To the question of the objects relations in the Graham Harman`s object-oriented ontology.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze how the objects relations in an object-oriented ontology of Graham Harman occur and go on. We believe that the Harman concept is one of the main achievements of modern philosophy, it is allows us to get a keys to solve the problem of objectivity as such, to gain access to an object uncorrelated by the subject of knowledge. Basing on the presented scheme of the object, the author postulates the absence of the subject and subject-object relations based on correlations, thereby solving the problem of objectivity in a radical way. However, Harman's object-oriented ontology does not explain how the relationship between uncorrelated objects occurs. To solve this problem, it is necessary to find a description of the mechanism of interaction between objects in which the object remains real, i.e. uncorrelated, and at the same time sensual - accessible to perception and interaction. To describe the mechanism of objects interaction we turn to the concept of deconstruction of Jacques Derrida. The application of deconstruction to the analysis of the relationships between objects in Graham Harman`s object-oriented ontology allows us to “deabsolute” correlationism in its status as the only possible way of relations between objects and, at the same time, keep it as a mean of how objects interact.

To explain how such objects exist, we have developed our own method for describing these relationships. We have developed a method that allows us to substantiate how the accessible-not accessible nature of the object is possible. We find a logical explanation of the nature of the relationship between objects in the Albert Camus`s philosophy, who, in turn, builds his own method on one of Aristotle`s aporias. Using this method, we came to the conclusion that correlations necessarily arise during the objects interactions, which allows them to manifest themselves as accessible. But at the same time, the existence of objects by themselves is carried out without correlations. Correlations are the condition for the appearance of a sensual object, but with the existence of real objects "in themselves", correlations are not possible. The method we propose shows that the relationship of objects is an inextricable duality of the sensual and real object, which manifests itself in their knowable-not knowable nature. Using this method in the study of nature of interaction between objects in an Harman`s object-oriented ontology gives an opportunity for a more profound understanding of the problem of objectivity as such. This issue requires more further work and discussion.

It is worth mentioning that neither Harman, nor Derrida, nor Camus gave an explanation of how accessible-not accessible, that is, nondual objects, are possible. Their ideas postulated the need for such nature of objects (or knowledge about them, in the case of Camus), however, we have no mechanism explaining how such objects should exist, move, and function. So we made this mechanism. Its creation finally allowed not only to postulate non-duality, but also to explain how it is possible.

At a conference held in 2007 at Goldsmith University, the birth of a new philosophical trend — speculative realism — was marked. Representatives of this trend are united by the desire to achieve objectivity as such, knowledge, which involves direct access to the object, for which it is necessary to overcome correlationism.

Correlationism implies that all the knowledge about an object is developed through correlation with a certain subjective prediction of the information about objects by a subject. In fact, we are talking about the fact that we do not have direct access to reality and are studying our idea of it. The common goal of representatives of speculative realism is to try to understand how access to “uncorrelated” is possible.

Among the concepts presented at the seminar, the object-oriented ontology of Graham Harman was most approached to the designated goal. The author sought to build his concept on the principles of absolute objectivity. Within the framework of the concept under study, the object appears to be completely independent of anything. Any root causes and fundamental principles are a priori excluded from the OOO. “The only way to establish an object-oriented ontology is not to switch to a process, genesis, dynamism, or course, but instead to establish a new model of objects as extremely free from any relationships and partially hidden in their personal vacuums” [G. Harman, 2017, p. . 4].

In order to construction of the model of the object as absolutley independent can be possible, it is necessary to rid it of their dependence on something. Neither the subject nor other objects will be a condition for the existence of the object as such. But the object itself will not be a condition for the existence of other objects. Each object in the OOO is a center, it is only one of countless equal objects. Such an approach leads to the fact that the OOO considers objects “... any single reality - be it atoms, vegetables, nations or songs - that undergo changes or support many representations, while remaining the same” [G. Harman, 2017, p. 13 ].

