Weaponising Speculation

Caoimhe Doyle

Published by Punctum Books

Doyle, Caoimhe.
Weaponising Speculation.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/76460

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2652321
A mutant subsists within contemporary continental theory. It endures on ridicule, horror, skepticism, comedy, excess, and groundless speculation. Conspiracy and contingency are at once its detraction and tactic. This mutant tricks unconditionally as an interpreter and paradoxical maker of meaning. It is what I call here: Optimistic Absurdity.

Absurdist philosophy has been haunted by its ancestral considerations as nihilist, meaningless, and devastatingly regressive. My responsibility and intention here is not to deny any of those potent conditions – it is rather to reveal how it can operate as a form of metaphysical infiltration when contemplated under object orientated ontology, continental realism, post-secular occasionalism, and aesthetics. This is what Ray Brassier may define as a ‘speculative opportunity’.

This infiltration is carried out in several ways. Firstly through a use of post-continental logic. What Brassier and Quentin Meillassoux allow through their rigorous use of logic is a zone where absurdity can manifest and operate weirdly[1] within it. Infiltration is also facilitated by a speculative approach to objects, as seen in Harman’s ‘Speculative Realism’, as well as utilising a post-secular interpretation of occasionalism that has use as a structure within my visual art practice[2].

   The use of the word ‘weird’ here defines the attempt within my position to not negate, but naively infiltrate, a subjects inherent weirdness through confronting it as such.

2. Expanded on from 9-15.
However, there are a number of important aspects to clarify before indulging in this weird argument; initially we must state the precise expectation of such a stance, and following that, where we begin our philosophy. The expectation of any interrogation of being should be to achieve some level of real emergence or at least an illuminating mode for such a colossal pursuit. This is why Harman’s Speculative Realism is vital to this discussion; it is through developments in his complex ontology, read through a speculative, nihilistic and optimistically absurd position, that a tangible emergence is allowed to develop. I borrow from his ontology its thrilling reading of object theory to stabilise optimistic absurdity and its structure of comedic-horror as first philosophy.

Harman is also important as he recognises that we require a realist origin for philosophy that is as weird as the structure it wishes to infiltrate: ‘Philosophy... must be weird because reality is weird’ [3]. In an approving consideration of both Harman’s ‘weird’ and ‘naïve’ beginnings [4] and Simon Critchley’s sentiment that the beginning of philosophy ‘... and the beginning of true thinking in general, is disappointment’ [5], it is imperative that an optimistically absurd philosophy begin in the ‘comedically horrific’. A sludge of uncertainty and unsubstantiated hope from which the mutant is evoked. It is through this we must crawl to find our positioning as human beings to many of the constituents of optimistic absurdity: like insincere-sincerity, formal and theoretical paradox, fear, and horror-comedy. The moniker of ‘mutant’ is vital to a nuanced understanding of this idea [6]. Mutants mutate; the changes that occur to their constituent elements during experimentation or tragedy to emerge as a mutant are specific to integral mirrored events within my claim and practice such as situation, relation, and infiltration.

5. Simon Critchley, as cited in Badiou, A. Comments on Simon Critchley’s; Infinitely Demanding (City unknown. Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy, 2007), 11.

“Harman’s object orientated ontology proposes that ‘it is language, in particular metaphor, which offers the path of least resistance to the ‘things themselves’.”
Indeed our relation to real, or tangible objects of the world, and relation as a theme are quite necessary to this discussion. That is where the importance of post-secular occasionalism within contemporary theory lies. There needs to be a reasonably clear formulation for mutation and in some way the structures of post-secular occasionalism frame it in a way that doesn’t indulge the sentimentality of secularism or the seemingly phantom belief structures held in the writings of the transcendentalists. It is through an occasionalist structure that we will look at the formal functioning of my own art objects in the context of object orientated metaphysics by discussing the denial of privileged human access to the world as an insightful or reasonable position of object orientated philosophy. For example: the kind of human centered enlightenment philosophy facilitated in Kant’s ‘Transcendental Being’ – the tradition that Quentin Meillassoux terms Correlationism [7].

