

Explorations in Revolutionary Investigative Monsterhood.

by Huge Sillytoe in collaboration with Folie/Culture

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1. How to Hatch a Monster: Instructions for the Self-Mutation of Benevolent Beasts

A monster may be understood to be many things, to make many sounds, to lurk in many corners, to hatch from many eggs.

The Oxford English Dictionary offers the definition of "a large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature".

Natural historian of exotic monstrosity Natalie Lawrence makes clear that "'Monster' probably derives from the Latin, *monstrare*, meaning 'to demonstrate', and *monere*, 'to warn'. Monsters, in essence, are *demonstrative*. They reveal, portend, show and make evident, often uncomfortably so."

The 'monstratsia' or 'monstration' protest parades that have spread throughout Russia since their initiation by Artyom Loskytov and the Novosibirsk Contemporary Art Terrorism group in Siberia in the mid 2000's are processions of human beings and other creatures holding placards that evade conventional constructions of political, logical, or grammatical 'sense'.

One slogan from this year's international monstration, staged online during COVID-19 lockdowns worldwide, read: "The dinosaurs did not die -- they are just self-isolating very well."

So, how might we coax the dinosaurs, and other monsters, out from their shells - especially amidst the restrictions of a global pandemic?

Linking the above threads of potential monsterly essence loosely together, the monsters that we talk about hatching in this text are best considered as beings demonised for existing exaggeratedly outwith the constraints of the 'normal'.

That which makes these creatures 'monstrous' is their exuberant refusal to fit in.

In some, or perhaps many, respects, you, dear reader, may already be a monster.

These instructions, which any monster is welcome to chew up and spit out into new forms, are here to help draw out and enhance the monsterliness of any individual who may wish to do so in three key areas: monsterly looks, monsterly movements, and monsterly interactions.

However, before going into further description of how one might undertake a process of monsterly self-transformation in each of these three areas, it is essential to explicitly recognise that there are many human beings who, as a result of prejudices endemic within the societies that surround them, are labelled pejoratively as 'monsters' simply for being as they are, without designing any masks or costumes nor rehearsing particular movements.

Indeed, this equation of certain categories of people with a perceived derogatory 'beastliness' may be seen as a prominent ingredient in numerous supremacist ideologies such as racist notions of 'savage' indigenous peoples, sexist suggestions of the 'animalistic' irrationality of menstruating women, and ableist slurs of people with a range of disabilities as 'freaks'.

Such violence and oppression with the suggestion that to be different from a dominant group is to be inferior and monstrous is precisely what is sought to be resisted within the processes of monsterly self-transformation and celebration outlined in this text.

Here people who may or may not have endured bigoted accusations of monstrousness as if it were an insult previously in their lives to different degrees are invited to embrace and amplify their shared beautiful monstrousness, in so doing contributing to the reclamation of the concept of the 'monster' and further undoing oppressive notions of normality that baselessly suggest that one way of being is superior to another.

Monsterly Looks

To bring out one's monsterly essence most effectively in terms of physical appearance, it is essential to alter the form, texture, colour, luminescence, (a)symmetry, and any other imaginable aspect of one's face and body as much as possible.

This may be achieved through addition and/or removal:

One eyebrow or half a head of hair or a portion of a moustache may be shaved off; plastic bottles or frying pans or pineapples may be tied to your knees; a wig may be fashioned from strings of threaded ping pong balls or shredded fabrics or a clump of seaweed; a mask may be made from old cabbage leaves, or a lino floor tile, or a toilet seat; clothes may be ripped or stuffed with pillows or splashed with ink; lights or bells or snail-shells may dangle from your fingertips; ribbons, cutlery, and dolls' feet may hang from your waist; you might be covered from head to toe in leaves, or slices of bread or plastic toy soldiers; you might be entirely naked but painted green or covered by a giant plant pot or with a bikini fashioned from slices of potato.

The trash is an incredibly rich mine of materials for monsterly transformation. One highly recommended option for finding a new monsterly look is to take a walk around wherever you are, pick up a selection of discarded items and weave them together in imagining a new monsterly skin.

