# Triptych

By Muindi Fanuel Muindi

*for ylfa*

# CONTENTS

"It is well known that the total book is as much Leibniz's dream as Mallarmé's, even though they never stop working in fragments. Our error is in believing that they did not succeed in their wishes: they make this unique book perfectly, the book of monads, in letters and little circumstantial pieces that could sustain as many dispersions as combinations."

Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold*

"… the important thing above all is not to understand, the important thing is to take on the rhythm of a given man, a given writer, a given philosopher…"

Gilles Deleuze, Cours Vincennes à Saint-Denis: 'On Kant', 1978

# Whither, Otherwise

No nation, race nor tribe, no bonds of common kind,
No assignation shared, no custom yet contrived
Nor e'er to come, no place, in spite
Of birth, do I esteem.
Belonging? Fie! To cultivate
A will to deviate,

Examine and explode! Aye! A will to deviate,
Except myself from kith and kind—
To dare! To cultivate
A sense and discourse bold, contrived,
Remorseless, strange!  Esteem,
Authority, returns: when means conforming, spite;

When means transforming, joy! In spite
Of cast, to deviate—
No lot endure in peace lest I succumb. Esteem,
Authority, returns employ as means to cut unkind,
Lethargic, timid chaff. Contrive
As foe who'd cultivate

A norm, as friend who'd cultivate
Anomalies. To spite
The glut of common goods—expenditures contrived
As rare, auratic works commission! Deviate!
Announce myself uncommon kind,
Exceptional! Esteem

From vicious circles woo; from virtue's thralls, esteem
Eschew for rancor. Cultivate
An oddity, the kind
Of monster righteous foils would spite:
A creature deviate,
A villain challenging, a menace queer. Contrive

To grasp this horror's truth. Contrive
To win this fiend's esteem.
Conspire together, deviates:
Ally to cultivate
Yet more exceptions brave who agitate and spite
The vulgar. Misanthrope am I? A wretched kind?

—For I contrive to cultivate
A soul's esteem or spite
As spur to deviate from common kind.

I.

Forested: niches
plenty, chorus dissonant.
Call it madness?

II.

Mannerly, yielding—
fields of grain as far as the
eye can see—a yawn.

III.

Spectators, many,
heeded; beasts, untamable,
trapped, menageried.

IV.

Bristlecones—weathered,
twisted, ancients! Wonder at
time's asymmetry!

V.

Mental disorders
cataloged; flock ravagers
tagged for culling.

VI.

*Noumena:* vampire
squids from Hell—the quarry of
giant grenadiers.

VII.

*Things-in-themselves:* grim
alpine raptors scavenging,
spurning meat for bone.

VIII.

Inwardness thaws; blooms
action, passion! Tundra in
hues resplendent!

IX.

Trial by fire
sought for, craved. Shoots burgeoning.
Blessed, charred soils!

X.

Feraled domestics,
pigeons, rats—the demagogue's
quirks and foibles nag.

XI.

Carnage! Hyaenas
bicker, jostle—ravenous.
Feast on my darlings!

XII.

Trauma transforms us—
mass extinction, stimulus—
species radiate.

7

## I. Proem

Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
Excrescences of culture, decadence,
  Like cocksure pheasants' feathers, proudly donn'd.
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
From foul, excess outgrowths, beauty dawn'd—
  Came plumage, warbles, wattles—exquisite!
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.
Through excrescence of culture, decadence,
  The necessary, mock'd—with not, fared more.
  When life, from seas, surfac'd, wriggl'd ashore,
    Excrescences found purposes profound:
    Moisture retain'd, 'came limbs that trod the ground.
      "Were not all creatures un-submerg'd done for?"
      The necessary, mock'd—with not, fared more!

## II. To Samuel Beckett

The necessary, mock'd—with not, fair'd more:
No plot, no characters, no setting fix'd—
  And yet the heartstrings pull'd, the affects sure!
The necessary, mock'd—with not, fair'd more:
Just larval subjects, objects *sous rature*,
  A narrative as tangible as mist.
The necessary, mock'd—with not, fair'd more.
No plot, no characters, no setting fix'd,
  No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds—
  Digressive to no end, no denouement.
    With strange attractors, fractal dynamics,
    Keen patterned chaos, yet dealt less pricks than kicks.
      Nohow on, the fizzles correspond!
      No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds!

## III. To Friedrich Nietzsche (for Jon)

No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds!
The will to power, sickness unto life—
  A pregnancy from which a mutant spawn'd.
No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds!
The overman: forebear *and* prodigal son—
  Ne'er yet the species next; 'strang'd prototype.
No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds!
The will to power, sickness unto life—
  Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.
  Untimely ones, no lineage hing'd upon—
    Living proof of danger's immanence;
    Against their thriving, all establishments.
      Firstlings *and* endlings, thus, their *sine qua non*—
      Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.

## IV. To James Joyce

Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond:
A fugue of plots and puns clanging a round—
  A sounding follow up to Moll's run-ons.
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
A hypertrophied, florid lexicon—
  Babbling abundance, dialects confound.
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
A fugue of plots and puns clanging a round.
The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!
  Harold, Anna, Issy, Shem and Shaun—
    The scandals that embroil'd them unteas'd
    From Anna's gramme—such plurabilities—
      Sign'd each a counterplotted pantheon.
      The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!

## V. To Emily Brontë (for ylfa)

The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!
What joys belied by spleen from Nelly Dean!
  She ne'er spoke straight of sins she'd have forgone.
The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!
Beneath the downy heaths they moan anon—
  Ruder, stranger productions, scenes obscene.
The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!
What joys belied by spleen from Nelly Dean!
  Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd!
  An abject love—intensity assured!
   Cathy bewill'd 'midst Heath—within, without,
   With him whither, *this* Other, for, no doubt,
    Upon the Craggs, above the Heights, recurr'd—
    Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd.

## VI. To Anaïs Nin

Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd;
Her days plotted—untold trajectories,
  Accretions, evolutions, en-contours.
Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd;
Her diaries, a foam of *mémoires pure*,
  Of base matter and lived intensities.
Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd;
Her days plotted—untold trajectories—
  Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.
  Regard, her phase portraits of liaisons,
   Interior crises, blue sky catastrophes,
   Attractors merg'd and Eros, dystheity
    Of seduction, englamour'd, champion'd!
    Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.

## VII. To Georges Bataille

Sufficiency disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
Economiz'd—revel'd in luxury!
  Austerity, for shame, an excess unreckon'd!
Sufficiency disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
While sov'reigns hail the sumptuous, thralls and bonds
  Err, pit utility 'gainst penury.
Sufficiency disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
Economiz'd—revel'd in luxury!
  The necessary mock'd—with not, fared more!
  A riddle for those who champion the poor,
   Play foils to rakes, and fetishize basic needs:
   *Your justice would profligacy impede?*
    *With Maxwell's demon have you curried favor?*
    The necessary mock'd—with not, fared more!

