

# Counseling and Family Therapy Scholarship Review

---

Volume 3 | Issue 2

Article 3

---

March 2021

## An Essay Concerning the Substance of Counseling

Lance Kair

Regis University, Department of Counseling, Division of Counseling and Family Therapy, Rueckert-Hartman College of Health Professions, lkair@regis.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/cftsr>



Part of the [Counselor Education Commons](#), [Marriage and Family Therapy and Counseling Commons](#), and the [Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Kair, Lance (2021) "An Essay Concerning the Substance of Counseling," *Counseling and Family Therapy Scholarship Review*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 3.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53309/PTDO3183>

Available at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/cftsr/vol3/iss2/3>

This Clinical is brought to you for free and open access by the Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Journals at ePublications at Regis University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Counseling and Family Therapy Scholarship Review by an authorized editor of ePublications at Regis University. For more information, please contact [epublications@regis.edu](mailto:epublications@regis.edu).

## An Essay Concerning the Substance of Counseling

LANCE ALLAN KAIR

*Department of Couple and Family Therapy, Division of Counseling and Family Therapy, Rueckert-Hartman College of Health Professions, Regis University, Thornton, CO*

Our modern world appears to lack a way to find truth. Philosophically, this problem is formulated in a manner of knowing which never gets beyond the subject of the universe; even objectivity in the universe is arguable. The effort called empirical science then gives us conclusions that regularly perpetuate an unstable world. Due to this real subjective empirical constraint, the usual approach to therapeutic Counseling offers methods focused on the individual obtaining skills and conceptions that function to mitigate the apparent and ubiquitous problem of modernity. Empirical science, whether it be physical, biological or phenomenal, has left us with only problem; it leaves us in a lurch, right in the middle of a contradiction of a subject able to know truth. This is the main problem of mental health. I propose that modern problems of mental health cannot be solved truly with reference to what I call the *conventional method* of experiment and argumentative reason. We require a true and knowable substance of the universe if we are to gain headway. To this end, I propose a unitive discipline of Counseling founded in what is true of the universe. Less about the negotiation between subjects and more about what is true of that negotiation. This essay uses the philosophy of Graham Harman, called Object Oriented Ontology, or “Triple-O”, as a means to begin to establish the truthful substance of Counseling as a discipline in its own right, which is to say as well, as a universal object.

*KEYWORDS: counseling, Francois Laruelle, Graham Harman, Nonphilosophy, Object Orientation, Ontology, phenomenology, realism, theory, Triple-O, truth, Two Routes*

### Introduction

This essay incorporates the leading-edge philosophy generally situated under the name *realism* and its main constituents that are called *objects*, into a discipline (Counseling) that has been involved with its own methods and ways of conceptualizing for at least two decades. Going further, one could say that the notions presented in this essay are up against 150 years of a particular type or way of viewing the human being in the world. I am attempting to merge the world of conventional thinking with leading edge philosophy. Making an argument that expands on conventional thinking is not a simple task, as the argument will be judged by conventional methods, and indeed, it is the conventional method that is at issue. The reader will note, also, this essay is not directly concerned with nor making a comment upon object relations as the psychodynamic theory might pose.

### Truth and Reality

Reality and truth present a tumultuous relationship in which the two are frequently at odds. The problem is a lack of real substance. The way to any knowledge of substance is through the reckoning of truth and reality. From the distinction which allows both reality and truth to arise in truth and in reality – each to each and other for their proper domains of each – we are able to describe how the discipline of Counseling arrives in reality as well as truth. That is, while the

reality of truth offers material for counseling, the truth of reality grants us the substance of Counseling. To present this clearly, the manner by which to resolve the differentiation of reality and truth cannot be followed along the regular path as one might be used to travelling; it is not a matter of attempting to argue priority (i.e., reality from truth or truth from reality), for, the two are intertwined as well as distinct. So is this the truth of the situation even as it may not settle for what might be real of it.