The object scheme presented by Harman suggests that each object will be an entity for itself that is not based on primary principles or ideas. Any object can be material or ideal, it does not matter: the point is not that all objects are equally real, but that they are equally objects [Harman G., 2015]

Objects can consist of a number of other objects of a lower order. So, the object "home" or "society" will consist of many objects of a lower level. Such as for example the elementary particles of what material objects are composed. At the same time, there is no essential difference between elementary particles and the house that consists of them. Harman puts "... machines or international banks, at the same level as plants, animals or atoms." [Harman G., 2009 p. thirteen]. In his article “Of Sealing Wax and Cabbages” D. Kralechkin notes that the world described by OOO is like “an infinitely deep sea in which each object of a higher level is composed of objects of a lower level” [Kralechkin D., 2014, p.317 ]. There is no difference between objects of a higher and lower level, since in OOO all objects are equal in nature. OOO suggests a lack of hierarchy of objects [Harman G., 2010]

Basing on this concept, we can conclude that the OOO postulates the absence of the subject and subject-object relations. Thus, solving the problem of objectivity in a radical way - there is no subject in the scheme, therefore, correlationism is not possible. Only object-object relations are possible, and only such relations are considered within the OOO.

The object itself has a dual nature: the object appears as a “real object” (RO) and a “sensual object” (SO). In his key book “The Quadruple Object,” Graham Harman notes that any interaction occurs only between the RO and the SO [Harman G., 2015]. Harman explains it by postulating that the real object is always inaccessible. Because that is its nature. But the sensual object is always available. Only because of this RO can be manifested in the interaction. SO is the visible side of the object as such.

This happens because the very essence of object-object relations consists in the fact that objects for each other are accessible and not accessible, since the set of qualities of objects changes. D. Vyatkin also notes the importance of the fact that these changes are ongoing. [Vyatkin D., 2017,] The object appears as accessible by the fact that it is still the same object. It is not available because it is changing constantley, which makes it impossible to clearly "catch" it as complete. This approach would suggest that we are no longer considering an object, but its idealized static model. This model is correlated with image of an object represented by our mind, which is not legitimate in the framework of the OOO. Thus, OOO postulates an accessible-not accessible nature of objects [Harman G., 2011]. The main problem of OOO is that it does not give a clear description of the mechanism of interaction between the objects. Note that we are talking about both external interaction between objects and interaction within an object, since this duality is assumed by the Harman scheme.

To explain the interaction, Harman refers to the term intentionality; - This is a special mutual orientation of objects towards each other. The author writes: “... intentionality seems to be the relationship between me and the sensually perceived pine, it’s just its internal content” [Harman G., 2012, p. 82].

Harman further writes that the intention arises from “an inexplicable substitute fusion of me with a real pine tree or with something else that excites the "impression" of perception in me” [Harman G., 2012, p. 81]. Harman calls the substitutional merger “vicarious causation” [Harman, G., 2012]. As we see, the intention leads to the appearance of an impression, that is, the knowledge not of the object as such (RO), but of how it manifests itself (SO). It may seem that the “inexplicable substitute merger” is an example of the correlationism that OOO disposes. But “vicarious causation” cannot be a correlate, in order for this to be possible, it is necessary that “vicarious causation” an attribute of being. As many researchers, in particular Dmitry Kralechkin, note, such recognition would mean that the principle of OOO construction is based on a certain principle, which itself is the result of interaction as such. This is a violation of logic, since the consequence cannot be the cause. [Kralechkin D. 2014, p. 313] In other words, the recognition of the presence of intentionality as an attribute would turn it into a correlate, which is denied by the nature of objects.

Thus, the OOO does not give clear answers to the question of how intentionality arises (how it can be possible) and functions. Graham Harman notes that his theory cannot fully explain the nature of the relationship between objects. This is the largest problem of the OOO, and its solution involves the expansion of ideas about objects: “But the question remains, why a real object relates to a sensual object in general: what does this give us regarding the knowledge of the structure of space and objects?” [Harman G., 2015, p .135 ]. At the same time, Harman seeks to find a description of this interaction with the help of aesthetics and its methods. He calls aesthetics “the future of philosophy” [Harman G., 2018, p. 184]. The reason for the problem is that traditional methods of relations suggest the completeness of cognizability of objects interaction. This implies the availability of objects to each other. Which is not consistent with the idea of the nature of the object postulated by the OOO.