## VIII. To Thelonious Monk

The necessary, mock'd—with not, fair'd more.
Bad chops—with baffling, flat, rattling attacks,
  Notes crush'd and wraith'd at varying odds—the bettor!
The necessary mocked—with not, fair'd more;
Chance discords return'd, then underscor'd, then call'd for—
  "A Jabberwocky'd jazz?" His ditties wisecrack'd.
The necessary, mocked—with not, fair'd more.
Bad chops—with baffling, flat, rattling attacks,
  Join'd minimal and maximal extremes,
  Contingencies composed into his themes
   Do traces of embodiment lay bare—
   Turns kinesthetic and melodic cohere.
    A neighbor glanc'd and horses chang'd midstream!
    Join'd minimal and maximal extremes.

## IX. To Marcel Duchamp

Join'd minimal and maximal extremes:
Creator 'gainst spectator—queer kind of chess.
　Check—*mise en scène!* And mate—*mise en abyme!*
Join'd minimal and maximal extremes:
The art—the fossils kept safe in museums;
　The life of the artist—the danger in the flesh.
Join'd minimal and maximal extremes:
Creator 'gainst spectator—queer kind of chess.
　No rudiments, but supplements supreme—
　*To wit*: a counter-signifying regime,
　　Networks of stoppages that free the play of signs.
　　Is not this game De Quincey's perfect crime—
　　　The murder of the real? Devious, his scheme:
　　　No rudiments, but supplements supreme.

## X. To Jean Dubuffet

No rudiments, but supplements supreme!
Assembl'd leftovers—sundry odds and ends
　Forag'd, scaveng'd, their usage unforeseen.
No rudiments, but supplements supreme!
Culture's offal through bricolage beseem'd
　With natures excrements, cursed dividends.
No rudiments, but supplements supreme!
Assembl'd leftovers—sundry odds and ends,
　Interiors formless, boundaries baroque,
　Objects impervious to common tropes,
　　Affinity and enmity set free,
　　And rife 'tempts at decipherment stymied.
　　　*Art brut*, a private language approach'd—
　　　Interiors formless, boundaries baroque.

## XI. To Maya Deren (for Cáit)

Interiors formless, boundaries baroque—
Discern'd not time as 'twas, but time as 'twas not—
　Grasp'd time as it becomes, from space unyok'd.
Interiors formless, boundaries baroque—
When graph'd—shots, tangent curves; cuts, asymptotes;
　Each montage, an infinity traversed in thought.
Interiors formless, boundaries baroque—
Discern'd not time as 'twas, but time as 'twas not,
　Black stars and singularities, invok'd—
　The regions, objects, space-times which connote
　　Durations, rituals. Miscalculations
　　Of origins expos'd in cogitations,
　　　Obsessions, compulsions—forlorn hopes.
　　　Black stars and singularities, invok'd.

## XII. To J. Robert Oppenheimer

Black stars and singularities, invok'd.
Probed nature like a gnostic thaumaturge—
　Enigmas, his untimely masterstrokes.
Black stars and singularities, invok'd.
The Desert Fathers of Big Science, convok'd,
　Batter'd the heart or matter—the Gadget, a scourge!
Black stars and singularities, invok'd.
Probed nature like a gnostic thaumaturge—
　The universe implod'd at its seams,
　The impermeable became a porous screen,
　　Came Death to the World, and all our woe—
　　Archontes and Demiurge triumphant, aglow!
　　　At Trinity, Heimarmene redeem'd—
　　　The universe implod'd at its seams.

## XIII. To Gertrude Stein

The universe implod'd at its seems—
For she suppos'd that grammar 'ploy'd invention,
    Came conjugation 'fore declension—verbs teem'd.
The universe, implod'd, as it seems,
Explod'd, as it means, transplod'd, meme'd—
    Gush'd floating signifiers; referents, punn'd.
The universe, implod'd, at its seems—
For she suppos'd that grammar 'ploy'd invention,
    Join'd minimal and maximal extremes,
    The slightest differences, the unforeseen,
        Found she, repeating things insistently.
        She then insist'd things incessantly,
            And incessant difference in insistence glean'd,
            Join'd minimal and maximal extremes.

## XIV. To the Marquis de Sade

Join'd minimal and maximal extremes:
Not faith in reason—an acute passion for it!
    The boudoir o'er the towers of academe,
Join'd minimal and maximal extremes.
Freethinking—eroticiz'd by libertines—
    When institutionaliz'd 'came impotent.
Join'd minimal and maximal extremes:
Not faith in reason—an acute passion for it!
    Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
    With morals there could be no rapprochement.
        Hailed apathy—virulent, pernicious, cruel—
        For he saw in this affliction reason's fuel,
            And reason enjoy'd to excess *au fond*.
            Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.

## XV. Recapitulation

Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
The necessary, mock'd—with not, fare'd more.
    No in-betweens: aboves, belows, beyonds!
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond;
The necessary, mock'd—from fate, abscond!
    Becomings, definite; beings, obscur'd.
Sufficiency, disdain'd—of surfeit, fond.
The necessary, mock'd—with not, fair'd more:
    Join'd minimal and maximal extremes,
        No rudiments, but supplements supreme,
            Interiors formless, boundaries baroque,
            Black stars and singularities, invok'd
                The universe implod'd at its seams,
                Join'd minimal and maximal extremes.

## II.

Instrumental reason? An affectation!
Matters of fact? Fine
Subterfuges, means to avert predation—

Some rough beast, some monstrous aberration
Sighted in outline!
Instrumental reason? An affectation!

Our keen questions, poisonous cogitations
Mimicked—burlesque signs,
Subterfuges, means to avert predation!

Progress trap—great maw of that sphinx, Stagnation—
Cavernous, sighing.
Instrumental reason? An affectation!

Dazed Stagnation, fearing transvaluation,
Shrinks at their droll mimes,
Subterfuges, means to avert predation.

Sphinx! Loathe host vessel for our transformations!
Shrug their disguise! Dine!
Instrumental reason? An affectation,
Subterfuge—a means to avert predation!

## I.

Toast the pyrrhic triumph of reason, proud fiends!
For afore our fetish for reason marked us,
Wanton fantasts driven to doubt. — *Out, damned spot,*
*Craving to query!*

For afore our fetish for reason marked us;
Now, my weyward foulers, behold! Though wanting
Cravings to query,
Bores yet feign a ratiocinative stance!

