this essay draws out parallels between Dalí's theorization of Surrealist objects and Harman's criteria for OOO. Continuing the work of Roger Rothman, who explained that Dalí's theorization of the autonomy of objects is aligned with the non-anthropocentric view of object-relations central to OOO, this essay extends the comparison in regard to two important tenets: the irreducibility of objects to their effects or compounds; and, the claim towards ontological Realism.

Much of Rothman's paper contrasts Dalí's writing against the anti-realist tendencies of his Surrealist contemporaries André Breton and Georges Bataille, concluding that Dalí may not have been an anti-realist, but was, perhaps, instead an Object-Oriented Idealist, though this provocation is left tantalizingly underdeveloped. In response, we show that there was a transition in Dalí's Surrealist conception of objects between 1928 and 1935, marked by a progression from Idealism to Realism. A substantial portion of Dalí's theoretical work is compressed into texts produced at the beginning of this period, from 1928 to 1930; texts that are so dense and labyrinthine that reading them remains difficult. Between 1931 and 1935, Dalí worked through the problem of the Surrealist object, completing the important booklet, *The Conquest of the Irrational*, which bears a complex relationship to his work prior to that period. This change in attitude is important to remember when attending to claims concerning Dalí's ontological ideas; thus, this paper addresses this confusion by reviewing the conception of the Surrealist object before and after his Ontographic turn, typically comparing texts from between 1930 and 1935. Finally, whilst Dalí's writings are explicitly concerned with the production of Surrealist objects, we will argue that his theorization promotes an Ontographic understanding of objects more broadly, simultaneously problematizing and elucidating the question of Realism.

In the following section, we begin with an overview of Ontography, interrogating Ian Bogost's contention that the Ontograph is "landfill, not a Japanese garden,"<sup>6</sup> arguing for clarification and expansion of it through the example of Ryōan-ji. Then, we look at the ontological ideas inherent to the projects of Cubism, Metaphysical art and Surrealism that influenced Dalí's Ontographic theorizations. Having established this background, we chart two paths through Dalí's work: the first taking Heraclitus' aphorism, "nature loves to hide" into the paranoid mechanisms of what Dalí called simulacra; the second, looking to Dalí's phases of Surrealist objects, where Ontography is communicated through veils, colloids and edibility. These paths cross at the end of *The Conquest of the Irrational*, when Dalí asserts that behind these simulacra lies the 'grilled cutlet': an Ontograph, which we will show to be diagrammatically expressive of the very same preoccupations central to OOO.

## 1.1 On the origins of Ontography

"When it isn't simply pushing preformatted pieces around, thought meets specters, which is to say, beings whose ontological status is profoundly and irreducibly ambiguous."<sup>7</sup>

Before describing the Ontographic project constituted by Dalí's theorization of Surrealist objects, we turn to the question of Ontography, mapping historical understandings of the term to clarify its re-conception in OOO. The term, Ontography, has been borrowed from geography via Gothic literature to denote, in Harman's words, the act of registering "the basic landmarks and fault lines in the universe of objects."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Kahnweiler, *The Rise of Cubism*, 12. Kahnweiler's text was written in 1915 and first published in German as *Der Weg zum Kubismus*. Munich: Delphin-Verlag, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> Dalí, "Non-Euclidean psychology of a photograph," 56–57.

<sup>6</sup> Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 59.

<sup>7</sup> Morton, *Humankind*, 64.

<sup>8</sup> Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 124–125.

A quick look at the OED reveals a helpful list of the term's etymological shifts during the last one-hundred-and-fifty-years.<sup>9</sup> The first record appears in Robert Gray Mayne's *An expository lexicon of the terms, ancient and modern, in medical and general science*, serially published from 1853. In this erudite work, Mayne defines 'Ontographia' or Ontography as a term from natural philosophy "for describing the characterizing of things." He provides its etymological roots — "ὄν, a being; and, γράφω, to write — as well as the illuminating German synonym, "*die Beschreibung und Zeichnung der Dinge*" (the description and drawing of things.)<sup>10</sup> This definition clearly presages the term's ontological application in the reconstituted model found much later in OOO.

Ontography is also referred to by W. M. Davis, "the titan of early American geography,"<sup>11</sup> in "Systematic Geography" from 1902. Davis wrote, "It is the element of relationship between the physical environment and the environed organism, between physiography and ontography (to coin a word), that constitutes the essential principle of geography to-day."<sup>12</sup> With Davis, the scope of Ontography underwent considerable narrowing, its focus explicitly anthropocentric, laying the foundation for what would later be known as "anthropogeography" or human geography.<sup>13</sup> Ronald Abler explains that, "prior to 1890 Davis had viewed geography as a physical science only. Between 1890 and 1910 Davis came to view geography as a physical and human science, which was unified by relationships between man and his environment."<sup>14</sup>

In 1904, M. R. James published "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to you, My Lad." It is with this Edwardian ghost story that the account of Ontography, as described on occasion by Harman and usefully paraphrased by Bogost, begins.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, we will now describe its pertinence to OOO in some detail.

Harman writes that he located the term when the story's protagonist, named Parkins, is introduced in the opening paragraph as a "Professor of Ontography."<sup>16</sup> Parkins is described as "neat, and precise in speech,"<sup>17</sup> but "totally destitute ... of the sense of humor, but at the same time dauntless and sincere in his convictions."<sup>18</sup> When Parkins' colleague, Rogers, mentions ghosts in relation to his proposed holiday destination — the Globe Inn, Burnstow — Parkins responds, "I hold that any semblance, any appearance of concession to the view that such things might exist is to me a renunciation of all that I hold most sacred."<sup>19</sup> He eschews the notion that "things might exist" that he may not otherwise be able to scientifically explain. Parkins' field of expertise is intimated by another colleague, Disney, with the request that during his vacation in Burnstow, Parkins take a look "at the site of the Templars' preceptor" to let him know if "it would be any good to have a dig there in the summer."<sup>20</sup> Parkins' replies: "I will do my best to give you an idea of the lie of the land when I get back."<sup>21</sup> In Burnstow, Parkins locates the area along the beach and writes "down its rough dimensions in his pocketbook."<sup>22</sup> Here, Parkins' Ontographic activity is akin to what might be called surveying (but with less focus on the geo-spatial description of geological features and more on their anthropological consequences.) At this juncture, the narrative betrays the onset of an ontological turn. Parkins delves into the ground. Probing "the soil" and "Scraping away the earth,"<sup>23</sup> he makes a discovery

9 "Ontography, n." OED Online. June 2019. Oxford University Press. <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/258981?redirectedFrom=ontography> (accessed July 09, 2019).