In order to understand such ‘mixed method’, we first encounter the differentiation of truth from reality at the point where a marker or partition falls through or over a certain type of argument or construct - a partition across which semantic consistency does not pass and cannot reconcile without contradicting its original intention. The construct is the ideal of unity and/or universe, which every conventional argument upholds silently. The marker is nothing less than the nature of causality. Recall that Aristotle gave us four causes. I group notions of cause to effective and practical associations; the *efficient* and *material* causes are associated with modern reality, while the *formal* and *teleos*, end or final, cause are associated with universal substance and truth. For this essay, existential phenomenal subjectivity is the real experience of the *efficient* synthetical a priori and its correlations, (i.e. pure imperative and hypothetical practicality, as well as the material of counseling and its constituent domain) while the truth of this reality is the rationale for an object-oriented ontology, which is to say, the object that is the subject. The real subject of counseling can be reconciled to a *formal* substantial truth as an object of the true universe.

Real omnipresent relativity is the automatic and axiomatic default through which truth and reality are differentiated. This default leaves the truth of any situation to be either determined by a negotiation between subject-agents, or randomly selected from a pure contingent and groundless ideal of subjective meaning. While the phenomenal exploration (phenomenology and phenomenism generally understood) of any individual can lead to deep transformation in individual presence and outlook, the traditional terms of such transformation (such as meaning and intentionality) have become highly problematic for mental health - almost to the point of meaninglessness. In other words, the best modern phenomenology can do is offer clients the consolation that they can find a reality of reality (their own meaning to existence) but never find themselves truly existing in *the* universe, which is to say in our context, as a known universal object. This is so much to suggest that the usual dichotomous epistemological foundations (the tension of semantic relativity manifested in the subject-object polemic) are no longer sufficient for what they once indicated; less Nietzsche’s ‘God(s)’, it is the spirit of irony which has been trampled into the pure synthetical ground of subjective ideological primacy; the subject always constituted in knowledge-power is already a misconstruing of existential truth and, as such, is the recipe for mental disease and distress. In terms of the Nonphilosophy of Francois Laruelle, the terms of the *sufficient philosophy* rarely find truth. Individual and societal mental health will benefit from finding a basis of real truth in as much as all suffering might be said to arise within the idealized disembodied subject of modernity.

A “quartered move” is first needed to shed light through a rift between reality and truth; a “half move” (either/or) is merely sufficient to reality, so the usual real argumentative polemics and resultant methods for negotiating the various definitions of material brings us nowhere nearer to truth. In order to initiate the bringing round of a complete conceptual motion, from the modern material subject to a true substance of universal objects, I recall Triple-O’s five distinct relations between objects. These are: containment, contiguity, sincerity, connection; no relation (Harman, 2007). The issue for a unitive discipline of Counseling is the object of the subject. In the “quartering”, the conceptual route begins in an odd place, that is, as already reconciled. A

discussion concerning Triple-O's middle three relations, i.e. connection, contiguity, and sincerity, then establishes the reconciliation; the *re*-consolidation, so to speak, of reality and truth. It is only then that the completed conceptual cycle can be found by moving into the differentiation itself, (reality and truth indeed may be distinguished as irreconcilable causal forms, *efficient-material* and *final-formal*) and employ the outer two relations, that is, containment and no relation, to speak about the situation which arises Nonphilosophically as the end which reconsolidates to enjoin the universe to its proper real truth. We are then able to notice the substance of Counseling.

## Knowledge and Causality

We begin from the definition that an object is not a thought. This in an ironically positive sense is the positive presence of a thing defined by the positive absence of another thing. Both are *known*. There is no true way of knowing an absence except as a presence of such absenteeism; nothing *is* known as such, itself. We can then say that due to the subjective constraint whereby nothing arises outside of thought, thought itself is essentially the only thing that we are dealing with in philosophy; that is, thought and nothing are the limits, or absolute parameters, of knowledge. Yet here, 'nothing' concords with Harman's "vacuum" which lay at the core of objects –for which Harman then says he instead prefers the term "cell" – because, that is, 'nothing' is a space that is not really empty as much as there "is a great deal...underway inside the object" (Harman, 2020, p. 175). Note when we speak of the object of the subject certain notions turn onto their head, or in this case, inside-out. What is not thought, i.e. an object, is still thought, and object. It is nothing which lay *inside*; the irony of the modern subject is revealed. This play on words might bring to mind Ludwig Wittgenstein's notion of language games but here we note the limits of such gaming. Discourse and thought arise Nonphilosophically, as we shall discover, to grant us objects that exist in-themselves, truly, outside and not mediated by the semantic negotiations of thought, and yet arising in knowledge.