Another central problem for optimistic absurdity is its tendency to fail and to fail immediately. For if an artwork is made to fail, and fails accordingly, failure cannot be the central point if we are to gain any real emergence or conduct a critical discussion around it. Failure within my practice could be followed through many portals: as the physical impossibility of a detergent tablet surviving intact within the water of an isolation tank, the theoretical failure of a sea made out of sugar, or the metaphysical failure of a yoga mat to achieve a humanly conceivable ‘higher knowledge’. It is in direct consideration of my practice that we will debate the helpfulness of failure, the inability for human interaction with objects and the ‘stuckness’ and exclusion of the human in the relation to the object. This democratisation of objects and humans within the work is the preeminent affinity of object orientated philosophy’s speculations and the practical implications for the art object [8].

For when the human is removed from the centre of the orbit of the theory they have enabled, and the object takes its place, we are presented with a philosophy unbalanced, with optimistic possibilities for a spectacular contingency. By enacting the philosophy of Harman, Meillassoux, and Brassier, through optimistically absurd gestures and post-continental logic, we momentarily transfer the comedic-horror of our human metaphysics to the object until it emerges anew – a tricky mutant, on groundless ground.

Stuckness | The Comedic-Horrific Object as Metaphysic

Humour functions by exploiting the gap between being a body and having a body, between – let us say – the physical and metaphysical aspects of being human. What makes us laugh, I would wager, is the return of the physical into the metaphysical, where the pretended tragical sublimity of the human collapses into a comic ridiculousness which is perhaps even more tragic [9].

What Simon Critchley so distinctly points out for us here, is the phenomenological link between the comedic and the horrific within lived human experience. Where a human’s

  “...the central notion of modern philosophy since Kant seems to be that of correlationism. By ‘correlationism’ we mean the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other. We will henceforth call correlationism any current of thought which maintains the unsurpassable character of the correlation so defined. Consequently, it becomes possible to say that every philosophy which disavows naïve realism has become a variant of correlationism.”

  Graham Harman’s brief list of object-orientated rules about objects:

  1: Relative size does not matter: an atom is no more an object than a skyscraper.
  2: Simplicity does not matter: an electron is no more an object than a piano.
  3: Durability does not matter: a soul is no more an object than cotton candy.
  4: Naturalness does not matter: helium is no more an object than plutonium.
  5: Reality does not matter: mountains are no more objects than hallucinated mountains.


knowledge about life and death are diluted and concurrently strengthened by their suppositions on experience while on the verge of both. What the comedian Tommy Tiernan described as ‘...the feeling of running down a hill that was a bit too steep for you, and you could fall over at any moment, but you couldn’t stop laughing’ [10]. It is around this idea that we can begin to construct an objective for our use of objects as metaphysics. As I have just stated, the central aim of most object orientated ontologies is the realisation of a real emergence earned through a philosophical, aesthetic [11] and political [12] engagement with objects [both real and imaginary]. My ambition here is no different to where I am trying to carry out a somewhat partial realist encounter with specific objects along with theories of access, agency, contingency, spirituality and secularism within post-continental and absurdist philosophy, in order to assess their ability for true emergence in conjunction with ‘object’.