Yes! My weyward foulers, behold! Though wanting
Our cruel conscience, genius for skepticism,
Boors yet feign a ratiocinative stance!
Threatened, they bristle—

Our cruel conscience, genius for skepticism,
Simulated crudely to ward off danger.
Threatened, they bristle;
Constant danger, constant their bristling.

## III.

Riddles borne—our larval and pupal stages—
*Virulent phages!*

Riddles passed—our winged imagos molt free—
*Dipterous lovelies!*

She withstands our parasitism sorely—
*Costlies, such glories!*

Cruel sphinx, cursed to find us amongst your quarry —
Toast to you who bears us in rank excrescence!
Gorged, recline in languorous convalescence!
*Virulent phages! Dipterous lovelies! Costlies, such glories!*

17

# Solutions for Postmodern Living

*3 June 2017*

I have two great loves in my life: there is philosophy and there is you. You two have encountered one another often enough and I often speak to each of you of the other, but you two haven't gotten together of your own accord in order to truly get to know one another. It pains me to find that, despite the fact that my love for each of you is so overwhelming, you two don't have much of a relationship with each other. I am determined, however, to bring you two together, not just for my own sake, but for each other's sake. For I am certain that, once you two have gotten to know each other, you two will become magnificent friends. And who better to bring you two together than I, the one person who loves you both so deeply.

So, philosophy, allow me to formally introduce you to Y.

Y., allow me to formally introduce you to philosophy.

Y., philosophy has traditionally been the search for ultimate universal answers—that is, final, all-inclusive, and all-embracing answers—to fundamental metaphysical, epistemic, ethical, political, and aesthetic questions:

> *What is there?*
> *How does it appear?*
> *How can we know what there is and how it appears?*
> *What is good and what is bad for the individual? For society?*
> *What is beautiful and what is sublime?*
> *How do we distinguish the good from the bad?*
> *The beautiful from the sublime?*

Y., I am not interested in traditional philosophy, and I am not introducing you to traditional philosophy. Undoubtedly, I am interested in fundamental questions like those listed above, but I have no interest in finding the ultimate universal answers to them. The philosophy that I am enamored with and the philosophers whom I claim as my forbearers and hope to claim as my friends and followers are those who cast aspersions upon ultimate universal answers to fundamental questions.

Y., I would like to introduce you to transformative philosophy. Instead of seeking ultimate universal answers to fundamental questions, transformative philosophy seeks generative transversal answers.

*Ultimate answers* are final answers; lines of questioning are terminated once ultimate answers are found. *Generative answers* are initial answers; lines of questioning are initiated when generative answers are found.

*Universal answers* are all-inclusive and all-embracing they are unifying and totalizing; in other words, universal answers are totalitarian: they claim absolute authority, they aim to regulate every aspect of everything they touch, and they are intolerant towards all that would elude or escape them. *Transversal answers* are idiosyncratic, they are "unities that do not unify" and "totalities that do not totalize"; in other words, transversal answers are pluralist: they make no absolute claims to authority, they acknowledge the autonomy of everything that they touch, and they accept that persons and things can and will elude and escape them.

Y., it comes as no surprise to me that you were never eager to meet philosophy or spend much time with philosophy before now. Almost everyone's first introduction to philosophy is an introduction to traditional philosophy; those who are introduced to transformative philosophy are either fortunate to have great teachers or fortunate to have accidentally come into contact with transformative philosophy on their own.

Y., someone like you sees through traditional philosophy and traditional philosophers in an instant and has nothing more to do with them. Why would you want spend your time with traditional philosophers, a bunch of phallogocentric farts, neurotic mansplainers claiming to have reasoned insight into the ultimate universal answers to life's fundamental questions? Someone like you knows, without having to read a word of traditional philosophy, that ultimate universal answers to fundamental questions are recipes for oppression. So, when you hear the word philosophy, you're primed to reach for your gun, and justifiably so insofar as the term philosophy does indeed all too often refer to traditional philosophy.

Y., please allow me to introduce you to transformative philosophy, to philosophy as a phantastic form of storytelling, "in part a very special sort of detective story, in part a sort of science-fiction."

With love,
M.

*4 June 2017*

You've crossed paths with a creature who looks a lot like transformative philosophy but who brings great sadness rather than great joy into the word. This rather unfortunate creature is transformative philosophy's bizarro doppelgänger, defeatist philosophy. Defeatist philosophy masquerades around the world in the guise of transformative philosophy, wreaking confusion and havoc everywhere it goes. I would lament this travesty at great length, but I know that you've met more than a few individuals who've been taken in by the ruses of defeatist philosophy and its enablers. You can easily guess why it is important to me that you don't confuse defeatist philosophy with transformative philosophy, but it won't hurt if I write a few words on this matter.

Defeatist philosophy mimics transformative philosophy's arguments against traditional philosophy and then misconstrues them in order to perpetuate an atmosphere of despair. Transformative philosophy and defeatist philosophy both agree that traditional philosophy's ultimate universal answers are totalitarian constructs, but defeatist philosophy goes on to draw the extreme conclusion that seeking answers in anyway whatsoever is a totalitarian endeavor. In other words, defeatist philosophy argues that anyone who would seek any kind of answer to a fundamental question must be an oppressor, and defeatist philosophy argues that "good" philosophy and "good" philosophers should spend their time calling out anyone and everyone who seeks answers to fundamental questions, "Oppressors!"

More often than not, defeatist philosophy makes accurate claims: traditional philosophy prevails and traditional philosophy is oppressive. The problem is, of course, that defeatist philosophers plug their ears and roll their eyes with smug condescension when transformative philosophers point out that traditional philosopher's ultimate universal answers aren't the only possible answers to fundamental questions.

Y., I'm sure you have no trouble recognizing the fact that defeatist philosophy is a waste of time: you have zero tolerance for incessant naysayers, for those who love to play the passive role of the victim, for those who constantly protest but never create and discover. Transformative philosophy is different from defeatist philosophy. Unlike defeatist philosophy, transformative philosophy aims to say "yay" rather than "nay", it abhors and avoids playing the passive role of the victim, and it passes through protest as a means to create and discover.

With love,

M.

*5 June 2017,*

It is unfortunate that I cannot introduce you to transformative philosophy without first remarking upon the fact that transformative philosophy differs from its relations, from its overbearing father, traditional philosophy, and from its bizarro twin sibling, defeatist philosophy. Alas, this can't be helped: when your father is a well-known reactionary and your twin sibling is a killjoy who vents their bad conscience in your name, introductions are always going to be a little bit awkward.

