



once identified in poetry: contingent (something one must “look up”), modal (“getting” something versus “digging” it), ontological (something perhaps not interpretable at all), and tactical (playing with basic conventions for expression).²⁴ This study focuses on tactical difficulty. Other sorts do matter, but in limited and less peculiar ways. *Topsy Turvy* (fig. 2), a 2009

design by Oskar van Deventer, is a case in point. A crank propels twelve numbered metal discs along a semicircular path in either of two directions; the path leads to a cascade that reorganizes the discs with each cycle of movement.²⁵ Running the crank clockwise generates one sort of scrambling while doing so counterclockwise results in a different one. Consequently, turning the crank first one way and then the other will not undo the initial jumble. Rather, it will only scramble things further. Still, the behavior of the discs is linear and entirely predictable. It is, however, entirely predictable only for users with specialized knowledge,

2 | Oskar van Deventer, *Topsy Turvy*, 2009. Various materials, 30.0 x 7.0 cm. Collection of Tom Cutrofelo, New York, New York. Photo courtesy of Tom Cutrofelo.