The objects we consider here to be comedic-horrific form the integral component of this discussion. It is my position that we are hypothetically, and in some cases literally, stuck at objects – that the human is incapable of escaping not only the limitations of her own corporeal form and thought, but is also incapable of finding any metaphysics [human or object] through objects. Quentin Meillassoux describes this position stating:

... any philosopher who acknowledges the legitimacy of the transcendental revolution – any philosopher who sees himself as ‘post-critical’ rather than as a dogmatist – will maintain that it is naïve to think we are able to think something – even if it be a mathematical determination of the object – while abstracting from the fact that it is invariably we who are thinking that something.[13]

To approach such a subject with comedic absurdity might be seen to negate the grim certainty of death and unrealised metaphysical transcendence; however it is the very opposite. The comedy and seeming ridiculousness of objects is their, and our, true horror. Although, it is important to mention that this comic-horror, which seems to emerge in the sublimity of objects, may be the closest we can come to an aesthetic understanding of what metaphysics can mean for contemporary object theory and for the art object itself. The reasoning behind discussing this claim through art, when art is arguably no more absurd than a joke, is relatively straightforward. Contemporary art contains the capability to explore its own absurd condition through engagement with other absurd centres of philosophy: that of the human and the object. It is also the antagonist of this particular argument as a lot of art can’t be conceived of without relation. Which makes it eminently problematic and an ideal host.

So why the inclusion of aesthetics and art – and in what way can they create a dialogue capable of emergence through objects? I will try answer this in two parts. Firstly, I echo Jean-Luc Nancy’s sentiment that: ‘The image is the obviousness of the invisible’ [14]. There is an unrealised or subterranean level to objects that are dulled in the vastness of global visual culture. In certain cases, when they are viewed as art objects, or curated as such, this concealed area of objects can be drawn from by theory and a more knowingly engaged level of interaction by its viewers to facilitate a remarkably horrific and elating experience. Put simply: objects are removed momentarily from us because there has been a shift in their use or situation. Secondly, it is the traditional surrounding in which we usually view contemporary art that heightens this sought contingency: the gallery. The gallery can act as a crossroads, as an interpreter of meaning, but most importantly for our objects, it can be amoral – a space of unlimited intellectual regression, a bedlam of confusion, and a downright messer of concepts and things [15]. All of these qualities that are gonna be said here cannot be taken and used in the real world. It’s like when you’re having sex with your girl friend and as part of the process to liven the whole thing up for the pair of you, you roar out ‘Go on! You big fuckin’ hewer ye!’ She is not allowed to come up for the pair of you, you roar out ‘Go on!’. I would like you to think of this gig as the opposite of mass. Somewhere we can come in the darkness and just fuckin’ let go for a little while. I am concerned with what is funny, and sometimes what is funny is not clever, sometimes what is funny is crude and it’s cock and cunt and balls – but it’s funny. It is funny.”

11. Graham Harman, Vicarious Causation Collapse II (Falmouth, [UK]: Urbanomic, 2007), 221.
15. Tommy Tiernan: Ok Baby [2007] [DVD] Ireland.
McMahon, Y. Power Pictures Productions [1minute 7seconds onwards].
“What’s gonna happen here...it cannot be used in the real world...There are no rules. We’re not concerned with political correctness or not offending anybody...The things
are vital to enabling the contingency of the objects within it. Various stand-up comedians address the idea of a similar place, in this case the stage, as a platform for behaviour with the intention of subversion of morals, expectation, humour and reality. A place where the formal appearance and interaction with such a landscape in a person’s mind are placed against the entirety of the universe and serves only to unravel the presumption of any regularity – be it art historical, phenomenological relation, or any supposedly lived context. To quote Tommy Tiernan: ‘Nobody knows we’re here... so let’s wreck the joint!’ [16]

Agency & Tragedy | Manmade Objects and Situations

There are two very real things I wish to pursue in order to elaborate on how objects, speculation, and comedic-horror bleed into each other to create an atmosphere for this proposed optimistic absurdity: manmade objects and horrific situations.