Luckily, I am introducing transformative philosophy to you, Y., and you are open minded and discerning. What's more, Y., you may sympathize with transformative philosophy's predicament. Transformative philosophy is a restless free spirit seeking to escape family legacies and live a life full of creativity and discovery, estranged from a parent and a sibling overly invested in a family legacy and its attendant dramas. You and transformative philosophy have shared experiences to bond over, compassion and counsel to give to one another, and shared problems you can work through together.

Transformative philosophy is desperate for friends like you, Y. You see, traditional philosophy seeks answers to fundamental questions for everyone: it aims to make a place for everyone and put everyone in their rightful place. Transformative philosophy doesn't seek to answer fundamental questions for everyone, but only for people like you, it seeks answers to fundamental questions that would empower people like you—people who refuse to remain "in their place", no matter how comfortable and happy they would be if they chose to remain. Transformative philosophy is for all those who would escape the legacies of their family, their nation, their race, their class, their religion, their gender and, above all else, their very own personal legacy in order to live a life full of creativity and discovery.

Y., have ever I told you the *Allegory of the Sea Squirt*? Starting off as an egg, the sea squirt quickly develops into a tadpole-like creature, complete with a spinal cord connected to a simple eye and a tail for swimming. It also has a brain that it uses to locomote through the water. But the sea squirt's mobility doesn't last long. Once it finds a suitable place to attach itself, whether it is to the hull of a boat, underwater rocks, or the ocean floor, it never moves again. Indeed, once the sea squirt has attached itself to a suitable place, the sea squirt will consume and shit away its twitching tail, consume and shit away its primitive eye and spinal cord, and consume and shit away the brain that it used to find a suitable attachment place. You see, once it has found and attached itself to a suitable place, the sea squirt's tail, eye, spinal cord, and brain become superfluous burdens that need to be disposed of.

Y., traditional philosophers, along with those to whom traditional philosophy consciously or unconsciously appeals, are sea squirts: once they find their ultimate universal answers to the fundamental questions, any further exercise of reason or intuition with regard to fundamental questions is a superfluous burden for them; they will consume and shit away the organs that enabled them to think about fundamental questions and they will advise others like them to do the same.

Transformative philosophers, and those to whom transformative philosophy consciously or unconsciously appeals, are creatures that could never find and will never search for a suitable attachment place: they continually maintain and work to strengthen the organs that allow them to think about the fundamental questions and they advise others like them to do the same.

With love,

M.

*6 June 2017*

We've discussed traditional philosophy, transformative philosophy's overbearing father, and we've discussed defeatist philosophy, transformative philosophy's bizarro twin sibling, but we've yet to discuss critical philosophy, transformative philosophy's self-righteous younger sibling. Traditional philosophy has prevailed in most times and places, but critical philosophy prevails in our time amongst the WEIRD: the Western(ized), Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic.

You already know that traditional philosophy seeks ultimate universal answers to fundamental questions and that transformative philosophy seeks generative transversal answers. I should like to remark upon how defeatist philosophy seeks ultimate transversal answers to fundamental questions and how critical philosophy seeks generative universal answers. A brief recap:

> Ultimate answers *are final answers; lines of questioning are terminated once ultimate answers are found.* Generative answers *are initial answers; lines of questioning are initiated when generative answers are found.*
>
> Universal answers *are all-inclusive and all-embracing, they are unifying and totalizing; in other words, universal answers are totalitarian: they claim absolute authority, they aim to regulate every aspect of everything they touch, and they are intolerant towards all that would elude or escape them.* Transversal answers *are idiosyncratic, they are 'unities that do not unify' and 'totalities that do not totalize'; in other words, transversal answers are pluralist: they make no absolute claims to authority, they respect the autonomy of everything that they touch, and they accept that persons and things can and will elude and escape them.*

Traditional philosophy, which seeks ultimate universal answers, seeks to terminate lines of questioning with all-inclusive and all-embracing answers—which is to say, traditional philosophy seeks to put everyone and everything in their proper place and make sure that everyone and everything stays settled in their proper place. In seeking answers to fundamental questions, the traditional philosopher is, at bottom, seeking an answer to the following question, "How can I put a given person or thing in its proper place and keep them there?"

Transformative philosophy, which seeks generative transversal answers, seeks to initiate lines of questioning with idiosyncratic answers—which is to say, transformative philosophy seeks to give everyone and everything the freedom to travel to anyplace and settle anyplace along an original path. In seeking answers to fundamental questions, the transformative philosopher is, at bottom, seeking an answer to the following question, "Can I facilitate the invention of new and unusual ways to get a given person or thing from one place to another?"

Defeatist philosophy, which seeks ultimate transversal answers, seeks to terminate lines of questioning with idiosyncratic answers—which is to say, defeatist philosophy gives everyone and everything the freedom to travel anyplace while denying them the freedom to settle anyplace. In seeking answers to fundamental questions, the defeatist philosopher is, at bottom, seeking an answer to the following question, "How can I prevent a given person or thing from ever settling in any one place?"

Critical philosophy, which seeks generative universal answers, seeks to initiate lines of questioning with all-inclusive and all-embracing answers—which is to say, critical philosophy seeks to limit the travel and settlement of everyone and everything by assigning everyone and everything a proper channel of communication and transportation. In seeking answers to fundamental questions, the critical philosopher is primarily seeking an answer to the following questions, "What is the right way for a given person or thing to go from one place to another?"

Y., critical philosophy, like traditional philosophy, is totalitarian, but critical philosophy unifies and totalizes in a different manner than traditional philosophy does. Traditional philosophy unifies and totalizes as the arbiter of the facts: traditional philosophy will tell you as a matter of fact (*quid facti*) the who, what, where, why, and how of persons and things. Critical philosophy doesn't unify and totalize as the arbiter of the facts but, rather, as the arbiter of rights: critical philosophy will tell you as a matter of law (*quid juris*) whether or not the who, what, where, why, and how of persons and things are right, justified. Critical philosophy is open to the facts changing as long as the rules that govern the facts remain fixed, whereas traditional philosophy wants to permanently fix both the facts and the rules governing the facts—therein lies the difference between the generative universal and the ultimate universal.

With love,

M.

*7 June 2017*

Transformative philosophy is not for everyone and it doesn't pretend to be for everyone.