10 Mayne, *An expository lexicon of the terms, ancient and modern, in medical and general science*, 812.

11 Abler, "Book Review of *The Origins of Academic Geography in the United States*," 325.

12 Davis, "Systematic Geography," 240.

13 Abler, "Book Review of *The Origins of Academic Geography in the United States*," 326.

14 *Ibid.*, 325.

15 Harman mentions this story in a blog post: <https://doctorzamalek2.wordpress.com/2009/07/14/ontography-the-rise-of-objects/>; the reference is then taken up by Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 35–36. For further discussion, see Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 124–125.

16 James, "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to you, My Lad," 183.

17 *Ibid.*, 183.

18 *Ibid.*, 189.

19 *Ibid.*, 187–188.

20 *Ibid.*, 183–184.

21 *Ibid.*, 184.

22 *Ibid.*, 192–193.

23 *Ibid.*, 193.

that ultimately destabilizes his positivist “convictions.” Finding a subterranean cavity, he locates “a metal tube about four inches long, and evidently of some considerable age.”<sup>24</sup> Parkins’ discovery turns out to be a whistle. When blown, its note is said to have “a quality of infinite distance,” its sound “to have the power ... of forming pictures in the brain.”<sup>25</sup> A second blow conjures a wind so powerful that it extinguishes the candles in Parkins’ room. The following night, Parkins is confronted by a spectral figure, which he observes with “horrid perplexity.”<sup>26</sup> James offers only the vaguest description of this specter, that it had “an intensely horrible, face of crumpled linen.”<sup>27</sup> In the story’s closing paragraph, James writes of the ghost that there “seemed to be absolutely nothing material about it save the bed-clothes of which it had made itself a body,” and that after this encounter “the Professor’s views on certain points are less clear cut than they used to be.”<sup>28</sup>

As H. P. Lovecraft, another of Harman’s favorites, writes, James is “gifted with an almost diabolic power of calling horror by gentle steps from the midst of prosaic daily life.”<sup>29</sup> Illuminating extraordinary depths in seemingly ordinary appearances, Parkins’ ultimate “perplexity” becomes the launch pad for Harman’s speculations. The transformation of Davis’ geographical Ontography to the Ontography of OOO is carefully spelled out by the retelling of these details from James’ story. Parkins’ Ontographic explorations ultimately problematize his conception of object-relations. Consequently, the remit of his Ontography is expanded.

Before moving to Harman’s and Bogost’s account, one further reference must be mentioned, which, in fact, situates Ontography within the discourse of Kantian metaphysics and art: Ernst Harms’ 1941 essay, “Prolegomena of Monistic Aesthetics.” Harms, now little more than a footnote to the history of modern psychiatry, was at that time a clinical psychologist and child psychotherapist, who had studied with Sigmund Freud and later became an apologist for C. G. Jung. Harms wrote broadly, attempting to instrumentalize art and aesthetics in the service of therapy. In developing his ‘Monistic Aesthetics,’ responding to what he referred to as ‘Kantian dualist aesthetics,’<sup>30</sup> he wrote, “aside from the ontography a monistic psychology of the arts must have as a second part, a study of the Psychological Structure of the experience of creative and receptive expressions in the arts.”<sup>31</sup> Harms used the term Ontography only once in his essay and provided no definition for it. Though, taking the preceding sections of his paper as a guide, it seems that by Ontography, he meant the mapping and understanding of “everything that comes into a man’s range of experience from the outside.”<sup>32</sup>

## 1.2 Object-oriented philosophy and Ontography

From the abovementioned sources we have derived an expanded understanding of Ontography. First, tracing its origins in natural philosophy, as the drawing and description of things, then, marking its drift into a specialized hybrid of geology and anthropology at the turn of the twentieth-century and, finally, mapping its ontological return. Recent work by Harman and Bogost has played a foremost role in restoring Ontography to its philosophical usage. However, we might note subtle variations in their individual constructions of the term. Harman defines Ontography as “describing and classifying” the pairings, or tensions, between *real objects*, *sensual objects*, *real qualities*, and *sensual qualities*,<sup>33</sup> a fourfold structure in which real objects and their real qualities remain withdrawn, attended to by the sensual qualities

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>29</sup> Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, 100.

<sup>30</sup> Harms, “Prolegomena of Monistic Aesthetics,” 96.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>33</sup> Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 124.

and sensual objects that “exist only as the correlate of our acts of consciousness.”<sup>34</sup> By contrast, Bogost explains that Ontography is only a “general inscriptive strategy,” concerned with the “revelation of object relationships without necessarily offering clarification or description of any kind.”<sup>35</sup> Bogost does, however, intimate further conditions for how we should consider Ontography. “Like a medieval bestiary,” he writes, Ontography can be “a record of things juxtaposed to demonstrate their overlap and imply interaction through collocation.”<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, he argues that an Ontograph is “a crowd, not a cellular automaton,” and “landfill, not a Japanese garden.”<sup>37</sup> Here, Bogost has certain Ontographic models in mind, emblematic of object-oriented philosophy’s keystone conception of ‘flat-ontology’: the cataloguing of one-thousand-and-one building forms in François Blanciai’s *Siteless*; “Latour Litanies,” — in deference to Actor-Network Theory’s Bruno Latour, what Timothy Morton refers to as “the hallmark trope of OOO,”<sup>38</sup> — lists of “items loosely joined not by logic or power or use but by the gentle knot of the comma.”<sup>39</sup> Indeed, Bogost has devised a “Latour Litanizer,”<sup>40</sup> using Wikipedia’s API Query module,<sup>41</sup> to generate randomized lists based on set prompts. Using Bogost’s prompts — ‘ontography,’ ‘Latour Litany,’ and ‘carpentry,’ — we generated the following ‘Litany’ during the preparation of this paper: Colonial Annapolis Historic District, Beach soccer at the 2010 Asian Beach Games, Marie Manning, St Benet’s Abbey, Psychotria domatiata.