The problem is the subject of the object. How shall we determine an appropriate proximity or distance to distinguish between, say, the object which we have yet to discover that is an element on the surface of a planet in the universe and an object that is a mind? An illustration of the problem of strict semantic definition shows us the way forward. Why is one an object and the other a mere idea – or is the former merely an idea and the latter an object? What criteria shall we use? Definition? To have language as the answer merely begs the question. To use a temporal index does little more; subject-supportive ideas placed in this context, such as, "one day we will have had discovered the actual object that is the element," or "mind is merely an abstraction" or "presently..." or "we never do find...", "before we knew...", etcetera, are surprisingly fantastic, astonishingly mutable as well as unstable. If we are honest, we have to admit that subjective material, whether linguistic, empirical, or psychological can indeed make for quite a confusing situation, however we might define it. To rely upon this ideal for mental health now seems, as well and in a way, quite odd.

As opposed to reliance upon such arbitrary and semantic hopes, substance, of the discipline of Counseling, concerns its *form*, that aspect of which we consolidate an *object*. A substance is not thought, and it is not an object bound by thought: it is both, that is, an object is thought *and* not bound by thought, not thought and bound by thought, mediated and not mediated. Both *known* yet leaning to neither side in-itself but to one or the other depending upon the conditions, and the condition under which any circumstance is possible is universal; everyone knows this. Since thought is all there is, as well as the totality that is only thought bounded by

nothing, the object of Counseling concords exactly with the space which constitutes subjectivity, which is the world of the therapeutic relationship. And, as this appears in the universe, the subject of Counseling, its materiality, constitutes the object of the therapeutic relationship. If we can agree with Alain Badiou's rendition of the event of Being as that which arises between nothing and thought (void and multiplicity), we are obliged to say truly the object of Counseling is a world in the Counseling universe, a real subject, which by communitive association, must arise likewise as a form, an object, in the universe itself, whatever that may be, to be a universal object. The totality which is thought and nothing else thus grants access to the object which exists outside of thought, which is to say, the object in-itself. It is *by virtue of* the limits of thought –not in spite of –that grants objects that truly arise in-themselves; not mediated by thought, but indeed *evident* to thought.

### Counseling as a Truth

I am proposing a substantial philosophical ground for a unitary discipline of Counseling, and we are doing this by elucidating a distinction between what is real and what is true while not discounting either out of hand or reducing one to the other's exclusivity.

To further support this didactic, Aristotle is instrumental. When we encounter the spirit of Aristotle and his words, original *cause* was a manner of allowing universal forms to retain each their own ontological faculty as aspects of the universe which are not properly reducible to one another in knowledge. We can say without apology that due to the dynamic and yet generally simple nature of universal objects, every proposal that argues an efficient grand reductive unity of things is a non sequitur, a contradiction based in an unrecognized efficiency. The best we can really do to that end without summoning a First-cause God Itself, the implication of God deferred in meaning, or an abyss of nothingness, is to temporarily suspend the reduction within a certain eternally upheld condition. In fact, we recognize the era of modernity is the never-ending string of temporary semantic injunctions which suspend the organic procession of Being to make room for multiple agent-creators who arise within an unknowable grand truth of things. The modern ground of negotiating subjectivities outlines the contradiction that gives rise to the real epistemological function *as an* excluded middle; self-evidence forms the basis of metaphysics as opposed to *other-evidence*. Metaphysics in this light, is the filling-in of the empty universe; empty in the sense of not-yet known. Thinking in this way *understands* or *underscores* implicitly itself as a 'vacancy' to be filled by the potential of the not-yet known, the universe as a place that fills our knowledge and grants material by which subjectivity may come into Being. In this manner and method metaphysics arises through the efficient cause. However, the truth of this situation arises outside of metaphysics to account for it by the *teleos*, or end form, wherein the universe is the place which *fulfills the truth of itself*. Subjectivity fulfilled itself by material is itself a substantial form arising in the universe, that is, as an object.