The reasoning behind manmade as opposed to natural objects is quite simple. In considering natural objects we would be obliged to delve deep into the history of the universe and overflowing vats of theology before enabling our discussion to move to where it needs to be. Also, the idea of having a closer agency to the objects we create, and not merely acting as a liberated drone for any god or deity, is quite vital. Agency is also important in light of Critchley’s concise study that ‘All tragedy is concerned with partial agency in a situation’ [17]. This may seem obvious but is never the less crucial. For the ‘new-age’ or ‘spiritual’ objects, as well as the coyly juxtaposed objects depicted and mimicked within my practice, can be accused of illustrating the tragedy in our agency, and the possibility of its horror. This horror seems to be the result of viewing objects that were engineered in, and presented to, the world, whilst concurrently having an ‘un-getability’, what Harman would term their ‘receding nature’. It is through the agency in tragedy, and thus the tragedy in our failure, that we can seize understanding of the objects which we create and produce our platform for considering the optimistically absurd object. As Harman notes: ‘When objects fail us, we experience a negation of their accessible contours and become aware that the object exceeds all that we grasp of it’ [18].

It is this kind of stuckness at objects that transfers into the human situational realm, especially through comedy, that allows us to better understand this comic-horror. A good example of this would be comedian Stewart Lee’s recollection of the aftermath of misguided grief around London in the wake of Princess Diana’s death. Lee recalls walking around the different royal landmarks and Buckingham Palace seeing the huge amount of flowers and tributes laid at the gates in memorial. In this moment of contemplation and sadness he notices a life-size inflatable of E.T. – the extraterrestrial from the seminal Spielberg film. At once this somber regaling by Lee erupts into a recollection of shock and confusion. All of his logic fails him in the object’s presence. But what he done next exemplified the ability of absurdist-humour to infiltrate the mourner’s seemingly impenetrable logic. Lee tediously imagines the couple waking that morning and hearing news of Diana’s death. He imagines the shock that watered their eyes and the disbelief dulling their thoughts. The eventual action that the husband takes, in Lee’s mind, is suggesting they get the giant E.T. inflatable out to place at the gates of her home [19]. What Lee plays out in this skit has as much to do with optimistic absurdity as it does with his personal beliefs on zealous public grief. He works back from the situation, considering the object, through the speculative logic of what may have brought it there. In this encounter with the fundamental paradox of logic, he justifies the use of logic in the weird arena of the comic, and exposes...
the groundless ground on which our optimistic absurdity can be built [20]. It is what Meillassoux explained through his version of correlationism in discussing absolutes:

... the strong model of correlationism can be summed up in the following thesis: it is unthinkable that the unthinkable be impossible. I cannot provide a rational ground for the absolute impossibility of a contradictory reality, or for the nothingness of all things, even if the meaning of these terms remains indeterminate. Accordingly, facticity entails a specific and rather remarkable consequence: it becomes rationally illegitimate to disqualify irrational discourses about the absolute on the pretext of their irrationality. [21]

What I have temporarily concluded here is that objects seem to recede into a shadow realm beyond the reaches of human understanding or apprehension [22]. The horrific lack in our knowledge, experienced in transcendental and phenomenological understanding of objects as well as our agency in object production, plays a pivotal role in allowing the weird to intervene with devastating implications for a human metaphysics through objects. From this we must establish how we can utilise all of the above elements into an effective object based discourse. I believe that the optimistically absurd art object can facilitate this discussion while creating more nuanced readings through its aesthetic conditions. What Nancy set forth as the ‘obviousness of the invisible’.

The Absurd Object Understood Through Post-Secular Occasionalism
To contribute to a defense of optimistic absurdity as a first philosophy, and an emergent paradigm for art making, I must first base this proposition in a tangible real.

A good place to launch such a discourse is around occasionalism [23]. A central theme to both theology and continental philosophy. If we take a basic description from Islam of how occasionalism might operate we can move on to an optimistically absurd interpretation of it. Islamic occasionalism considers anything that may happen between two entities, for example: fire burning cotton without the direct influence of God to be blasphemous. Here we have the traditional religious interpretation of occasionalism. With this in mind, let us describe what the absurdist version of this would entail [24].