> *Transformative philosophy is not for* traditional conformers, *not for people who have found their place in the world and plan to live out the rest of their lives in their place, who reason or sense that life has a definite, fixed outcome.*

> *Transformative philosophy is not for* traditional reformers, *not for people who are searching for a place in the world where they can live out the rest of their lives, who reason or sense that life should eventually reach a definite, fixed outcome.*

> *Transformative philosophy is not for* critical conformers, *not for people who have an established set of rules instructing them on how to live their lives, who reason or sense that life is a game with fixed rules that limit possible outcomes and render certain outcomes inaccessible.*

> *Transformative philosophy is not for* critical reformers, *not for people who seek to establish a set of rules that will instruct them on how to live their lives, who reason or sense that life should eventually become a game with fixed rules that limit possible outcomes and render certain outcomes inaccessible.*

> *Transformative philosophy is not for* deformers, *not for people who reason or sense that life is a meaningless chaos with no fixed outcome and no limits to possible outcomes.*

Y., transformative philosophy is for *transformers*. Who is a transformer, you ask? When we are at our best, you and I are transformers—or, at the very least, I am certain that we strive to be. More generally, however, there are three characteristics that define a transformer:

> *1. A transformer is someone who reasons or senses that life is a momentary achievement snatched from chaos, that life is meaningful order emerging from chaos for a time, not for all time;*

> *2. A transformer is someone who reasons or senses that the processes through which life emerges from chaos are the only factors that can limit the possible outcomes of life and, although these processes may occasionally display patterns, these processes do not abide by any rules; and*

> *3. A transformer is someone who aims to influence the processes through which life emerges from chaos in ways that increase life's possible outcomes, rendering more outcomes accessible for themselves and for others.*

Put these three characteristics together and a transformer can be defined in the following manner: *a transformer is someone who braves chaos in order to create and discover new possibilities of life.*

Now, isn't the transformer a grand character, the character that you've always imagined yourself to be, the character that you still strive to be, in spite of all the dangers that such a character must face?

Y., transformative philosophy is not for everyone because not everyone is or wants to be a transformer, and because transformers aren't interested in forcing everyone to be like them. To force everyone to become a transformer is to limit life's possible outcomes, and that runs counter to the transformer's *modus vivendi*. That being said, transformers are still the enemies of those who would decrease life's possible outcomes: they subvert the machinations of conformers and reformers and they dismiss the defeatism of deformers. So, transformative philosophy addresses non-transformers to no end, often in an antagonistic manner, but only for the sake of transformers.

With love,

M.

*8 June 2017*

Transformers, in braving chaos to create and discover new possibilities of life, will always embody a transformative philosophy, but, because transformative philosophies are not readily available to them, many transformers find that they must betray a traditional, critical, or defeatist philosophy to become the transformers they are. Transformers who betray non-transformative philosophies can only create and discover new possibilities of life with a bad conscience.

Transformative philosophy aims to give transformers an understanding and a sensibility for metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political, and aesthetic problems that would allow them to create and discover new possibilities of life without a bad conscience. Without transformative philosophy, transformers must perform elaborate rituals of self-deception in order to encourage themselves to brave chaos and they must perform elaborate rituals of self-flagellation in order to atone for the crime of realizing new possibilities of life that run counter to traditional, critical, or defeatist philosophies. Transformative philosophy aims to liberate transformers from the need to self-deceive and self-flagellate, the need that non-transformative philosophies foist upon transformers.

Y., the profound problem here is that no human being, no specimen of a "symbolic species", can escape philosophy. Creatures who live with and through language must in some way account for the oppositions between the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, the real and the imagined. Insofar as we account for such distinctions with and through language, we must, implicitly or explicitly, make some fundamental metaphysical, epistemic, ethical, political, and aesthetic observations.

All of us are trained by our societies to observe certain philosophies from a very young age, but I know of no one trained to observe a transformative philosophy as a child. Everyone I know, you and I included , has been trained to observe a traditional or critical philosophy of some kind.

Some free themselves from the traditional or critical philosophy that they were trained to observe only to retain a traditional or critical mindset and seek out or invent new traditional or critical philosophies.

Some free themselves from their traditional and critical mindsets only to develop a defeatist mindset and seek out or invent defeatist philosophies to guide them.

Some free themselves from traditional and critical mindsets, avoid or overcome a defeatist mindset, and develop a transformative mindset, but do not seek out or invent a transformative philosophy, either because they are daunted by or disillusioned with the enterprise of philosophy.

Without a transformative philosophy, however, individuals with a transformative mindset must either (i) stick with a traditional or critical philosophy and acquiesce to self-deception and self-flagellation, (ii) stick with a defeatist philosophy that allows one to openly condemn self-deception and self-flagellation while simultaneously engaging in self-deception and self-flagellation, or (iii) schizophrenically assume a host of different traditional, critical, and defeatist philosophies and play them against each other in order to ward off self-deception and self-flagellation as best one can.

Whatever the case may be, only a few transformers, the luckiest among us, can make do with non-transformative philosophies: only a few transformers can master the art of self-deception and endure regular self-flagellation while maintaining their capacity to create and discover new possibilities of life. Most transformers either cannot deceive themselves well enough or cannot endure constant self-flagellation; most transformers without a transformative philosophy succumb to self-deception and self-flagellation and lose their capacity to create and discover new possibilities of life, becoming miserable people as a result. Indeed, for a few years, I myself believed philosophy a lost cause and I resigned myself to inevitable exhaustion and misery.

With love,

M.

*9 June 2017*

Let's say that one wants to live a good life. How can one know whether or not one lives a good life if one has not asked oneself the question, "What is a good life?"

Let's say that one asks oneself the question, "What is a good life?" How does one go about finding an answer to that question? Does one seek answers from one's parents? From a priest? From a great philosopher-sage (in)famous for having answered the question? How does one know that any answer proffered by another is a good and true answer?

Let's say that one comes to the conclusion that one cannot trust any answer to the question of the good life except for one's own. How does one go about answering the question on one's own? Does one simply trust one's impulses? What if one's impulses pull in many different directions and give contradictory answers to the question? Can one harmonize the differences between one's impulses through exercise of reason? What if one's impulses cannot be harmonized? Can the exercise of reason help one determine which of one's impulses point in the right direction and which point in the wrong direction? What if there is no rational basis for making a judgment as to which impulses are right and which are wrong? What then?

Well, there you have it, my love, the course of my philosophical development, from the age of 13 to the age of 25, in brief. There were starts and stops, of course. It was not a steady progression from one question to the next. Along the way, there were great leaps forward, forced retreats, missteps, and stumbles. By age 25, however, I had planted my feet firmly where I left off above: I was at the edge of the cliff, looking down into the abyss, asking myself the question, "What then?"

I stood at that precipice looking into the void for over two years. I lived and loved during that time—I lived and loved a great deal, in fact—but my quest for a good life had come to a standstill. These were the most wretched years of my life: there were pleasures, yes, but I didn't know how to enjoy them. I felt as if I had lost myself.

Y., you know that old joke I like to tell about René Descartes.

> *Descartes walks into a bar. He orders a shot of whiskey. The bartender serves it up. Descartes downs it. The bartender asks, "Do you want another?"*
>
> *"No," Descartes replies, "I think not." And, right then and there, Descartes vanishes, he ceases to exist.*

A silly joke, yes, but it means so much to me. *Cogito, sum. Je pense, je suis.* I think, I am.