Obviously, aesthetics really can help to understand some aspects of an object when the mind is unable to reach them. One of the critics of OOO Stephen Shaviro notes: “Aesthetics involves the sensation of an object as its own — in addition to those aspects that can be understood or used ... Only aesthetically, beyond understanding and will, I can appreciate the act (actus) of being a thing what she is ”[Shaviro S., 2017, p. 137]. Harman calls this “the pure sincerity of existence” [Harman G. 2005]

On the one hand, turning to aesthetics may seem like an intuitive hunch that can lead to misconceptions. Prominent OOO critic Peter Wolfendale believes that by relying on aesthetics, Harman is moving away from realism [Wolfendale P., 2014]. But on the other hand, the appeal to aesthetics is inspired by the nature of objects: reality always escapes and therefore it cannot be expressed in words or formulas. Harman himself believes that so far “metaphorical access to reality is the best we have” [Harman G., 2018, p. 184-185]. The nature of reality dictates the search for new methods of understanding it.

Obviously, it is necessary to find such a description of the mechanism of objects interaction, so that it can show how the accessible-inaccessible nature of the object is possible. There should be no correlations at the basis of such a method, since their presence would make the method investigate the final, completed, that is, fully accessible object. Which contradicts the nature of the facility in the OOO.

To develop this method, we turn to Jacques Derrida `s concept of "deconstruction". [Derrida J., 2000] Deconstruction implies an identical idea with OOO about objects as accessible-not accessible and independent of any basic causes. Deconstruction is neither a method nor a principle. This is neither a phenomenon nor an essence. Deconstruction has no boundaries, neither ideal nor material. This is the very essence of non-concreteness, which does not deny either accessibility or non-accessibility.

Deconstruction can be defined as overcoming the absolutization of something, that is, the centralization of any element. The essence of centralization is that in a binary pair of objects the main (central) and subordinate is always distinguished [Derrida J., 1999]. The specificity of relations between such objects leads to the creation of primary principles, concepts or any other starting points. That is, of what correlation occurs. Correlationism is a consequence of the centralization of (or on) something. Deconstruction equalizes the metaphysical status of the elements of a binary pair, which makes it impossible to absolutize centralization as such. Since absolutization as such is a logical fallacy.

However, correlationism as such is not canceled. Deconstruction just overcoming its absolute status as the only mechanism for the relationship between objects. A complete rejection of it would mean the absolutization of the absence of correlationism. Which is also not legitimate in the framework of deconstruction, since deconstruction cancels all absoluteness. Therefore, we only deabsolutize its status as the only possible way of objects relations. Therefore, we cannot completely get rid of correlationism. And this means that it must take place in the objects relations and, therefore, without correlations it is impossible to describe their interactions. Note that returning correlationism to discourse, we do not go beyond Speculative realism. It is known that despite the fact that all representatives of the trend agree that correlationism must be overcome [K. Meillassoux, 2013]. But their strategies suggest different paths. Graham Harman is most radically inclined on this issue, while Quentin Meillassoux does not believe that the rejection should be complete. [Meillassoux Q., 2009].

It is necessary to find a method for studying the interaction of the availability non-availability of object. Which, on the one hand, will show how centralization occurs, leading to correlations, and on the other hand, it will show that the correlations are not absolute in the framework of the relationship between RO and SO. Our method will show that correlationism is a necessary part of any objects interconnections, but at the same time there must be another way of interconnection. We find the logical basis of our method in the philosophy of the great French philosopher and writer Albert Camus. His work and worldview is based on the basic philosophical principles outlined in his programmatic work, The Myth of Sisyphus.