Clearly, Object-oriented philosophy’s resuscitation of Ontography offers a potential heuristic for how object-object relationships may be illuminated and understood. Yet, whilst the results of the ‘Litanizer’ and other examples provided by Bogost and Harman are all characterized by randomization, we argue that Ontography is better served by a different criterion. We will now show that an Ontograph need not be landfill, and that it can indeed be a garden — for instance, the Japanese Stone Garden of Ryōan-ji in Kyoto.

### 1.3 Ontographic gardens

Ryōan-ji is entered via a long procession of ceremonial gateways and ancient gardens. Upon entering the temple door, removing shoes to preserve the nearly 600-year-old timber floors, the approach to the famous Zen Stone Garden is made along a narrow raised platform running down one long edge, with a low earthen wall opposite. Five or six groups of stones with different facets and textures emerge from carefully raked pebbles, floating on islands of moss. Despite being in close proximity to them, it is difficult, indeed, deliberately impossible, to count all the stones from any one position. As one continues along the platform, slightly disorientated, the arrangement of stones changes again and again. A stone withdraws and another slides into view. A plan of the garden confirms that there are indeed fourteen stones, although only thirteen can be seen at any one time. The stones are said to be tiger cubs crossing a river, in recognition of their dynamic beauty and the urgency of their philosophical message. One of the tigers cannot be seen, and the observer cannot help but instinctively look at the motionless objects expecting change, exciting the hyper-vigilance of a prey animal on alert and the atavistic urge to seek hidden things. Ryōan-ji is a reminder that concealment is fundamental to appearance, and its fourteen stones are, as Bogost described, a crowd, a little too complex, too motivated by concealment, for any single point of perception to comprehend. Can Ryōan-ji’s assortment of stones therefore be considered an Ontograph? Surely, the disorienting sensory experience of attempting to attend to the stones, and the concomitance of mnemonic or ideated and sensory realities, are evidence of ontological tensions. The stones have been placed precisely into position, and into relation with one another by design. That the stones of Ryōan-ji can indeed be thought of Ontographically, offers a counterexample to the Ontographs of OOO, which, tend to comprise of heterogenous and randomized

<sup>34</sup> For a detailed discussion of this, see Harman, *Object-Oriented Ontology*, 149–161.

<sup>35</sup> Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 38.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>38</sup> Morton, “Here Comes Everything,” 173.

<sup>39</sup> Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 38.

<sup>40</sup> [http://bogost.com/writing/blog/latour\\_litanizer/](http://bogost.com/writing/blog/latour_litanizer/) Accessed 17 July 2019.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.mediawiki.org/wiki/API:Query> Accessed 17 July 2019.

objects: a ‘funeral pyre,’ an ‘aardvark,’ a ‘porceletta shell,’ a ‘rugby ball’ (Bogost);<sup>42</sup> or, “airplanes, carrots, electrical pylons, triremes, walls, and men” (Harman).<sup>43</sup> Whilst Ryōan-ji is the foremost example of the Japanese Garden typology — the antithesis of landfill — like the Latour Litanies, it too differentiates the objects of which it is comprised by asserting their autonomy and problematizing object-to-object relations. In Ryōan-ji, the question of correlationism — the concomitance of thinking and being identified by Quentin Meillassoux — is brought to the fore through the careful, intentional alignment of the stones and one’s subsequent inability to attend to them, flaunting their inaccessibility, and hence, their independence.<sup>44</sup> With Ryōan-ji, we have shown that heterogeneity and strategic arbitrariness are not necessary conditions for Ontography, and rather, that it can also be through the intentional alignment and obfuscation, or ‘veiling’ of the totality of objects, in this instance stones, that, to return to Ortega, “the inwardness of things, their executant reality, is opened to us.”<sup>45</sup>

## 2 Dalí’s theorization of Surrealist objects

Having commenced our expansion of Ontography, we return to Dalí and the Ontographic agenda that the Surrealist object inherited from Cubism and Metaphysical Art. First, we locate Kantian preoccupations in Cubism and Metaphysical art, then interpretations of Heraclitus’ ontology developed into Ontography in Metaphysical Art and Surrealism. Finally, Dalí’s theorizations will culminate in his Ontographic conception of the grilled cutlet. To support our claim that Dalí intentionally engaged with ontological questions through painting, we will now examine his youth and early writings.

Almost all of Dalí’s first thirty summers, from 1904 to 1934, were spent in Cadaques, a small, stucco-white village looking east over the Mediterranean. In 1910, Picasso also visited Cadaques and rented a waterside home where he worked on Cubist paintings. Cadaques is a place of great significance in the careers of both Dalí and Picasso. In 1920, Kahnweiler, published the booklet *The Rise of Cubism*, which explained the “great advance” Picasso made there, “Instead of an analytical description, the painter can, if he prefers, also create in this way a synthesis of the object, or in the words of Kant, ‘put together the various conceptions and comprehend their variety in one perception.’”<sup>46</sup>

Dalí almost certainly knew about Picasso’s visit to Cadaques and probably also of Kahnweiler’s book; it was only a few years later that Dalí began art school in Madrid and there, he later claimed, introduced his professors to Cubism.<sup>47</sup> While the seeds may have been planted back then, it was a decade later when Dalí, living in Paris, developed the theory of Surrealist objects, and discussing Cubism, wrote about the representational aspirations that we now describe as Ontographic:

We became accustomed during the Cubist period to seeing things assume the most abstract and intellectual shapes; lutes, pipes, jam-pots and bottles were seeking to take the form of the Kantian ‘thing-in-itself’ supposedly invisible behind the quite recent disturbances in appearance and phenomena.<sup>48</sup>

In Giorgio de Chirico’s Metaphysical paintings too, Dalí recognized vast pictorial and ontological ambitions. In Kant’s philosophy, space and time are arguably ‘pure intuitions,’ common features fundamental to human perception. As Dalí wrote, “I have always considered the miscellaneous objects used by de Chirico as Kantian categories, as metaphysical materializations of ‘pure intuition.’”<sup>49</sup> By the late 1920s, when Dalí was

<sup>42</sup> Bogost, *Alien Phenomenology*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Harman, *The Quadruple Object*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ortega, “An Essay in Esthetics by Way Of A Preface,” 139.

<sup>46</sup> Kahnweiler, *The Rise of Cubism*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 176.

<sup>48</sup> Dalí, “The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment,” 234–244. Dalí likely borrowed this interpretation from Kahnweiler. See, O’Brien, Dan. “Cubism and Kant.” In *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, 482–506.

<sup>49</sup> Dalí, “Non-Euclidean psychology of a photograph,” 56–57.

first reading about Metaphysical art, pure intuition had been irretrievably changed. In Kant's philosophy, Dalí later explained, space and time "could have been used" to situate the object "as an immensely solitary and exact thing 'outside of us,'" but instead space and time were adopted by mathematics and passed around the sciences. In this, one senses Dalí's disappointment at what he may have considered a missed ontological opportunity. De Chirico's images, such as those depicting a small calm piazza with a steam train racing behind, embodied for Dalí "this impossible and unfortunate duo of 'pure intuition' and Newton's physics."<sup>50</sup> But de Chirico's moment quickly passed. In 1919, when de Chirico had just completed his strongest works, those most infused with Nietzschean pessimism, Arthur Eddington experimentally provided evidence to support Albert Einstein's theory that space and time were not two rigid and separate categories, but a single flexible continuum. The aspect of Eddington's proof that most appealed to Dalí was that space-time was not only an external object, but one that was soft enough to be changed by objects. The now experimentally confirmed theory that massive objects deflect space, Dalí extrapolated down to the human scale, writing, "the concrete, material, 'personal' notion that space possesses in modern physics, lamentably ruin[s] the a priori in relation to reality in the way Kant understood it."<sup>51</sup>

From Dalí's writings on Cubism and Metaphysical painting, we can see his concern with object-relations in the face of Kantian ontology. It was through these 'objectifications' in art, that he recognized the opportunity for producing what, we argue, can be thought of as Ontographic objects. Leaving Kant aside, Dalí found another source of ideas in the writings of Metaphysical artists which laid the groundwork for the later development of his Ontographic ambitions in Surrealist objects.

## 2.1 Objects of concrete irrationality

Dalí became increasingly influenced by de Chirico during 1926, reading translations of the journal *Valori Plastici*. Dalí was struck by a 1919 essay by Alberto Savinio, the pseudonym of de Chirico's younger brother. Savinio took Heraclitus' aphorism "nature loves to hide" and interpreted it in terms of two kinds of irony.<sup>52</sup> Savinio's first irony is the veil of representation itself, asking artists to respectfully refuse to reproduce nature's appearance, and to confine themselves strictly to abstract or imaginative painting. Savinio's second irony, the veil of presentation, which Dalí considered primary, is that nature is concealed from itself through "self-directed modesty."<sup>53</sup> Dalí discussed Savinio's interpretation in the opening lines of his first unambiguously Surrealist essay, 1927's "Saint Sebastian," which begins, "Irony: Heraclitus tells us, in a fragment collected by Themistius, that it pleases Nature to hide itself."<sup>54</sup> Thereafter, whenever Dalí referred to Heraclitus, irony or modesty, he was most often referring to Savinio, and in the choices Dalí made in response to Metaphysical painting, he sought to produce imaginative depictions of ideas of natural concealment.

In 1931, Dalí positioned his interest in Surrealist objects in the *Letter to Andre Breton*. He pointed to two "living branches" of painting: one exemplified by Picasso, who depicted traditional objects whilst revolutionizing the means of expression; the other exemplified by de Chirico, who retained traditional means of expression whilst revolutionizing the object.<sup>55</sup> As we shall see, Dalí enthusiastically chose the latter approach in his pursuit of Surrealist objects.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>51</sup> Dalí, "The Surrealist and Phenomenal Mystery of the Bedside Table," 199. First published in 1934.

<sup>52</sup> Savinio, "Anadymenon," 6–14. For a more complete explanation of Dalí's long interest in Heraclitus, see: Weir, "Salvador Dalí's Interiors with Heraclitus's Concealment," 195–196; and, in Surrealism more broadly: Eburne, "That Obscure Object of Revolt: Heraclitus, Surrealism's Lightning-Conductor," 180–204.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 14. Dalí later called self-modesty the "first principle of irony". See, Dalí, "Reality and Surreality," 7. Savinio's position was not universally accepted by the Metaphysical painters; two issues of the journal later, Carlo Carra described irony as a disease corroding the seriousness of art; one might hope he was being ironic. See: Carra, "Irony and Mysticism in Contemporary Painting," 72; and, Baldacci, *De Chirico*, 96–97, 287.

<sup>54</sup> Dalí, "Sant Sebastian," 52.

<sup>55</sup> Dalí, *Letter to Andre Breton*.