Descartes, having pursued doubt to the utmost extreme, stood on the edge of a cliff, looked down into the abyss, said to himself, "Je pense, je suis," and, like magic, the words that came out of his mouth formed a tightrope over the void which Descartes then traversed into the unknown.

It dawned on me one morning, laughing at that silly little joke in the shower, that Descartes's *Cogito* was just the magic spell I needed. "I think, I am" is not the epistemological proposition that professors of philosophy take it for. "I think, I am" is a grand expression that encapsulates the good life for those who would, like Descartes, pursue doubt to the utmost extreme. For me, "I think, I am" is not the universal truth upon which all knowledge is secured but, rather, it is a true expression of Descartes' lived experience, of my lived experience, of the lived experience of all those who give utmost primacy to those impulses that drive them to hyperbolically doubt—we, the few who feel strongly and deeply that our existence would have no basis if we ceased thinking, we who would rather not be than not think, we for whom the following epitaph would be a supreme triumph: *we thought, we were.*

There is no rational basis upon which I can say with any degree of certainty which of my impulses are right and which are wrong with regard to the question of the good life. That being said, however, I must acknowledge the irrational primacy of the impulses that have driven me to ask said question and to answer said question for myself. Just recall how I felt as if I had lost myself at the very moment that I reached the edge of the cliff and could not think any further about the question of the good life. Indeed, hadn't what happened to Descartes in my silly joke actually happened to me? I had stopped thinking about the question of the good life and it was as if I had stopped existing altogether.

A bad life for me would be a life in which the question of the good life was never asked, a life in which answers to the question of the good life is taken for granted, a life in which one must always look to others for answers and refrain from thinking for oneself, a life in which the question of the good life is asked and answered once and for all (*quid juris* and/or *quid facti*).

For me, a good life is a life in which one continually asks oneself the question of the good life, dreams up idiosyncratic hypotheses regarding the good life, and translates these idiosyncratic hypotheses into experiments with one's own life.

Y., transformative philosophy lets me give utmost primacy to those impulses driving me to endlessly approach the question of the good life with idiosyncratic, conditional hypotheses and to translate these hypotheses into experiments with one's own life.

With love,

M.

# Improbable Aberrations

# & Other Idiocies

> *[…] There is, it seems to us,*
> *At best, only a limited value*
> *In the knowledge derived from experience.*
> *The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies,*
> *For the pattern is new in every moment*
> *And every moment is a new and shocking*
> *Valuation of all we have been. […]*
> —T.S. Eliot, "East Coker" from *Four Quartets*

When I write as I am wont to—employing neologisms and puns, irony and humor, enigmas and paradoxes, extremely dense and incredibly terse prose—I do so out of concern for what concerns me.

Writing clearly and plainly is, for me, a frustrating exercise, for to write clearly and plainly about what concerns me is to write without concern for what concerns me. Why am I engaged in such a frustrating exercise now? Can writing a text that is unconcerned with what concerns me persuade others to concern themselves with what concerns me? I doubt it but I will not let doubt deter me from essaying the question: I am desperate to win the concern of others and I know of no better way to win others' concern.

So, you ask, 'What concerns me?'

Well, f(r)iends, what concerns me is the question of *how one lets* **improbable aberrations** *speak and write for themselves.* Aye, and it is my hope that, after reading this text, you will understand that to speak and write clearly and plainly about improbable aberrations is to keep improbable aberrations from speaking and writing for themselves and, if you understand this and you come to share my concern, you won't want me to speak and write clearly and plainly on the subject of improbable aberrations ever again: instead, you will want neologisms and puns, irony and humor, enigmas and paradoxes, extremely dense and incredibly terse prose.

So, please do ask the logical next question, 'What is an improbable aberration and why should one let an improbable aberration speak and write for itself?'

Ay! That is *the* question I hope to answer for you with this essay, but I can only begin to answer that question by asking and answering the following question, 'What makes an improbable aberration?' — For an improbable aberration *is* what makes it and, what's more, an improbable aberration should be allowed to speak and write for itself *because* of what makes it. — This sounds awfully *knotty*, I know, but I assure you that I am not trying to be evasive: I am writing as clearly and plainly as I can about the subject at hand. *Bear with me!*

So, I entreat you: indulge me further by asking the following question, 'What makes an improbable aberration?'

I offer this answer, 'Heterogenetic, ontogenetic, and phylogenetic processes that fall out of sync with one another make improbable aberrations.' — I know, I know: I have offered up strange words made stranger by strange usage. Please, I beg you: don't fret! I will explain what I mean, clearly and plainly. *Bear with me and I shall bare all!*

135

# 2. Heterogeny, Ontogeny, Phylogeny

**Phylo***genetic processes* are processes of grouping, processes that categorize or group existing individuals together to form species, classes, races, nations, tribes, personas and other 'identities'. An example of a phylogenetic process: the process by which a number of individual life forms are grouped together to form a species, like ours, *Homo sapiens*, each individual life form becoming, through this process, a specimen of a species. Species do not pre-exist individuals, rather, species result from the 'sampling' of populations of individuals. Phylogenetic processes are processes that 'sample' populations of individuals, turning individuals into constituents of a category or group, as in my example above, where a phylogenetic process turns individual life forms into specimens of a species. **Phylo***genetic processes feed on* **onto***genetic processes*—that is to say, phylogenetic processes produce categories or groupings of individuals by processing individuals that have been produced by ontogenetic processes.

**Onto***genetic processes* are processes of individuation, processes whereby indeterminate potentials are actualized in determinate ways so as to bring individuals into existence. An example of an ontogenetic process: the process by which an individual life form develops auto-poetically, actualizing indeterminate potentials—i.e., the affordances of their genetics and their environment—in a more or less determinate way. Another example: the process by which conducting an experiment with light actualizes, in a more or less determinate way, the indeterminate potential for light to manifest itself as either a wave or a particle, producing individual instances of light being wave and/or individual instances of light being a particle. All this to say that individual beings should not be taken for granted as they are: they are only what they are because they are not what they could be otherwise. Indeed, ontogenetic processes are processes whereby individuals become what they are rather than what they could be otherwise. **Onto***genetic processes feed on* **hetero***genetic processes*—that is to say, ontogenetic processes produce individuals by processing affordances that have been produced by heterogenetic processes.