Comprehending the problem of truth in terms of how modern knowledge works to support an efficient linear mode of reason, weirdly enough, locates the unity sought (truth) *as* a middle in a non-linear, Non-philosophical manner. Harman capitalizes upon this observation to suggest the formal cause of things, but specifically the relations of forms (objects). To this end we defend "against philosophies which regard surface as formal and sterile and grant power to the shadowy depths...", because phenomenality has been reduced to a shadow of its original form and allowed to only reveal relative, generally hidden, local and material realities. Now instead we argue "...discrete autonomous form lies only in the depths, while dramatic power and interaction float

along the surface” (Harman, 2007, p.195). Hence, the issue for the object of counseling involves *orientation* upon objects. The autonomous truth of universal objects, to which subjects ultimately are found, is what we seek for a mental health constituent of those aspects which we already include in the definition of mental health; namely resiliency, self-esteem and confidence, among others. However, this is not another advocacy of transcendent Platonic forms but rather a true *and* real coordination of existent knowledge. In a strange twist which has to do with the object of the subject, in order to develop a philosophy upon which a discipline of Counseling may find sure validity, it is from the depths –not from the thin transcendent or immanent facades of some all-too-far or all-so-close dimensions, but from the correspondence of both –we find the substance we seek for the substance of Counseling.

Further, due to the modern prevalence of the efficient cause in modern (conventional) philosophy, *the argument* that all forms do not always have to answer to efficiency (forms are not always posterior, created or caused by, agency) becomes an effort of futility. Consistent with Laruelle’s Nonphilosophical proposal, the ‘bridge’ of reductionism only does commerce in one direction. So, by contrast, in order to find our elusive substance, it is not necessary to negate or deny the phenomenological course into reality; we shall see that the *either/or* reductive method always establishes reality, which then by its validity and actual veracity, contrasts with a truth which allows for the phenomenal reality *as well as* a reckoning of its formal substance, without the added necessity of an efficiently determined first or reductive cause.

Ultimately, the notice is that a causally efficient (phenomenal) priority never allows for a further landing of cause than a linguistic negotiation (a God-First Cause), and thus we are never able to decide upon that which is most fundamental to Counseling, namely *thought*. In this way, even Positivist-Cognitive approaches are phenomenalist. Thought defined – or undefined for that matter – still never quite lets us understand what thought actually is beyond a vague ideal estimate which perpetually avoids the object it supposes by its term. Due to this strange vacancy in knowledge, psychology in general regularly proceeds to establish itself upon various theories and proposals for what thought is, the various schools of psychology and associated practices; Psychodynamic, Gestalt, Cognitive-Behavioral, Moral Recognition Therapy, identify only a small few. These are conceptual-linguistic proposals situated and correlated by sensible formulations of problem-solution; they cohere in counseling only if we do not think too much about them individually or critically. Thus, we refer these self-evidential proposals to Jean-Francois Lyotard’s *phrase universes*, but then halt the endless phenomenal tumble into the abyss of language and meaning to call them, simply, *objects*.

The formal cause through which Harman elucidates an ontology of objects, I further extend to employ three of his relations, i.e. connection, contiguity, and sincerity, in the effort for growth and involvement in a true substance for the discipline of Counseling as a whole. Instead of dwelling in the repressive materialistic discourses of power and prestige, reduction and isolation, let us explore this new universe of inclusion and breadth, empowerment and expansiveness.

## Connection

The intention as a whole must arise from a real connection of real objects, albeit an indirect connection.

- Harman, 2007, *On Vicarious Causation*

Harman is well known for proposing that real objects withdraw from view or relation. What does that mean? When we are approaching to view the object that is the subject, we cannot dismiss the correspondent fact Harman points out; namely, the aspects, elements or components (my terms) of objects are never exhausted, and thus real objects always exceed our grasp. One can easily comprehend this feature of objects when we consider an analogue. The early Twentieth-century philosopher Bertrand Russel discusses somewhere how we never find the object we seek in the table before us, that always we find something else that the table is ‘made of’, always some other feature which ‘goes into’ the table for it to be a table, i.e. the wood, the texture, the color, the shape, the molecules and atoms, etcetera. We might also uphold that the table is never really there at all because it was made from the material of a tree into a shape established in knowledge by any number of symbols, sounds and utterances, all of which only arise for a moment in eternity, always in the entropic process of deterioration and thus never a table. In fact, every extension of Aristotelian cause can be pulled out and strung along efficiently in the effort to find the ‘actual’ table that we sit at to write our philosophical essays, to sadly only fail such that the table as well as philosophy itself was merely a phantasmic illusion forever and always. Strangely enough, often phenomenology itself wants to frame the knowing subject as exempt from this same feature to find thoughts forever wrestling in and out of themselves - squeezing sense and poetic meaning from this corner of the table, and expanding up to the highest heights of significance from the color of the table’s wood, its grain, smell, and every sense that comes from it; temporal, divine and atomic, alas, all utterly within the single experiencer’s vessel of Being into which the table itself dissolves and the being of which becomes only that for a reification of fundamental human center of experience that is never discovered.