In 1935, Clement Greenberg wrote his critique of Dalí's academic technique, recently discussed in relation to OOO by Harman.<sup>56</sup> Whereas Greenberg implied that avant-garde artists innovated “the processes of their medium” whilst academic artists took their medium “too much for granted,” Harman reminds us that Dalí “deliberately suspends innovation of medium in order to open up innovation of subject matter.”<sup>57</sup> Indeed, by 1935, in *Conquest of the Irrational*, Dalí was explicit that his unique subject matter, which he called ‘objects of concrete irrationality,’ were the primary focus: “illusionism of the most abjectly *arriviste* and irresistible imitative art, the usual paralysing tricks of trompe l’oeil, the most analytically narrative and discredited academicism ... [are] the means of approach to new exactitudes of concrete irrationality.”<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, as Rothman noted, Dalí's use of anachronism was not only technical but also symbolic: among his novel forms, many of the motifs in Dalí's paintings were also deliberately anachronistic. The cypresses of Arnold Böcklin, the farming couple from Jean-Francois Millet, the lances and perspectival obsession from Paolo Uccello, Art Nouveau decorations, and de Chirico's red tower all serve to push Dalí's paintings out of their contemporary moment into a mysteriously anachronistic void where old objects are retained, but old relations are not.

To show how Dalí pursued this ontological principle into Ontographic forms, we will draw from examples recurring throughout Dalí's pictorial oeuvre and in his writings, specifically rocks, composite objects and soft objects. Although these objects were theoretically superseded in his formulation of Surrealist objects, they long remained among the Ontographic motifs he deployed in his painted works.

## 2.2 The modesty and irony of rocks

So, we return again to Cadaques. Residing in the far north-eastern corner of Spain, where the tectonic uplift of the Alps is eroded by the Mediterranean, Cadaques is characterized by bays and coves with diverse marine ecosystems framed by unusually complex rock formations. When travelling by boat around the coves immediately north of Cadaques, the outlines of the rocks alter rapidly, producing an ever-changing sequence of silhouettes. As Dalí explained in his first autobiography,

All the images capable of being suggested by the complexity of their innumerable irregularities appear successively and by turn as you change your position. This was so objectifiable that the fishermen of the region had since time immemorial baptized each of these imposing conglomerations — the camel, the eagle, the anvil, the monk, the dead woman, the lion's head ... While the fishermen rowed, and one saw these rocks at each monotonous stroke of the oars continually become metamorphosed, become uninterruptedly something else, change simulacra as though they had been phantasmal quick-change artists of stone, I discovered in this perpetual disguise the profound meaning of that modesty of nature which Heraclitus referred to in his enigmatic phrase, “Nature likes to conceal herself.” And in this modesty of nature I divined the very principle of irony.<sup>59</sup>

In Dalí's recollection, we find clear resonances between the development of his ontological position and what Harman and Manuel DeLanda have described as the delineation between relational and non-relational metaphysics. As they explain, object-oriented philosophy is synonymous with non-relational metaphysics: in a relational metaphysics, an object's various movements, facets and reflections mean that it “would have to be considered a different” object “in each instant.” The rocks at Cadaques would necessarily be different rocks from each and every perspective. Yet, Harman and DeLanda refute this relational model, instead agreeing, at least in part, with Edmund Husserl, for whom the object — or rock, in Dalí's case — would remain the same “even as it wobbles and moves and reflects light differently.”<sup>60</sup> Here, Dalí's insistence on the irreducibility of these rocks to their effects closely aligns him with OOO, providing evidence of the

<sup>56</sup> Harman, “Greenberg, Duchamp, and the Next Avant-Garde,” 258.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>58</sup> Dalí, *Conquest of the Irrational*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 304–305.

<sup>60</sup> DeLanda; Harman, *The Rise of Realism*, 74–75.

development of what is arguably ontological Realism during his time at Cadaques. In what follows, we will see how Dalí's theorization of object-relations began to manifest in his painted works.

### 2.3 Composite and soft objects

In a fashion akin to Bogost's 'landfill' Ontographs, Dalí's earliest Surrealist objects are composite objects such as those found in *Little Ashes*, 1928, and *Portrait of Paul Eluard*, 1929. In these double and multiple images, objects hide as other objects. In his earliest musings on this topic there is a sense of naive realism being drawn in to question. In 1928, he writes that, "through the infinite figurative associations to which it may submit our mind — a constant revision of the external world, which becomes increasingly an object of doubt."<sup>61</sup> A little later, in 1929, it is precisely the external world itself that is subjected to doubt. Dalí's first 'double image' was in fact a triple or quadruple image, *Invisible Sleeping Woman, Horse, Lion*, 1930, which uses figures taken from Plato's *The Sophist*,<sup>62</sup> and about which he wrote:

It should not be forgotten that attaining the appearance of a third image is merely a question of a more violent paranoiac intensity, and thus a fourth one, or thirty images. In that case I would be curious to find out what it is that the image under consideration really represents, what is the truth; and, right away, doubts are raised in our minds regarding the question of whether the images of reality itself are not merely products of our own paranoiac capacity.<sup>63</sup>

During these early stages of Dalí's object-theorizations, his ontological project remains fluidly embryonic; similarly, his 'multiple images' seem to represent multiple ontologies, where the relationship between subject and object, or object and object, is held in perpetual and rapid oscillation. This oscillation, we argue, is simultaneously intensified and ameliorated in Dalí's later Ontographic work. After acknowledging the paranoiac capacity of the mind, apparently stable objects with no visible independent subcomponents began to emerge in what are now some of his best-known works, the soft objects: the watches in *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931, and the soft skull in *The Fine and Average Invisible Harp*, 1932. In the sheet that Dalí provided to MoMA upon the purchase of *The Persistence of Memory*, Dalí was explicit that soft watches were a kind of colloid or gel, an agglomeration of various individual objects too small to perceive with the unaided eye, thereby giving phantasmal appearances as singular unified objects.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to the collective effects of Cubist fragments and Impressionist brushstrokes, Dalí's Surrealist composite objects, like de Chirico's earlier Metaphysical objects, were designed to assert their autonomy, free from functionalist, relational, and importantly, anthropocentric constraints. As Rothman argued, Dalí's work insists that freedom from function and relation is applied not just to living subjects, but to all objects. Dalí wrote in 1928 that a watch's "minute-hands are truer when they cease being subject to their special functions, the moment that they are given to a rhythm other than that of following the circumference."<sup>65</sup> Rothman recognized these same minute-hands in *The Persistence of Memory*, on one of the soft watches' faces. From a distance the watch's face looks normal enough, but on closer inspection,

Atop the metal cover of a pocket watch crawl two dozen ants ... They give the impression that the three hands of the clock and the fifteen digits that circle the dial had magically transformed themselves into a colony of ants. No longer following the prescribed rhythm of the clock's circular motion, the hands and digits have been liberated, free to determine their own rhythm, perhaps even to wander off the watch completely if that is their desire.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Dalí, "Reality and Surreality," 7.