Each person has the capacity to undertake multiple - potentially even endless - monsterly forms. The first step is finding one, using the methods described above or elaborations that you invent yourself, and assuming this form. The second step is embodying this new form, to which we now turn.

Monsterly Movements

To move as a monster is to move unexpectedly.

This may be in terms of the movement of body parts in non-standard ways like moving one's head as fully from side to side as possible consistently whilst walking or moving all one's fingers in the air like the dancing legs of a spider throughout any conversation.

It may be moving at faster or slower velocities, such as bobbing to and fro at a goldfish's pace in a busy street or pouncing like a leaping jaguar upon a tub of margarine in a supermarket.

It may be to move as if a certain part of the body were much heavier or lighter than might be expected, such as walking as if stacks of bricks were balanced upon one's shoulders or one's feet were made of rice puffs.

It may be combining two or more standard movements in a non-standard situation, such as pouring out a pot of tea whilst rolling by on a skateboard or licking a stamp and then sticking it to a tree.

It may be performing an action in the absence of a prop conventionally considered essential for that action such as playing with an invisible yo-yo or hula-hooping without a hula-hoop.

It may be none of the above, too.

The most important thing for creating monsterly movement is trusting in one's monsterly instincts. If a movement feels like it matches your monsterly being in that moment, then it does, and from that movement may be born a further sequence of beastly steps. This is the march of the monsterly revolution.

Monsterly Interactions

A monsterly interaction is one characterised by friendly threat.

It is a threat insofar as the sanctity of an individual's ideology or worldview may be implicitly or explicitly drawn into question.

It is friendly insofar as this questioning may help underline how neither monsterly nor normative behaviour is superior to the other, thus establishing an interactional situation of mutual respect beyond normative constraints.

A monster never removes their mask, neither literally nor metaphorically, in any interaction with a human being.

If a monster is asked what they are, they answer truthfully that they are a monster. If they are asked what they are doing, they answer truthfully according to whatever monster (non)sense had inspired the particular action in question.

Monster (non)senses describe how any given monster (mis)understands their actions. No two monsters follow the same (non)sense. Just as their monsterly movements make a unique match with their monsterly looks, so too the (anti)rationale that informs the actions and interactions of each monster is unique to them.

Each monster recognizes that their (non)sense is no better nor worse than the (non)sense of any other monster - or the normative (non)sense of a given human society for that matter - but rather simply distinct. If a human being attempts to assert the need to understand a monsterly interaction according to their own human (non)sense, a monster will not compromise but rather continue to interact following their own (non)sense.

For example, if a monster is asking a human being to help them sing a lullaby to a fistful of green beans, and the human asks why, the monster might reply - if this matches their (non)sensical (mis)understanding - that their intention is to magnify the spirit of mutual aid worldwide. If the human then asks something along the lines of - 'No, but why really? Is this some kind of art thing? Or some kind of protest?' - then the monster would simply continue in their (non)sensical groove and re-state that they hoped singing to the beans would amplify support networks worldwide.

After all, monsterly interactions are not art, nor are they protest, they are simply monsterly interactions.

Now, dear reader, you know how to animate and extract your multi-faceted monsterly essence in look, movement, and interaction. You always knew, really.

In the next document we will consider how to use one's monsterly being as an instrument of revolutionary investigation.

2. Scrambled Sauntering: Guidelines for Monsterly Drifting, Supersensible Inqueery, and Operatic Reporting.

'Monsterly drifting': the wandering of a monster or group of monsters - that is beings demonised for existing outwith the constraints of the 'normal' - from one point of space to another.

'Supersensible inqueery': the pursuit of (non)knowledge that goes beyond normative conceptions of what is 'sensible'.

'Operatic reporting': the delivery of research results through dramatic song.

Combining these three elements, we, as investigative activist demons, seek to discover the post-truth, no-truth, false-truth of being and not-being.

Our questions are endless, their answers likewise, all shouted at once in a swirl of interminable inqueery.