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When constructing his method, Camus proceeded from the same premise as representatives of speculative realism. In his opinion, true knowledge is not possible due to the fact that we do not comprehend the world directly, but through correlation with the internal presets of the subject: “I can understand this (something, author's note) only with the help of human concepts” [Camu A. , 2011, p. 23]. The author believes that it is not possible to get rid of correlations, but this method of cognition does not lead to the truth. However, they are often “disguised” as basic ideas and principles. As an example, Camus cites Husserl’s statement “The fact that this is true is really absolute in itself” [Camus A., 2011, p. 84]. For Camus, it is nothing more than a necessary prerequisite for reflection, with which there is a correlation of thought.

In his key book, The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus writes that nothing in the world can convince him of the veracity of anything. Camus denies all the truth and any complete knowledge. Camus, likes the heroes of his works, cannot say “neither yes nor no,” they find themselves in the midst of hostile uncertainty. It seems to us that the author is somewhat exaggerating, considering such a worldview a burden. He observes that this way of understanding the world resists the desire of the human mind for “concreteness” [Camus A., 2011] and the completeness of knowledge, and is therefore perceived as absurd. The absurdity of Camus is that when receiving complete answers, the mind runs into even greater obscurity if it is sufficiently consistent in its own logic.

In his works, the author shows that a person cannot determine his knowledge about the world as an absolute truth. In confirmation of this, Camus writes: “the method that I define here frankly admits that it proceeds from the premise that true knowledge is impossible, only you can understand visibility and feel the climate” [A. Camus, 2011, p. 27].

Camus was able to avoid the important and to this day actual epistemological problem - anthropocentricity: “One of the problematic consequences of the dominance of epistemology in current philosophy is that it dooms philosophy to a purely anthropocentric orientation.” [Bryant L., 2014] This allowed Camus to create his own method independent of correlations with the subject of knowledge, which made him as objective as possible.

*Camus demonstrates his method of cognition on one of the aporias of Aristotle: “He who claims that everything is true makes the truth and the statement opposite to his own, and thus makes his statement false (since the opposite statement denies its truthfulness); and he who claims that everything is false makes this statement false. If they make an exception - in the first case for the opposite statement, claiming that only it is not true, and in the second - for their own statement, claiming that only it is not false, then it should be assumed that an infinite number of true and false statements to assert that a true statement is true, is in itself true, and this can be continued indefinitely "[A. Camus, 2011, 35-36].*

This aporia shows that correlations, on the one hand, are necessary for the object (for example, the object “everything is right”) to exist. On the other hand, aporia shows that the nature of such relationship cannot provide true knowledge about the object itself. In order to just exist the object must be correlated, but then it ceases to be itself.

Let us consider the categories from the aporia of Aristotle as objects. When the object “everything is true”, due to its nature, begins to assert the absence of the opposite RO, it must inevitably occupy this niche (“everything is false”), but this leads to a contradiction: the object cannot be its opposite. The object “everything is false” also denies the absence of the opposite “everything is true” by the fact that it does not imply its existence. Any RO implies the absence of other real objects as their opposites, where the opposite of any RO will be any other RO. A RO cannot allow the existence of another RO with itself.

Therefore, both real objects will always slip away from each other or will be impossible. These objects disappear due to their completed nature, which does not allow them to exist together with other objects. The method shows that the completeness of statements, as well as the completeness of RO, simply cannot exist without any assumptions. At the objects level, this works as the appearance of a SO by replacing or changing a certain part of the qualities of a RO at the time of collision with another RO.

We shall give an example of the application of this method with respect to classical philosophical objects of study. Let’s take as objects “being” and “nothing.” If there is being, then everything that is not being (that is, other objects) will also be being. If there is nothing, then everything that is not nothing will be nothing. These objects would disprove themselves if they entered into a direct relationship with each other. We see that the direct interaction between ROs is impossible. The method suggests that in order to prove that “being” is possible without internal negation in the form of “all that is not being is being”, we need to make an assumption that will look like this: “There is being, and all that is not being will be being, except nothing”.

The method shows the impossibility of complete knowledge of the object, which means the inaccessibility of the RO. The joint existence of the ROs as directly existing objects is impossible, since they must be mediated by something. In this case, the RO “being” is mediated by the assumption “all that is not being will be being, except nothing.”