<sup>62</sup> Noted by, Fanés, *Salvador Dalí*, 159.

<sup>63</sup> Dalí, "The Moral Position of Surrealism," 6.

<sup>64</sup> Dalí, *Notes pour l'interprétation du tableau / "La Persistance de la mémoire."*

<sup>65</sup> Rothman, "Object-Oriented Surrealism," 186. Rothman is quoting from: Dalí "New Limits of Painting - Part 2," 185.

<sup>66</sup> Rothman, *Tiny Surrealism*, 19.

There are echoes of Heidegger's 'tool-analysis' in Rothman's description of Dalí's soft watches, offering a clear elucidation of the ready-to-hand; with the minute-hands circumnavigating the watch's dial, their objective presence recedes, they may be understood as equipment. However, once they "cease being subject to their special functions," they become unready-to-hand: they are conspicuous and obstinate. They are no longer equipment, no longer encountered in the usual way. Something of their independent being is announced; to return once again to Ortega, Dalí makes "it seem that the ... executant reality" of the soft watches "is opened to us."<sup>67</sup> In *The Persistence of Memory*, the colloids of the watch and the watch's ant hands, asserting the independent autonomy of objects separate from, and in addition to, semiotic and aesthetic relations certainly seems to align Dalí's Ontographic conception of composite objects with the primary contentions of OOO, yet for Rothman the extent of Dalí's Realism remains in doubt.

And this is understandable; up to this point Dalí's allegiances remain ambiguous, if not idealist. In fact, in 1930 he wrote, "The Surrealists are Idealists partaking of no ideal,"<sup>68</sup> openly aligning himself with Surrealism's long sought "discrediting of reality" eloquently expressed at the beginning of 1919's *Paris Peasant*,<sup>69</sup> Louis Aragon's protagonist reflecting "nothing, neither strict logic nor overwhelming impression, can convince me about reality, can convince me that I am not basing reality on a delirium of interpretation."<sup>70</sup> The summation of the delirium of interpretation that constitutes this idealist understanding of the world is what Dalí would call the simulacra, a term that would be popularized by Jean Baudrillard some decades later.<sup>71</sup> We will now move through 1931 to 1935, however, to show the progressive theorization of the Surrealist object through which Realism begins to gain prominence in Dalí's work.

### 3 Phases of Surrealist objects

In the 1932 essay, "The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," Dalí offered a description of Surrealist objects divided into four phases. In the first phase, the beholder takes no part in the object. In the second, the object begins to act "upon our contemplation." In the third, the object operates "symbolically" and fulfills "the necessity of being open to action by our own hands and moved about by our own wishes."<sup>72</sup> These three phases of objects are in one sense or another veiled; the transition from the first to second category is exemplified by the photograph Dalí included with his essay in *Minotaure* in 1935, where his 'paranoiac-critical activity' fixates on an almost imperceptible threadless spool in the image's foreground;<sup>73</sup> an example of Dalí's third phase may be found in Man Ray's photographs of wrapped objects, where the object's concealment provokes the desire to reveal that which has been hidden. The fourth and final phase, identified by Dalí, concerns those objects he deemed edible, alluding to the concomitance of desire and allure.

The progression from the first to fourth phase of Surrealist object is thus characterized by increasing desire and allure. The first phase of Surrealist objects, those entirely withdrawn from our awareness, do not even enter our contemplation. Dalí questioned why this was the case through experimentation in his Surrealist art practice. As Dalí wrote, "what matters is the way in which the experiments revealed the desire for the object, the tangible object."<sup>74</sup> Dalí's claim, inherent in this passing comment, is that the world is

<sup>67</sup> Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way Of A Preface," 139.

<sup>68</sup> Dalí, "The Rotting Donkey," 226.

<sup>69</sup> Dalí, "New General Considerations Regarding the Mechanism of the Paranoiac Phenomenon from the Surrealist Point of View," 65; Dalí, "The Rotting Donkey."

<sup>70</sup> Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, 23.

<sup>71</sup> The November 1927 issue of *L'Amic de les Arts* included poems by Michel Leiris titled "Les Simulacres," with illustrations by André Masson: Leiris, "Les Simulacres," 104. The poet, Aragon also uses the word "simulacra" in *Le Paysan de Paris*, 1926.

<sup>72</sup> Dalí, "The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," 242. Further explanation of these objects can be found in Mileaf, *Please Touch: Dada and Surrealist Objects after the Readymade*, 110–116.

<sup>73</sup> Dalí, "Non-Euclidean Psychology of a Photograph," 303. Also, see: Finkelstein, "Duchamp and Dalí: Photography of the Naked Object," 1–4; Finkelstein, *Salvador Dalí's Art and Writing, 1927–1942: the Metamorphoses of Narcissus*, 223–224; and, Rothman, *Tiny Surrealism*, 106–108.

<sup>74</sup> Dalí, "The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment," 234–244.

filled with Surrealist objects but that these often escape our attention.<sup>75</sup> In the second phase, the object enters our attention; interest emerges where desire and allure meet. Thus, for Dalí it is not the Surrealist quality of objects that elevates them as art, but that among Surrealist objects there is a subset of those that are oddly alluring and desirable.