Yet we must keep asking!

What could be more monstrous - and more human - than a question?

As we drift, stalk, or haunt from place to place, we ask those who pass us whatever feels like the most (in)appropriate question(s) for that exact being at that exact moment. Examples of potential questions are provided below to be used, improvised upon, or disregarded entirely, yet ultimately any question that feels most (in)appropriate in a given moment is the question that should be asked.

The word (in)appropriate is to say that the question may not be expected within normative scripts and therein come across as inappropriate, yet at the same time may reach beyond such restrictions in order to grasp at an otherwise undisturbed bed of (non)knowledge and feeling and thus be, at the same time, supremely appropriate.

Monsters can always feel when a question is (not)wrong and (not)right at the same time. They must simply trust their (non)senses and let their tongue slash out the (un)necessary words that follow.

In turn, all the responses of those stumbled upon and interrogated with whatever questions surge forth must be diligently recorded.

What is a monster without a clipboard? Nothing!

Notes concerning the responses of those encountered, mixed alongside other sounds, comments, and thoughts overheard or intercepted along the way, are the raw data of monsterly drifting as a method of supersensible inqueery and the basis of the score for subsequent operatic reporting.

Once at the climax of a monsterly drift - a moment that a monster is able to feel in their bones when it arrives - the operatic report of their findings must duly commence. Here each monster begins to sing - in the tone and volume that feels most (in)appropriate, in whatever sequence and with whichever velocity feels most (in)appropriate, and with the level of repetition, elimination, and elaboration that feels most (in)appropriate - lines from their sheets of data recorded during the preceding monsterly drift.

The resulting opera is the final step of a monsterly drift and the ultimate presentation of the results of the supersensible inqueery conducted therein. Once the final line of the opera has been delivered - a moment once again recognised deep within the bones of each monster - the monsters disperse.

To re-cap, the (in)essential steps to the intertwined processes of monsterly drifting, supersensible inqueery, and operatic reporting are as follows:

1) Become a monster.

This is to realize one's monsterly looks, monsterly movements, and monsterly interactions.

2) Move through space and time as a monster.

This is to monsterly drift.

3) Ask (in)appropriate questions of those encountered on the way to nowhere in particular.

This is our method of supersensible inqueery.

4) Make notes of these responses and other thoughts or comments that emerge.

This is to record the raw data of this revolutionary investigation.

5) Channel these findings into a verbatim dramatic song.

This is operatic reporting.

6) Enjoy a world subtly but undeniably different from before.

This is the fruit of the monsterly revolution.

Some Questions That Might Be Asked By Monsters Whilst Walking On Eggshells:

What can happen in a world where nothing should be disturbed?

How would you like to be reborn? How would you not like to be reborn?

What does it mean to walk on eggshells?

How many yolks would a yolk-yolk yolk if a yolk-yolk could yolk yolks?

What does the monster look like under your bed? How do they smell?

How might it feel to have eggs instead of kneecaps and elbows?

What do you do when the clockface frowns?

Should I stay or should I go now?

How does it feel when you hear a cockerel crow?

What would you say if you were to throw an egg at the President?

What would you say if the President were to throw an egg at you?

What is protest?

What is the most tragic thing anyone has ever said to you?

How do you imagine the sound of the fall of the elite and the redistribution of wealth?

How do you try to influence the behaviour of others?

If you were made entirely of wax, where would you choose to melt and why?

What if God was one of us? Just a slob like one of us?

Who is watching us right now and what are they saying about us?

If you could talk about anything right now with me, what would you like to talk about?

What does it mean to be 'a good egg'? A good citizen? A good artist? A good dog?

Do you really want to hurt me? Do you really want to see me cry?

What phrase would you be most surprised to discover written upon the underside of a woodland mushroom?

Who let the dogs out?