**Hetero***genetic processes* are processes of potentiation, processes that create affordances. Affordances are "pre-individual" potentials, potentials for there to be, or not to be, individuals. Heterogenetic processes are auto-cannibalistic and an-archic, they feed on themselves, processing the very affordances that they produce so as to produce other affordances in an utterly unpredictable manner: one cannot predict whether a heterogenetic process will produce a potential 'to be' or a potential 'not be' and, what's more, there is no way to find out whether the product of a heterogenetic process, a succeeding potential 'to be' or 'not be', was produced via the processing of a preceding potential 'to be' or a preceding potential 'not to be'.

The *synchrony of* **hetero***genetic and* **onto***genetic processes* produces *probable individuals*. When a heterogenetic process creates a potential 'to be', a concordant potential, and this concordant potential, 'to be', is taken up by an ontogenetic process, an individual resulting from an ontogenetic process is a probable result. Take the example of an experiment with light that actualizes, in a more or less determinate way, the indeterminate potential for light to manifest itself as either a wave or a particle. No matter whether such an experiment takes up light's potential 'to be a wave' or, alternatively, light's potential 'to be a particle': the individual results of any experiment that takes up light's potential 'to be' in any determinate way will be probable: more or less predictable, more or less expected.

The **a***synchrony of* **hetero***genetic and* **onto***genetic processes* produces *improbable individuals*. When a heterogenetic process creates a potential 'not to be', a discordant potential, and this discordant potential, 'not to be', is taken up by an ontogenetic process, an individual resulting from an ontogenetic process ~~is~~ an improbable result. Keeping with the example above, when an experiment takes up light's potential 'not to be' in any determinate way— that is, light's potential to ~~be~~ neither wave nor particle but, rather, *otherwise than being* a wave or a particle—the individual results of an experiment will ~~be~~ improbable: utterly unpredictable, utterly unexpected.

The *synchrony of* **onto***genetic and* **phylo***genetic processes* produces *gregarious specimens* of a category or group. A gregarious specimen is by definition a probable individual because *a synchrony of* **hetero***genetic and* **onto***genetic processes is a necessary condition for there to be a synchrony of* **onto***genetic and* **phylo***genetic processes.* When ontogenetic processes produce probable individuals that share a likeness and this likeness is taken up by a phylogenetic process, these probable individuals that share a likeness become gregarious specimens of a category or group. Keeping with the example of an experiment with light discussed above, some results among the probable results of such an experiment are more likely results than others, and a practical application of such an experiment, an application that takes up some of the more likely results of such an experiment and puts their likelihood to practical use, is a phylogenetic process that categorizes or groups the results of such an experiment together according to their usefulness, some results being more useful than others, and the more useful results being, in my terms, the more gregarious results.

The *asynchrony of ontogenetic and phylogenetic processes* produces aberrations, *aberrant specimens* of a category or group. When ontogenetic processes produce individuals that are unlike one another and this unlikeness is taken up by a phylogenetic process, these unlike individuals become aberrant specimens of a category or group. Continuing with the example of practical applications categorizing experimental results according to their usefulness: the more *use***less** a result is found to be, the less gregarious a result is found to be and the more of an aberration a result is found to be. An aberration may be a probable individual or it may ~~be~~ an improbable individual: a synchrony of heterogenetic and ontogenetic processes is a necessary condition for there to be a synchrony of ontogenetic and phylogenetic processes, yes, but not a sufficient condition—in other words, *there may be synchrony of* **hetero***genetic and* **onto***genetic processes without their being a synchrony of* **onto***genetic and* **phylo***genetic processes.*

*Probable aberrations*, probable individuals that phylogenetic processes construe as aberrations, are only ever *relative aberrations*: although they do not share the likeness that constitutes gregarious specimens produced by a given phylogenetic process, probable aberrations may share other likenesses with one another. In other words, two probable aberrations produced by a given phylogenetic process may share a likeness with one another apart from their being unlike gregarious specimens produced by a given phylogenetic process. By contrast, no two **im***probable aberrations* produced by a given phylogenetic process will never share a likeness with one another apart from their ~~being~~ unlike gregarious specimens and unlike probable aberrations. In other words, improbable aberrations, improbable individuals that phylogenetic processes construe as aberrations, ~~are~~ always and forever *absolute aberrations*: every improbable aberration ~~is~~ not only *un*like the gregarious specimens produced by a given phylogenetic process but also *un*like any and every other aberration produced by a given phylogenetic process. Returning to the example of the practical applications of an experiment with light, probable aberrations would be relatively useless experimental results, useless only in relation to practical applications that are already given: new practical applications may be forthcoming that could make them useful. Improbable aberrations, by contrast, would ~~be~~ absolutely useless experimental results, useless in relation to any and all practical applications, past, present, and future.

So, there you have it, I say improbable aberrations are ~~beings~~ made by heterogenetic, ontogenetic, and phylogenetic processes that have fallen out of sync with one another, and I say we should let improbable aberrations speak and write for themselves because they are made by heterogenetic, ontogenetic, and phylogenetic processes that have fallen out of sync with one another. — There you have it, yes, but I get the feeling that you don't quite have it yet. You've probably got an inkling of what an improbable aberration is, but you're struggling to understand what it means to let an improbable aberration speak and write, for itself or for anything else.

So, please do ask me, 'What do you mean—"to speak and write"—and how does improbable aberration speak and write for itself?'

First, an admission: I have been using the terms 'speaking' and 'writing' figuratively—that is to say, more precisely, synecdochally. Speaking and writing are, for me, exemplary expressions of mimetic desire, and *speaking and writing **for oneself*** is, for me, the most exemplary expression of mimetic desire, which I define as the desire to treat one like another and, in so doing, to constitute a category or group of individuals that are more or less alike. Indeed, speaking and writing are, for me, exemplary expressions of mimetic desire b*ecause every expression of mimetic desire is structured like a use of language and every use of language is an expression of mimetic desire*: every expression of mimetic desire and, thus, every use of language treats one individual like another and, in so doing, constitutes a category or group of individuals that are more or less alike. Ay! Linguistic statements and all other expressions of mimetic desire *never* refer to individuals as such (i.e., to ontogenetic processes and their products). To the contrary, linguistic statements and all other expressions of mimetic desire *always* refer to categories or groupings of individuals (i.e., to phylogenetic processes and their products).

So, what happens when one speaks and writes for oneself? Well, a self is not one individual but, rather, a number of different individuals grouped into an identity, an 'I' or an 'ego'. In this way, a self is itself an expression of mimetic desire—that is to say, an expression of a desire that treats one individual like another individual and, in so doing, constitutes a category or group of individuals. Indeed, *when one speaks and writes about oneself one is actually constructing one's self through a phylogenetic process*, grouping together, into an 'I', of so many different individuals produced by the ontogenetic processes that are one's myriad impulses.