While Harman postulates such phenomenal motions “undermine” and “overmine” objects (Harman, 2011), to the candid observer of both occurrences, we begin to see the same event unfolding, the same actual Beingness evidenced before our minds. Namely, that these two historical philosophical polemical proposals (Russel and Harman) are actually exhibiting the same function, the same ontological motions, exhibiting the same kind of causal stance, or formal cause. They are not merely arguments about material but *different reflections of the same substance*. A real object can be said to “withdraw from view” because the material of its subjectivity always exceeds any particular definitional knowledge of it. We resolve to thus a new orientation upon what an object actually might be in the universe – a connection – that is, in the true sense of what ‘universal’ actual means, and in this new frame thus, what a universal object actually is.

Make no mistake; our goal with the proposal of a unitary discipline of Counseling is not so much to make philosophers of all Counselors, but rather to derive a discipline for all Counselors by which they indeed can be said to be Counselors *truly*. We seek a discipline of Counseling founded in a sound and substantial philosophy which accompanies and supports the assertion of name and ethical duty. A set of values and activities with a sound philosophical base is preferable to having only ethical practice with a reason for it. Through an ontology of objects, the duty and practice of Counseling is connected with universal truth.

## Contiguity

The various sensual objects in an intention lie side by side...

- Harman, 2007, *On Vicarious Causation*

An exhibition of Being supplies the true substance of real material. For, the counseling material (various practical theories, ethics and all they propose of explicit and implicit components) in its aggregation, use, and proximity, has revealed the substance of counseling itself (the a priori category). This is indeed how true science works. Not from an imposition of theory upon material, which gains more and more ungrounded material; rather, the smallest element of the universe is given even before the universe it belongs to: it is elemental, the smallest element ‘begins the count’ (Badiou, 2005) of existence. So it is that Counseling does not arise from some vacancy, as though Counseling was always available just waiting for the right conditions to fill out its true form; on the contrary, the discipline –as yet, unrevealed to its universal substance—is founded upon some thing which arises in need of counseling, which is to say, the client, but before a client is even formulated to its (universally objective) being; philosophically speaking, objective and universal Being has to move first through being merely a modern subject.

The modern psychological identity is itself a recurring and self-replicating *problem*. It is nearly a truism to say the modern identity of psychological subjectivity is inherently compromised. In *any* rigorous analysis of a subject we find at once itself and its undoing, both now and not now, but as we might begin to see, a subject as well as an object, thought and nothing, the substance of material conditions. We therefore can no longer in good faith address the subject as a purely psychological entity (as we presently conceive) and remain responsible to the knowledge which has come to us through our historical and traditional lineage about our condition as human beings in the universe. We might begin instead to comprehend the universal objectivity of the subject, and through this realization and comprehension, begin to more effectively address what has been handed us *in state*, through an acceptance of what actually *is*. Less a reduction of real materials swirling in an eternally transcendent flux, the notice now is that the universe is constituent of contiguous objects. Harman spells it out for us. “Our primary relationship with objects lies not in perceiving or theorizing about them but simply by relying upon them” (Harman, 2007, p. 192). Here is indicated a coin itself, of its both sides, the true substance of real material.

## Sincerity

At this very moment I am absorbed or fascinated by the tree, even if my attitude toward it is utterly cynical and manipulative.

- Harman, 2007, *On Vicarious Causation*

For a unitive theory of Counseling substantiated in truth it is not necessary that Counselors change anything that they are already doing as counseling, by the very fact that describing a thing, an object, of the universe does nothing to change its Being. The mere observation of a universal thing does not change the thing, rather, as we know from quantum physics, the observation itself can be said to be involved in the change to the very manner that we are able to observe the thing.