Within my practice, when I place an object within another object’s realm of purported or suggested speculative transcendence I am at once continuing a possibility for emergence for the objects ‘within themselves’; creating the possibility for emergence within the breakdown of relation of the objects to each other – under a human understanding. We are only privy to one spectacle (usually sad and imbecilic one) but speculating on another, maybe a sublime transcendence or wobbly failure, that we will continue to discuss using the ‘relatable’ limits of human language, experience, sense and thought. We will still converse and deconstruct an ‘object version’ of metaphysics with a human notion of metaphysics. We will never find out if a teabag or detergent tablet find transcendence within a waste bin or Zen garden, because we continually use logic inappropriately. However, this is not an outright rejection of logic in the slightest. It is a way of interacting with the inherent paradoxes of its use in the correlationist tradition - within the quest for emergence. As Nietzsche proclaimed: ‘The irrationality of a thing is no argument against its existence, rather a condition of it’ [25].

20. A member of the audience clarified that the doll was in fact Alf, from the American TV series of the same name [Alien Life Force], Ibid.
23. The doctrine ascribing the connection between mental and bodily events to the continuing intervention of God.

suggestion within my work is that even if a teabag had its own version of metaphysics – what if it encounters the same situation as humanity? A break down at the impenetrability, incompleteness, and impossibility of itself which had the facility to do no more than make lukewarm tea from its porous form.

If we take Harman’s call for a leveling of the echelons of philosophical centrality [26] – his call for an engagement with the reality of the objects, without the hangover from the dominance of Enlightenment thought, and place the object on the same pedestal of importance as the Transcendental Being – we have initiated the first step of an absurdist occasionalism. Within my practice, that is literally what is being proposed. Objects, particularly new-age and ‘spiritual objects’, that are purported to have metaphysical outcomes for their human users are mimicked and engaged with other objects. The suggestion being that since we are seemingly so spiritually and technically developed as human beings to induce a metaphysics through an object, that a reasonable speculation might be that an object could inhabit its own metaphysics through another object – essentially an experience not actively involving humans and without human knowledge if it was a failure for the objects in question. What I am attempting to do here is to develop on the theorists of the absurd who have noticed the importance for occasionalism in understanding the emergent possibilities of absurdity. Albert Camus seen the possibility in absurdity’s utilisation of occasionalism for emergence when he wrote: ‘The absurd, which is the metaphysical state of the conscious man, does not lead to God. Perhaps this notion will become clear if I risk the shocking statement: the absurd is sin without God’ [27]. This somewhat reflects a realist absurdity that my work should emphasise – a stuckness at objects without a saviour or even a facilitation to induce meaning.

This practice of excluding the human from the quest for transcendence, and in some instances damming the object to quite possibly the shittiest and remarkably un-profound experience of its existence, is not merely to maintain the thesis that there is no ‘God’ or ‘no absolute’. But it functions as a discussion about how we imbue objects with our sensibilities and senses – thus negating the opportunity to encounter objects in terms of their actual reality. This is the distorting and fumbling tendency that Harman termed the ‘Overmining and Undermining’ of objects in the Kantian tradition [28]. This must be what Brassier rightly asserts to be the ‘speculative opportunity’ for radical logic and what Paul Ennis points out about Harman’s stance; the need for philosophical, and I would assume aesthetic, scrutiny of the paradoxical relationship between object and object:

Harman argues that for the most part we falsely ascribe human notions into objects: ‘We distort when we see, and distort when we use’. The true test of a metaphysical realism about objects is to deduce how objects must interact with each other beginning only with the basic, inevitably anthropocentrically inflected, human insight into object-object iteration. This is not a failure in ‘purely’ seeing objects, or an embargo on reason in the vein of finitude, but simply the starting point of a first science of objects...

Object Within Post-Secular Occasionalism | Object, Thought & Human Access

Allow me to state clearly what is at stake in the claim that an aesthetically-based optimistic absurdity can act as an infiltrator for contingency in contemporary theory – if we take into account the works tendency, and sometime objective, to fail. Failure in this case being either an inadequacy in providing a humanly accessible process of emergence – or a non-fulfilment of a touchable, fully livable, state pertained by the process’ theoretically achieved transcendence. Addressing this theory and the work through a post-secular occasionalism, we can begin to confront the meaning of these problems.