This means that RO “being” must be correlated with something in order to exist. Like "nothing" or any other RO, it also needs correlation. We have shown that RO does necessarily unexist in experience. Thus, we can conclude that RO cannot appear in the world without correlations.

Note that as a binary pair of real objects we can take any ROs. You can consider the pair “everything is false” - “car wheel” and we will see the same pattern. The important thing is not what kind of object we are considering. The important thing is that we consider the object.

RO "being" gets the opportunity to manifest itself in the world at the moment when we assume that there can be another object, that manifests being: "all being, except that it is not being." Without this assumption, the RO “being” is not able to exist in the world full of other objects. But then it is no longer a RO. It becomes a sensual object, as it is mediated by something. Facing each other, two ROs are forced to allow each other to exist - that is, to correlate. This is how the SO appears - the result of mutual correlations between the ROs. Thus, due to the phenomenon of correlationism, the appearance of SO is possible.

We showed only “half” of the desired interaction. We have clarified how RO is not available in experience, as well as SO is possible and why correlations are needed. It is easy to fall into a logical trap here, making RO only a logical root cause, and not a real ontological entity. What is contrary to OOO. We have to go the second half of the way from SO to RO.

When studying objects that would be correlated with something, logic gives the right conclusions. But if logic (rationality of course) explores what is not available but necessary, that is RO, then some difficulties arise. To give an example: the mind seeks to justify the impossibility of absolute knowledge, absolutizing the absoluteness of impossibility. This is true for a method that does not go beyond the limits of correlation, but with respect to RO, this means that if RO is impossible because it is reachable, then it is not possible, since RO will not be reachable. This is not true, because then the impossibility of its existence, the impossibility of RO to be RO, are absolutized, which contradicts deconstruction, since absolutization will occur.

Therefore, the RO must exist and must be comprehensible, but "in the some another way." Once again, the problem is that the impossibility of the “impossible” is absolutized. Because of this the theory contradicts to itself, since something is absolutizing. Therefore, RO necessarily exists, since the absolutization of its impossibility is not true. We obtain a justification for the impossibility of the impossibility of a real object. In other words it is necessary. Our method showed how and why RO becomes SO due to correlations. At the same time, correlations are eliminated, since they cannot be absolute either, which brings us back to RO. This means that it is possible to consider a real object as incomprehensible only taking into account its comprehensibility in the form of a sensual object.

In fact, we are talking about the unity in two manifestations. For the mind used to focusing on only one side of the object, it is difficult to accept non-duality. This is the absurdity of which Camus wrote. However, this way of understanding the world does not carry any contradictions, in contrast to the way of understanding the world based only on correlations. We make a paradoxical conclusion that objects are not available on the one hand, and available on the other. Thus, Harman’s thesis that the reality of a thing “does not come down to what is perceived in it” [Harman G., 2005, p. 187] finds in our work logical and methodological confirmation. In fact, our entire interaction scheme describes the duality of the RO-SO relations as a process of internal establishment and overcoming of correlations.

Using our method, we examined the problem of the relationship of objects. According to the obtained results, when objects interact, correlations are necessary, that makes the object accessible, but at the same time, some part of the objects themselves exist without correlations. Correlations are a prerequisite for the occurrence of SO, - this is “vicarious causation”, due to which RO appears as SO. With the existence of ROs in themselves correlations are not possible.

Due to correlations, the object is available to some extent, as a SO. However, this accessibility is a static image of the object, captured in the form and with the set of qualities that were noticed using correlations. But the method shows that along with this, correlations are not the only and absolute way of objects interaction. This means that some part of the object is still not available. The method we propose shows that no matter how close the objects are "moving to" to each other, they can never be open for each other up to the end and some part of the object inevitably remains hidden. Thus, Harman's thesis that the object is always wider than our ideas about it is confirmed. Objects really turn out to be inexhaustible, but at the same time they are quite achievable. The relationship of objects is an inextricable duality of the sensual and real object, which manifests itself in their knowable-not knowable nature. The use of this method in the study of how the objects interact in the object-oriented ontology of Graham Harman makes it possible to better understand the problem of objectivity as such. We will consider this problem in our next works.

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