While I assert that an object ontology benefits the discipline of counseling, I call attention to the *orientation* upon objects rather than specifically Harman’s philosophical position called Object-Oriented Ontology as argued. By his and other’s arguments we become able to notice that there are actually two –and only two – orientations upon objects, Two Routes, as I say. There is the judgement which would reduce all objective reckoning back into the perception of the subject who then expresses that perception—and also as well may behave in a certain manner based on the subjective interpretation of the situation—to other subjects who confirm or deny or otherwise supply useful reflection and feedback to the subject, such that all things arise within the



confinement of perception and the like or associated subjective knowledge. This is real material. Then there is also the observation that the truth of things in-themselves does not revolve around the subjective consideration of them, but the contrary; this is true substance. As opposed to the relative opinions of subjective views, both can indeed be known truly. The difference lay in the fact that *either* manner is involved with the other *sincerely* – one does not take privilege or precedence; apart from their assertions of content, perception and thinking can be known as in-themselves things. In its way and by its orientation, just as surely a piece of paper as well as a pen are each sincerely involved with the table, and just as sincerely as likewise I am involved, as just as sincerely the earth's atmosphere and gravity well are involved, so is thinking and perception. While "it is tempting to confuse such absorption with 'conscious awareness', we need focus on the most rudimentary meaning of sincerity... [that is] ...contact..." (Harman, 2007, p. 205). This is the condition of the object of the subject, that the subject itself as well does not change in the observation *only*. The subject can be called unto itself a real universal object in-itself which is able to change by virtue its own ontological manner within the universal imperative, that is, ironically involved in its own unfolding and disclosure of Being in sincere relationship with other objects' Being in-themselves, or even *being-there* themselves. The issue that arises for mental health as well as philosophy is orientation, and not merely perception or semantic intuition. For if we are to understand the whole of phenomenological philosophical query, if we can name one thing which it implicitly promotes as foundational and unimpeachable, it is the notion of the centralized thinker and or producer of meaning and reason unique to the human being. Yet human Beings are not the only Beings in the universe worth consideration in the reckoning of Being.

Aristotle gave us more than one cause; he notices four. I have associated modernity with the kind of cause which arises from a consilience of empirical subjectivity and a priori synthetical identity, and associated now with the conventional manner by which philosophy routinely proceeds, which further works to limit what is allowed to be true along one manner or method of knowing which, strangely enough eschews an ability to know truth. An ontological primacy of empirical scientific theory inside of which phenomenological semantics are permitted to be devoured, to be honest and consistent with what we as counselors encounter every day, is a very short-sighted, small-minded and, frankly, severely biased assessment of the situation, and I would add, a very sad method of supporting truth. A sincerer approach is to be viewing, understanding and using such routes of knowledge in cooperation, both contributing to mental health as an object of praxis.

## Containment

The intention as a whole contains both the real me and the sensual tree.

- Harman, 2007, *On Vicarious Causation*

Having traversed the causally efficient world, we find its ends. We find form of all created material. We find one's ability to know and view based in a reduction by reason to a cause that obtains or implies always larger or more explanatory power enacts a correlation. This correlation to the subject indicates that an orientation upon objects is significant in the reckoning of truth. As we have been describing thus far, once a certain threshold of power for explanation is reached, the *method* of explanation itself begins to lose its verity; by locating the point of this failure subjectivity and meaning lose traction as the explanatory model and orientation accounts for the object of the subject itself. At some point meaning and definition fail to account for the truth of

things. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari make notice this point of failure by the shift to calling the excessively meaningful definition *It* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994). *It* is at once present and absent, nowhere identifiable while at the same time intimately involved in the everyday affairs of humans so much so that human beings themselves become mere working material for the magical force which *It* only appears to control; they call this condition *immanence*, nonetheless *It* is the mark of the subject beginning to *assert* its truth instead of the truth informing the subject. Levi Bryant gives us some insight into this conventional approach to philosophy; “when the empiricist arrives at discussions of causality...”, that is, efficient causality, “she thus has no recourse but to discuss claims about causality as claims about *constant conjunctions of events and impressions*” (Bryant, 2011, p.46; emphasis added); and I would add ‘constant’ means a specific type of epistemological lineage.