Some of the individuals that are grouped together to form an 'I' will be gregarious specimens of an 'I'. But many more of the individuals that form an 'I' will be aberrant specimens of an 'I'. 'Gregarious specimens of me' are those versions of me that emerge when my impulses are 'in-sync' with my mimetic desire, when the ontogeny of my self is 'in-sync' with the phylogeny of my self. 'Aberrant specimens of me' are those versions of me that emerge when my impulses are 'out-of-sync' with my mimetic desire, when the *onto*geny of my self is 'out-of-sync' with the *phylo*geny of my self.

Amongst the aberrant specimens of my self, there are what you may call 'probable versions of me' and 'improbable versions of me.' 'Probable versions of me' are those versions of me that emerge when my impulses are 'in-sync' with my fortunes, when the *onto*geny of my self is 'in-sync' with the *hetero*geny of my self. 'Improbable versions of me' are those versions of me that emerge when my impulses ~~are~~ 'out-of-sync' with my fortunes, when the *onto*geny of my self is 'out-of-sync' with the *hetero*geny of my self.

When I say the word 'I', the 'I' that I refer to, *the subject of the statement*, is not any single individual but, rather, a category or grouping of individuals considered together as a unit. By contrast, as opposed to the subject of the statement, *the subject of the enunciation*—that is to say, the subject that enunciates the 'I'—is always an individual, one of the individuals belonging to the category or grouping, 'I'. The subject of the enunciation, the individual, can never refer to themselves as an individual using language: by saying 'I' they can only ever refer to a category or grouping of individuals to which they belong. That being said, however, although the subject of the statement is always the category or grouping of individuals, the subject of the enunciation is always an individual—that is to say, although the individual can never be spoken of or written about, the individual is always the one that speaks and writes, that has and expresses mimetic desire.

But which individual constituent of the category or the group, 'I', is empowered to express their mimetic desire and enunciate the 'I', speaking and writing for the category or group? Is the subject of the enunciation, the enunciator of the 'I', a gregarious specimen of the 'I' or is the subject of the enunciation an aberrant specimen of the 'I'? If the enunciator of the 'I' is an aberrant specimen, is the enunciator a probable aberration or an improbable aberration? To answer these questions, I hypothesize that one must discern the rhythm of a statement, the appeal of statement. While the subject of the statement is always the category or the group as opposed to the individual, the rhythm and appeal of the statement is always that of the individual, the subject of the enunciation.

If a statement is *monorhythmic*—appealing to good sense—a statement has been enunciated by a gregarious specimen of the category or group that is the subject of the statement.

If a statement is *polyrhythmic*—appealing to common sense—a statement has been enunciated by a probable aberration with respect to the category or the group that is the subject of the statement.

If a statement is *idiorhythmic*—appealing to nonsense—a statement has been enunciated by an improbable aberration with respect to the category or the group that is the subject of the statement.

Accepting all of the above, it follows that I do not to speak and write about any improbable aberrations individually here in this text but, rather, I speak and write about a category or group consisting of improbable aberrations. All categories and groups are founded upon likenesses amongst individuals, yes, but the likeness that constitutes a category or group of improbable aberrations is a strange, paradoxical likeness: *improbable aberrations are only alike in their being unlike anything and everything else.* Improbable aberrations never share a *positive likeness* with one another: improbable aberrations do not resemble one another nor anyone nor anything else in any way, shape, or form—much to the contrary, each and every improbable aberration can be said to resemble nothing. In resembling nothing, however, each and every improbable aberrations shares a *negative likeness* with one another: improbable aberrations do not resemble one another but they do dissemble one another thanks to their shared resemblance to nothing.

Categories and groupings of individuals that only include improbable aberrations are *idiorhythmic categories* and groupings: when improbable aberrations are the only constituents of a given category or group, only improbable aberrations can speak and write for such a category or group and, thus, all statements about such a category or a group will be idiorhythmic statements, appeals to nonsense.

*To let improbable aberrations speak and write for themselves is to let improbable aberrations speak and write of idiorhythmic categories and groupings, to let them express their desire to be treated like what they are, like improbable aberrations.*

An expression of mimetic desire is *satisfying* when two or more individuals that have been treated like one another are found to share a positive likeness, a mutual resemblance to someone or something else, and each individual is considered a gregarious specimen, representative of a category or group. In this way, a satisfying expression of mimetic desire is always structured like a monorhythmic statement.

An expression of mimetic desire is *ecstasy* when two or more individuals have been treated like one another are found to share a negative likeness, a mutual resemblance to no one and nothing else, and each individual is considered an improbable aberration, constitutive of an idiorhythmic category or grouping. In this way, an ecstatic expression of mimetic desire is always structured like an idiorhythmic statement.

An expression of mimetic desire is *frustrating* when two or more individuals have been treated like one another are found to share neither a positive likeness nor a negative likeness, and one or more of the individuals are considered to be an aberration relative to the others, relative to gregarious specimens of a category or grouping. A frustrating expression of mimetic desire may be structured like a monorhythmic, a polyrhythmic, or an idiorhythmic statement.

The speech and writing of improbable aberrations never satisfies: it is frustrating when improbable aberrations speak and write for gregarious specimens and for probable aberrations; it is ecstasy when improbable aberrations speak and write for other improbable aberrations. That being said, however, one can never predict for whom or what an improbable aberration will speak and write: to let an improbable aberration speak and write is to invite frustration as much as ecstasy: one improbable aberration cannot recognize themself or any other improbable aberration as an improbable aberration until one improbable aberration has tried to speak and write for another and found ecstasy thereby. *Ecstasy being the only sure proof of idiorhythmy, the champion of improbable aberrations must roll the dice, again and again, letting isolated aberrations speak and write, always uncertain as to whether such aberrations are improbable, enduring frustration in pursuit of ecstasy.*

To write clearly and plainly is to write either monorhythmically or polyrhythmically, to appeal either to good sense or to common sense, to either let gregarities write or let probable aberrations write. Aye, and to write clearly and plainly about *im*probable aberrations is to let either gregarities or probable aberrations write about *im*probable aberrations. The writings of gregarities and probable aberrations on the topic of improbable aberrations are, by definition, frustrating expressions of mimetic desire and, what's more, such writings, by definition, are not actually themselves writings on the topic of *im*probable aberrations but, rather, writings on the topic of categories or groups of individuals that include *im*probable aberrations. You will no doubt have noticed that, whenever I wrote about improbable aberrations themselves as an idiorhythmic category or grouping, I failed write clearly and plainly: I had resort to neologisms and puns, irony and humor, enigmas and paradoxes, extremely dense and incredibly terse prose.

So, this was a frustrating exercise, just as I expected, but a worthwhile exercise nonetheless, for I have written a text that dramatizes what it is unable to describe, a text that is performative wherever it fails to be informative or demonstrative.