The third phase, that of symbolic and veiled objects — hidden or withdrawn — provided a recurrent subject for early Modern artists. In a text from 1900, Henri Bergson claimed, “Between nature and ourselves ... a veil is interposed: a veil that is dense and opaque for the common herd, — thin, almost transparent, for the artist and the poet.”<sup>76</sup> Much of the discourse around art and religious mysticism supports Bergson’s contention; the popular presupposition that the artist or mystic has greater access to the *real* because their view is somehow *less* veiled. However, in the third phase, the motif of the veil instead recalls the ontologically instrumentalized force of James’ spectral “face of crumpled linen” that had haunted the Professor of Ontography in that story.<sup>77</sup> Dalí explored the motif of the veil — partly revealing the form of the objects they conceal — in a series of works at the beginning of the 1930s: *The Untitled (Landscape)*, 1931, *The Feeling of Becoming*, 1931, *The Old Age of William Tell*, 1931, and *Untitled? (The Veiled Heart)*, 1932. However, such a direct translation of the strategy of veiled occlusion was rare in Dalí’s images after 1932, although the principle of concealment remained. This explicit strategy of veiling, though, remained a prominent feature in Surrealist art. Indeed, the motif of concealing or veiling objects with other objects appears in the works of Belgian Surrealist Rene Magritte as early as 1928’s *The Lovers*, and continued into the 1960s. Regarding the *Son of Man*, 1964, in which a large apple conceals a besuited man’s face, Magritte explained that concealing objects provokes desire, “Everything we see hides another thing, we always want to see what is hidden by what we see.”<sup>78</sup> Yet as Magritte explained, painted images are not depictions of reality. While all visible objects hide other objects, “a painted image ... hides nothing” but rather acts on the mind of the observer and provokes speculation about unreal objects.<sup>79</sup>

In 1932’s “The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment,” veiled objects begin to provoke a desire to be manipulated by the hands and “acted upon.” By 1935, this desire for manipulation was explained as initiating “processes of verification of the ‘simulacra,’ in the crudely physical sense in which Heraclitus already understood them in his own day.”<sup>80</sup> Dalí now argued against images whose “essentially virtual and chimeric character no longer satisfies our ‘principles of verification.’”<sup>81</sup> This taste for verification initiated the criteria for the final phase of Surrealist object, hunger and edible objects, coinciding with his criticism of the three earlier phases of Surrealist art. This critique included those images produced by “psychic automatism, dreams, experimental dreaming, surrealist objects functioning symbolically, instinctive ideographism,” which for Dalí, now “cease to be unknown images, for in falling into the domain of psychoanalysis they are easily reduced to ordinary logical language.”<sup>82</sup> Here, Dalí’s attempts to avoid symbolism reinforce his Ontographic intentions, presaging what Harman later identifies as the characteristic limitations of knowledge production: “the inevitable price of such knowledge is that we substitute a loose paraphrase of the thing for the thing itself.”<sup>83</sup> The point Dalí repeats is that the objects must be irreducible to remain unknown: “images of concrete irrationality ... are neither explicable nor reducible by the systems of

75 This extended Breton’s theory of Surrealist objects, upon which Dalí grew his paranoiac-critical method. For overviews of the intersections of Dalí’s and Breton’s theories, see: Dalí, *The Tragic Myth of Millet’s Angelus: ‘Paranoiac-Critical Interpretation,’* 173–175; Malt, *Obscure Objects of Desire Surrealism, Fetishism, and Politics*, 76–91; Finkelstein, “The Incarnation of Desire: Dalí and the Surrealist Object,” 114–137; Finkelstein, *Surrealism and the Crisis of the Object*, 29–43, 101–118; Finkelstein, *Salvador Dalí’s Art and Writing, 1927–1942: the Metamorphoses of Narcissus*, 162–186; and, Jenny & Trezise, “From Breton to Dalí: The Adventures of Automatism,” 105–114.

76 Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, 136. Surrealism’s use of the iconography of the veil is explored in Rothman, “Dalí’s inauthenticity,” 489–497.

77 James, “Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come to you, My Lad,” 222.

78 Torczyner, *Magritte: Ideas and Images*, 172.

79 Magritte’s 1966 letter to Foucault, reprinted in: Foucault, *This is not a pipe*, 57.

80 Dalí, “The Philosophical Importance of Soft Watches,” 202.

81 Dalí, *Conquest of the Irrational*, 14.

82 *Ibid.*, 14.

83 Harman, *Immaterialism*, 7.

logical intuition or by the rational mechanisms. The images of concrete irrationality are thus authentically unknown images.”<sup>84</sup> Dalí argued that the fourth phase of objects tended “towards their physical and actual ‘possibility’” thus “giving objective value on the real plane to the delirious unknown world of our irrational experiences.”<sup>85</sup>

The importance of the fourth and final phase of the Surrealist object quickly grew in Dalí’s theorizations across this three-year period. In 1932, Dalí wrote that in the final phase, the Surrealist “object tends to bring about our fusion with it and makes us pursue the formation of a unity with it,” which he further explained in terms of “hunger for an article and edible articles.”<sup>86</sup> In the same year, he identified the significance of edible Surrealist objects in de Chirico’s paintings of biscuits.<sup>87</sup> In the 1933 essay, “Of the terrifying and edible beauty of Art Nouveau architecture,” Dalí described Antoni Gaudí’s architecture as edible, and in 1934, he painted his wife, Gala, with lamb chops on her shoulder. Upon visiting America shortly thereafter, and being confronted by reporters, Dalí later reflected that,

They immediately asked me if it was true that I had just painted a portrait of my wife with a pair of fried chops balanced on her shoulder. I answered yes, except that they were not fried, but raw. Why raw? They immediately asked me. I told them that it was because my wife was raw too. But why the chops together with your wife? I answered that I liked my wife, and that I liked chops, and that I saw no reason why I should not paint them together.<sup>88</sup>