Obviously though, events still unfold even though we might find that there is no reason in place for them to unfold, or that there are only various reasons, albeit, only hypothesized, speculated and argued about. Subjectivity does not disappear due to semantic argumentation that uses different words and definitions. Rather, having come this far, the subject of the argument shows the nature of it-self: it is *both* a subject and an object; a mere phantom of thinking, as well as indeed something that arises in the universe truly (*here* it is!). Where the reduction by reason to one of those aspects (either the subject or object) begins the process of mechanically reproducing it-self, the subject, in a different light the emergence by reason in the universe is involved in a kind of reproduction which occurs organically, naturally, even mentally and physically. The “still unfolding” is allowed to be noticed for what it is; the reduction *per say* is not incorrect, but a particular orientation upon the object that grants argumentative interpretations which miss the truth. Meaning and definition are put in their proper places and from there reveal a responsibility to move past –or better – leave *It* where it is, to do what it does, and move *with* the name game of the conventional, phenomenal, philosophical method to say this amazing feature of consciousness, of the human being *in* the world, is a remarkable feature of the human being *and* the object.

We find in this the reason which arises at the heart of what we know now as *Nonphilosophy*. Some theorists have accused Laruelle’s gambit of being like a religion. Its intellectual advocates often sound like congregants by their adamant adherence to the deciphering, reiteration and administration of Nonphilosophical definitions. Some Nonphilosophers use Laruelle’s ideas as an accusatory dogmatic liturgy. Those kinds of reactions are best comprehended through the rubric of an orientation upon objects with reference to Triple-O. On one hand, we can see the ideologues who fully embrace the pure transcendence of a discourse which totally is inscribed with meaning to subjective immanence; and on the other, we find the secular skeptics who feel the impinging threat of the same upon their pure subjective freedom. We recognize accusatory reaction and defensiveness for what it is, which is, the coloring of reason to match an unrecognized or denied emotion arising from an offense; the labeling of Nonphilosophy as religious is really an aggressive cover for the Nonphilosophical proposal of *containment*.

Though a larger articulation of the matter is still forthcoming, if there is anything which Laruelle describes so well and so thoroughly, it is the situation of subjective ontological containment. Looking upon, one side sees its beauty, the other its ugliness. Nonetheless, once such emotional judgements are cleared the thorough description of the containment that is subjectivity and the reality of its own containment become less difficult to equate. It is a small step to find thus an object. The French philosopher Ray Brassier neatly summarizes Laruellian Nonphilosophy in his book *Nihil Unbound*: (Brassier, 2007, p. 120; emphasis added), which I quote at length:

*“According to Laruelle, ‘non-philosophy’ is not a negation of philosophy but rather an autonomous theoretical practice (or ‘science’, as Laruelle once liked to call it) which seeks not to supplant or eliminate philosophy but rather to use it as a material and object of study. The ostensible rationale for this non-philosophical usage of philosophy proposed by Laruelle is a theory and practice of philosophy which would expose the latter’s innermost workings and explain its fundamental operations while opening up a realm of conceptual possibility hitherto un-envisaged within philosophy. Thus, Laruelle maintains, non-philosophical practice entails a suspension of the practicing philosopher’s own spontaneous acceptance of the legitimacy of the characteristic problems, methods, and strategies of philosophy...identifying what he takes to be the constrictive essence of philosophical thinking – which he calls ‘decision’ – the better to propose a more inventive theoretical and practical alternative; i.e. a non-philosophical use of decision, which lets the non-philosopher generate new concepts even as it illuminates the functioning of philosophical thinking. This contrast between the inventive and (intellectually) emancipatory potency of non-philosophical thought and the essentially inhibitory and repetitive nature of philosophy is a recurring motif throughout Laruelle’s work.”*

Though Brassier then offers a surgical exegesis of Non-philosophy, the description reprinted here in part is sufficient to convey the notion that Laruelle’s basic push is that *philosophy is an object to be come upon*. If one cannot understand the significance of this proposal, suffice it to say that philosophy is generally understood to not be an object, and that at best, if we were to suggest that philosophy was an object we must be saying it as a mere metaphor or in some other abstract conceptual context than what we usually understand as an object. While the feminist anthropologist Danna Haraway problematizes the ‘metaphoric conceptualization’ default as a paternalistic orientation by her *situated knowledges*, Bryant tends to a quiet side of feminism to make in his description of a ‘flat ontology’ (object ontology) the basis of his *onticology* wherein he poses a solution to his problem of “two highly different cultures” (Bryant, 2011, p.247), even yet as he upholds a philosophical application for Laruelle’s notion. The significance of containment comes complete when we see that the phenomenal subject repeats a correlation of Being and thought that is regularly *philosophical in nature* and that this ‘real nature’ is able to be associated with a mental health along its materialistic, explanatory default under modern science.