When working with objects in an aesthetic context the agenda of the process is to push the idea of a non-secular, object facilitated, metaphysical interaction between objects. For this reason I tend to work with objects or ‘object situations’ that have some sort of vague transcendent intention that can never be fully dismissed or realised; Tank-Isolation techniques, Zen gardens, yoga, eastern meditation etc. This is important because it faces up to not only the idea of aesthetics as a speculative means for metaphysics [30] but also the


27. Harman, The Quadruple Object, 7–19

Harman’s ‘Overmining’ is defined as the empiricist model [seen in Hume] that objects of experience are nothing but bundles of qualities under nicknames for things; the word “apple” is merely a collective nickname for a series of qualities linked to it: red, sweet cold etc. What exists are
non-religious and realist interpretation of occasionalism that links the three elements of this unholy trinity; object, thought, and human access to the world in the quest for a tangible absolute. Alain Badiou describes this gesture as allowing “...thought to be destined towards the absolute once more, rather than towards those partial fragments and relations in which we complacently luxuriate while the ‘return to the religious’ provides us with a fictitious supplement of spirituality” [31].

As an example of how failure for human access to a given work is not an absolute failure – consider I am a destiny 2012 [32]. We are presented with a new-age situation; that of the isolation tank and its user. These positions are played out by a gel detergent tablet (user) and a waste bin filled with salt-water and illuminated from within by a pond light (tank). As the light spills from the tank over the floor, lighting the path potentially taken by the tablet into the ‘isolation tank’, it also highlights the tablets thin and dissolvable skin – reminding us if the tablet chose to seek a metaphysics of mind and/or body through an isolation session in the waste bin – the materiality and occasionalist catch that will break it down to produce an underwhelming bluish sludge. What is happening here between one material or ‘simple’ object, as Harman would call it, and another is crucial to our human admittance of a failed speculative transcendence through objects. The real horror of the situation being that the objects, which were seemingly the tools for experimentation, are the sole bearers of their potential. This reveals the comedic-horror of the situation which Paul Klee describes as: ‘Les choses me regardent’.

It’s no longer the ego that regards objects in the world and makes epistemic claims about them – or in Husserl’s sense that I could manipulate those things for my use, like Heidegger with his hammer. Instead, it is an experience when things turn and look at me, when as Paul Klee says ‘things look at me’... This is the reversal of intentionality in the experience... [33]

We become stuck at the object as a visual or empirically provable portal of metaphysics. Stuck at the point of not being the observer within this process but the observed. Essentially we become lodged at the simplicity and inadequacy of our experience through objects; even stcker. It seems we can speculate on the potential of a detergent tablet’s version of the real, metaphysics, empiricism, and thought, in a human mode or structure. This is an underlying argument against my interpretation of Speculative Realism (and indeed the use of SR in visual culture in general) in the humble announcement of optimistic absurdity; ‘For how is one to legitimate the assertion that something subsists beyond our representations when one has already insisted that this beyond is radically inaccessible to thought?’ [34] [35]. Responding to this I hold a position close to Brassier’s critique of Meillassoux’s version of facticity and his necessity of contingency;

... the reaffirmation of facticity in the attempt to deny its necessity absolutizes it as something which is a necessary property of existence in-itself, rather than a contingent feature of our representation of existence. In doing so it unwittingly confirms the strong interpretation of the principle: it is not just a contingent fact that contingent entities exist; it is an absolute necessity. [36]

Therefore this occasionalist trinity of object, thought and human access or in-access, inherently contain the conditions for an optimistically absurd emergence. Here, emergence is not denied by the dead end traditionally provided by the logic of facticity (that usually makes room for the dogmatism of the mystical to flourish) [37] and our absurd reality. Instead it is viewed optimistically as something that is provided and discovered in the very conditions

individual impressions, ultimately in the form of tiny pixels of experience that we weave together habitually to form into larger units. ‘Undermining’ is determined to be a collection of strategies dealing with objects [philosophies of difference, monism, modern day materialism etc.] that undermine the objects in question by stating that ‘only what is basic can be real’ or that objects are only a crust of aggregates that are produced by the underlying flux that sustains them.