By 1935, in the *Conquest of the Irrational*, it was metaphorically significant to Dalí that these chops were freshly cooked, and he described the responsibility of Surrealism in terms closely aligned with the special ontological position afforded to art more generally at the beginning of this paper by Ortega and Harman: “a responsibility which becomes more and more objective.”<sup>89</sup> Indeed, in this 1935 booklet Dalí’s prose itself starts to resemble a Latour-Litany in his description of surrealist experimental material:

nocturnal pollution, false recollection, dream, diurnal fantasy, the concrete transformation of nocturnal phosphene into a hypnagogic image or of “waking phosphene” into an objective image, — the nutritive caprice, — the inter-uterine claims, — anamorphic hysteria, — the involuntary retention of insomnia, — the fortuitous image of exclusively exhibitionist tendency, — the incomplete action, — the frantic manner, — the regional sneeze, the anal wheelbarrow, the minimal mistake, the liliputian malaise, the super-normal physiological state, — the picture one leaves off painting, that which one paints, the territorial ringing of the telephone, “the deranging image”, etc., etc.<sup>90</sup>

What connects this Ontograph of Dalí’s to the conception of Ontography argued in this paper, is the characteristic of intentionality, that is, in Dalí’s words the “systematic and interpretive organization,” which becomes the mechanism by which object-alignments, or juxtapositions, begin to open objects to us.<sup>91</sup>

Dalí’s theorization of Surrealist objects during this period culminates in the final section of 1935’s *Conquest of the Irrational*, titled “The Tears of Heraclitus” — recalling Dalí’s first Surrealist essay and Savinio’s two interpretations of Heraclitus’s aphorism. ‘Edibility’ — emblematic of the logic of desire and allure — which he identifies as characteristic of the final phase of Surrealist object in 1932, is articulated in the closing paragraph of “The Tears of Heraclitus.” Dalí writes of “superfine simulacrum of imponderability,” behind which “is hiding, in better and better condition the very well-known, sanguinary and irrational grilled cutlet which shall eat us all.”<sup>92</sup> The key to understanding this characteristically obtuse prose is found in a later text, 1956’s *Dalí on Modern Art*:

<sup>84</sup> Dalí, *Conquest of the Irrational*, 13.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–15.

<sup>86</sup> Dalí, “The Object as Revealed in Surrealist Experiment,” 243–244. The ‘fusion’ that Dalí discusses in this passage may be profitably framed in terms of Ortega’s and Harman’s discourse on metaphor.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 234–244.

<sup>88</sup> Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 330.

<sup>89</sup> Dalí, *Conquest of the Irrational*, 9.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–17.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

a serious and important grilled lamb-chop, bubbling with savor and biological ulterior motives ... in the case of the lamb-chop the bones are half inside, half outside, that is to say coexistent ... the bone and the meat, objectivity and delirium, showing visibly at the same time ... burning one's teeth ... and when I say 'burning one's teeth' I mean 'burning one's imagination.'<sup>93</sup>

For Dalí, the grilled cutlet becomes a diagram for the alluring and desirable withdrawn *real object* and its *qualities* (bone/objectivity) and its corresponding *sensual object* and *sensual qualities* (meat/delirium). In this diagram, the fourfold of bone, objectivity, meat and delirium presage the tensions expressed much later in the ontological fourfold that underlies Harman's OOO. In these Surrealist experiments, Dalí's ontological foraging is marked by an ultimately insatiable hunger for the withdrawn real object; just as we have seen in the example of his soft-watches, so too does his grilled cutlet seek to reveal precisely what is at stake in our understanding of not only subject-object, but importantly and foremostly, object-object relations: the ontological preeminence of an unfulfillable desire for the eternally withdrawn.

## 4 Conclusion

Ontography provides a means by which object-relations may be productively problematized. This problematization may be expressed through randomization, as we have seen in the example of Latour-Litanies, or through alignments and juxtapositions characterized by intentionality, as in Ryōan-ji and Dalí's theorizations of Surrealist objects and Surrealist art. Indeed, the special ontological position afforded to art by Ortega and Harman, is, we argue, based upon this Ontographic capacity. As we have shown in examples drawn from Ontographic art: Cubism, Italian Metaphysical art and Dalí's Surrealist objects, this lies in the aesthetic capacity of art to make "it seem that the inwardness of things, their executant reality, is opened to us."<sup>94</sup> Thus, we have shown how Dalí's ontological project between 1928 and 1935 presages many of the tenets of Harman's OOO; beginning with preoccupations with the withdrawn Kantian thing-in-itself, moving through increasing fixations on the prominent foregrounding of ontological ideas, non-anthropocentrism, the roles of allure and desire in object-object relations, and the irreducibility and unknowability of objects, these characteristics each mark a step in the development of Dalí's ontological outlook during this period, as he arguably shifts from Idealism to Realism.

Dalí's theorization of Surrealist objects — as explicated in this paper through the careful reading of his often impenetrable essays from this period — clearly establishes his ontological preoccupations and the Ontographic intentionality of his work, revealing an easily overlooked philosophical sophistication and rigour. In particular, we hope to have made clear the Ontographic turn in Dalí's work during this period, culminating, in 1935, with *The Conquest of the Irrational*. In closing, whilst we contend that Dalí's theorization of Surrealist objects is consistent with the aforementioned tenets of OOO, we acknowledge the contentiousness of this claim, and take heed of the important fact that Idealism, as expressed in the Surrealism of Breton, Bataille and Aragon, as well as in Dalí's earlier surrealist formulations, is oppositional to OOO. We believe that Dalí's shift towards Realism during this period was a reaction to the ontological limitations he perceived in the symbolic preoccupations of his contemporaries. For, as Harman insists, "the true danger to thought is not relativism but Idealism."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 83–85.

<sup>94</sup> Ortega, "An Essay in Esthetics by Way Of A Preface," 139.

<sup>95</sup> Harman, *Object Oriented Ontology*, 6.

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