**3. Tuesday, Forever Intervention - Friday November 13th, 2020
in London, Quebec City, and WORLDWIDE**

Huge Sillytoe

**Scrambled Sauntering: Explorations in Revolutionary
Investigative Monsterhood.**

On Friday the 13th of November 2020, a hoard of investigatory monsters will descend upon London, Quebec City, and a scattering of other sites WORLDWIDE in unison, seeking to explain nothing.

You are invited to become a monster.

You can join the packs of monsters growing in London or Quebec or participate from wherever you are in the world!

Commencing from the outset of Huge Sillytoe's residency with Folie/Culture on Tuesday 3rd November 2020, interested participants will be invited to self-mutate and extract their monsterly essences following the (mis)guidance provided in Huge's text 'How to Hatch a Monster: Instructions for the Self-Mutation of Benevolent Beasts'.

In addition to this text, Huge Sillytoe will be available throughout their residency period for consultation via video-conferencing, socially distanced meetings, or extra-temporal monsterly vibe exchanges concerning the self-mutation process for those who feel in need of additional support in becoming monsters.

On the 13th of November, at exact times and coordinates still to be determined, gaggles of newly hatched monsters will meet in London, Quebec, and anywhere else a monster may have grown and begin a monsterly drift as a method of supersensible inqueery, culminating in an operatic report of their findings. This practice is to be (mis)guided by Huge's other text - 'Scrambled Sauntering: Guidelines for Monsterly Drifting, Supersensible Inqueery, and Operatic Reporting'.

These monsterly journeys will be adjusted according to the COVID-19 restrictions in each place and the different needs of each participating monster. There will also be the possibility to participate from home and to sing the opera of one's findings out of the window and/or by webcam.

To sign up for participation in the monsterly drifts in London or Quebec or to register your interest in becoming a monster wherever you are, please follow this link:

To contact Huge Sillytoe about a self-mutation consultation or
to make an
inqueery of your own, please write to huge@hugesillytoe.com

4. Huge Sillytoe Artist Bio

Huge Sillytoe is a large and daft toe. They are also a multidisciplinary performance artist/activist and (auto)ethnographic researcher who proposes their actions and other works as explorations of their artistic-political philosophy of [pragmatic absurdo-anarchism](#).

Transmogrifying into a full human body, amongst other forms, Huge Sillytoe creates performances using masks, puppets, (anti)musical instruments, and interactive sculptures often built from found and reclaimed materials. Sometimes they work alone or as part of numerous collectives. Harnessing their unique artistic position as a shape-shifting, oversized and foolish toe, they seek to create work that challenges normative perceptions of 'sense' and undermines associated power/knowledge hierarchies. In this way they toe open the pathway to a stranger and fairer world, assisting others to trample this trail further via facilitating (no)work(no)shops where new practices of transgressive, emancipatory performance are nurtured collectively by different groups in diverse locations. By creating otherworldly costumes and masks, embodying the characters they birth, and helping others to do the same, Huge Sillytoe instigates alternative modes of relationality and allows performance participants to bridge differences in unforeseen ways.

Born and raised in Durham, North East England, Huge Sillytoe is now itinerant, based during recent years between New York City, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, and London, with regular research, residency, and performance trips elsewhere. Their artistic, activist, and academic work is intertwined and mutually informing, their recent practice-informed PhD investigations resulting in a thesis entitled: 'Alegría rebelde and performance (c)art: A comparative (auto)ethnography of absurdist performance practice amongst activists and socially committed artists in Buenos Aires and New York City'. They have been seen performing at Centre for Contemporary Arts (Glasgow), Manuke (Tokyo), MKA: Theatre of New Writing (Melbourne), Grace Exhibition Space (New York), Judson Memorial Church (New York), Experiencia Hiedra (Buenos Aires), Teatro Popular La Otra Cosa (Buenos Aires), Temporary Autonomous Arts (London), Casa Viva (Mexico City), Huerto Roma Verde (Mexico City), and many unexpected crevices in-between. Huge Sillytoe speaks fluent English, Spanish, and Toetapoelib, working Portuguese, not-quite-working French, and broken Russian. They make work in all these languages and more.

www.hugesillytoe.com