29. Harman, Vicarious Causation, 221.
30. Alain Badiou in After Finitude, viii.
33. Meillassoux, After Finitude, 38.
34. Ibid, 3, 4. (Preceding position that “...we cannot know any thing that would be beyond our relation to the world.”)
36. Ibid, 73.
of our being, extinction, reality, and our speculative reality of objects. Our failure at the essence of our condition is the reasoning that we must utilise in order to overcome it – to re-encounter the absurdity of philosophy which uses humanity as its heart and ransack our understanding of logic in the Copernican sense.

**Orbit of Impotence**

The absurd impenetrability of objects that cohabit our universe remain that: impenetrable. But they can be infiltrated. This language may seem contradictory; and it is. This however this is the method of the mutant. To qualify such a position the mutant submerges itself within the comedically-horrific paradox and radical instability at the heart of reason; to ransack logic for its weirdness which has traditionally escaped scrutiny in correlationism. It is what Meillassoux noted as transcendentalism’s depth when he wrote: ‘The virtue in transcendentalism does not lie in rendering realism illusory, but in rendering it astonishing, i.e. apparently unthinkable, yet true, and hence eminently problematic’ [38]. These problems must be encountered with the weirdness and radical logic that we see within them, and ourselves, in order to deny negation of our first responsibility to metaphysics – emergence.

The problems we face in the implementation of optimistic absurdity as first philosophy come through two very obvious yet fundamental doubts. On one hand, there is a real and shared concern that objects, especially objects of art, under such a theory might be raised to a spiritual or mystical level. Optimistic absurdities response to this is twofold. In an optimistic reading of this the qualities ascribed to the spiritual or mystical are present. But they are present in the object in-itself and not in the ‘Overmining’/‘Undermining’ discourses and assumptions taken up and continued in Kantian tradition [39].

Finally, to address the other self-imposed anxiety of optimistic absurdity: failure. Our mutant sees the idea of failure to be misappropriated in its use in the qualifying of a metaphysics. Failure is approached in optimistic absurdity as necessary rather than necessarily negative. This is how we begin our philosophy in the negative, lack, disappointment or naïveté. It is seen as an opportunity for speculation and engagement with what it means to fail at such a task as metaphysics or to get stuck at a hippy’s bead curtain, or the Hadron Collider [41]. Failure, in the case of our mutant, is not failure of a given metaphysical theory – but a valuable and viable position in itself.

The most important object here however is our mutant. Going forward this mutant must be more self descriptive, transparent, dense, complex, shadowy, criminal, real, monstrous, horrific, penetratingly doubtful, fictitious and comic, than the objects through which it emerges. With this mutant as our starting point we can infiltrate the hallucinated mountain and begin to interrogate the reality of everything else.

---

40. Slavoj Žižek, *Wake Up and Smell The Apocalypse* (2010), As cited in L. Else. [Web Article]. accessed September 25 2012 Available at: http://www.newscientist.com/article/ mg20727751.100-slavoj-zizek-wake-up-and-smell-the-apocalypse.html Website: www.newscientist.com “There is an old philosophical idea about God being stupid and crazy, not finishing his creation. The idea is that God (but the point is to think about this without invoking God), when he created the world, made a crucial mistake by saying, ‘Humans are too stupid to progress beyond the atom, so I will not specify both the position and the velocity of the atom.’ What if reality itself is rather like a computer game where what goes on inside houses has not been programmed because it was not needed in the game? What if it is, in some sense, incomplete?”