The same Nonphilosophical situation applies to the objects of the Counseling universe (‘philosophies of counseling’ that we know of as the counseling theories) but also the object of Counseling we have proposed of the therapeutic relationship. We recall a metaphor which Harman is noted for saying often: objects nest inside one another like Russian Matryoshka dolls, yet always upon opening the next, we find another inside.

## No Relation

Real objects are incapable of direct contact, and indeed may have no effect on one another at all.

- Harman, 2007, *On Vicarious Causation*

Due to the containment that is the object of the subject, no direct contact is ever able to occur. This mandate of existence accounts for every modern worldly problem, but specifically, mental health. Communication between objects is, at best, always only partially completed, and

what is left over is misinterpretation. This alone is enough criteria to identify the subject as a universal object. The contemporary Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has suggested the methodological contradiction inherent of modern subjectivity involved with the universe is a *catastrophe*; that is to say, if there was more than one subject of the universe, they would never interact –and yet they do! The solution to this paradox lays in Harman’s ontology of form; they can never interact *directly*. This is to identify, on one hand, the efficient cause that we have given the proper name of Phenomenal Subject of Ideology, as well on the other hand, the formal cause which identifies that such a subject is indeed an object of the universe. Without one falling into the other (which implies a material efficiency), the two could only interact, as Harman calls it, *vicariously*.

The specific significance for Counseling in this regard is that it is indeed Counseling which is already understood to be involved with the bridging of the basic and widely noticed two aspects of existence, which are, the subject and the object. Yet, in this essay I have addressed the more foundational bridge of truth and reality, that is, substance and material, and then by extension, objects and subjects. At best, an empirical universe of only phenomenal subjectivities is a world which has no substance but that of pure material semantic fantasy, indeed what the whole *parallax gap*, noted by Žižek, is based upon; roughly, the philosophy of the seminal philosopher Georg Hegel combined with the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan. However, regardless of the soundness of such a social-critical psychological philosophy of material, such a phenomenal universe never supplies a route for human beings to ever encounter a substance of anything or anyone, *including themselves*, for all such phenomena are merely figments of symbol and imagination. Something else is required to fill out the truth of the situation wherein fantasy signals a capacity for meaning at all. An object-oriented ontology grants the discipline of Counseling a true philosophical basis from which its apparent, obvious and indeed real therapeutic encounters surely occur and exist as an idea as well as an empirical, physical, and actual truth. The discipline of Counseling thus may gain a true philosophical ground upon which all sound mental health interventions and theoretical postulates may function and exist *truly*.

### Bibliography

- Badiou, A. (2006). *Being and event* (First Edition). Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Brassier, R. (2007). *Nihil unbound: enlightenment and extinction*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan
- Bryant, L.R. (2011). *The democracy of objects*. University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Open Humanities Press
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1994). *What is philosophy*. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, translation. London and New York, Verso
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The philosophical discourse of modernity: Twelve lectures*. Frederick G. Lawrence, translation. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>
- Harman, G. (2007). On vicarious causation. *collapse*. march (2). pp. 187-221
- Harman, G. (2011). *The quadruple objects*. UK, Zero Books
- Harman, G. (2018). *Object oriented ontology: a new theory of everything*. Pelican
- Harman, G. (2020). *Art and objects*. Cambridge, UK & Medford, MA, USA, Polity Press
- Laruelle, F. (2013). *Principles of nonphilosophy*. London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney, Bloomsbury
- Lyotard, J. (1988). *The differend: phrases in dispute*. Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press.

- Satir, V., Banman, J., Gerber, J., and Gomori, M. (1991). *The satir model*. Palo Alto, CA, Science and Behavior Books
- White, M. and Epston, D. (1990). *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*. New York & London, W.W. Norton and Company.
- Wittgenstein, L. (1953). *Philosophical investigations*. New York, The Macmillan Company
- Zizek, S. (2009). *The parallax view*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Zizek, S. (2014). *Event*. Brooklyn & London, Melville House