


The Damned Universe of Charles Fort



Louis Kaplan



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THE **D**AMNED **U**NIVERSE
OF **C**HARLES **F**ORT



CHARLES FORT AT HIS GIANT CHECKERBOARD

**THE DAMNED UNIVERSE
OF CHARLES FORT**

LOUIS KAPLAN

AUTONOMEDIA

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







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








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THE DAMNED UNIVERSE
OF CHARLES FORT



THEODORE DREISER AND CHARLES FORT, SEPTEMBER, 1931.

“Your publisher wants opinions of your writing. To think that that should be necessary or even seem so. You—the most fascinating literary figure since Poe. You—who for all I know may be the progenitor of an entirely new world viewpoint. You whose books thrill and astound me as almost no other books have thrilled and astounded me.” Letter, Theodore Dreiser to Charles Fort, August 27, 1930, in Robert H. Elias, ed., *Letters of Theodore Dreiser: A Selection* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), p. 507.

“Now see here my dear Helen. This is a plot. It’s some kind of a trick of double exposure. Everybody knows that I’m bigger than Dreiser, and you have me looking like some ordinary little lizard beside the huge dinosaur. But I don’t care. In the picture, I’m handsomer than he is, and in the other, I’m uglier than anybody else in the world. That’s superiority enough for a while.” Letter, Charles Fort to Helen and Theodore Dreiser, December 13, 1931.

1

QUASI-INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMORIST SCIENCE

LOUIS KAPLAN

“I can’t quite define my motive, because to this day it has not been decided whether I am a humorist or a scientist.”

Charles Fort, *Wild Talents* 1

This introduces the humorist science of Charles Fort. But it can only be introduced as a quasi-introduction because, as Fort indicates, the humorist science can only invoke a quasi-status. After all, it has not been decided one way or another yet. This split decision gives the hyphenated and intermediate state of existence or the world according to Fort. At that peculiar juncture between the humorist and the scientist, one will not be able to specify a motive either in the service of knowledge or of laughter. Through the insertion of a hyphen, one will have to take matters seriously-playfully. Through the insertion of a hyphen, I take up the work and the spirit of Charles Fort. Quasi, I write to further an indecision or to review a decision making process. I write to keep the motive not quite defined or to define the limits of the subject of motives. I write to make the outline—the difference between what I include and

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exclude—vague, and I find that in this process I must constantly call myself back from wandering off into the infinity or the abyss of the quasi-itself. (p. 178) I write because to this day it has not been decided whether I am a humorist or a scientist.

The texts of Charles Fort address the quandary of borders and the problematic boundary lines that divide and define inside and out.² Take any conventional dichotomy or division about the ways of the world (real/unreal, truth/fiction, knowledge/ignorance, serious/playful) and the Fortean humorist science intervenes with a practice that tracks the interval. It makes for a peculiar writing style brusquely punctuated by dashes and interspersed through hyphens. It strews its pages with unpatented neologisms and a litter of simulated prefixes (i.e., pseudo-, phantom-). For these marks constitute the appropriate language for any remarks to trace the hyphenated state of intermediate existence which we are-are not. This is, as it were or as it were not, the were-wolf in his composition as well as his composition on werewolves. "So my acceptance, or pseudo-conclusion, is that werewolves are quite likely-unlikely."

The likely-unlikely pseudo-conclusions of the humorist science return to the absolute difference of a gap which it is impossible to cross inasmuch as it always has been crossed already. Whether imagined or real, this peculiar crossroads provokes the most serious of tasks (absolutely) and the most comic of diversions (supposedly). "The gap, or the supposed gap, is the difference, or the supposed absolute difference between the imagined and the physical." (p. 1010) In the staging of its craft, the humorist science recalls the quasi- as the gap or the supposed gap that both defines it and that separates it from itself. This is how the humorist science repeats that to which there is nothing to add—where it has not been decided yet and where no motive has been quite defined.³

It is a world where catachresis has become a way of life. Or, as Fort writes: "One of the advantages of Intermediatism is that, in the oneness of quasiness, there can be no mixed metaphors." (p. 59) In pursuing the oneness of quasiness, the humorist science endlessly speculates on the possibility-impossibility of squaring the circle of the following intermediate equation: $1 = 1/2$. It delivers the language appropriate to Syntheticus—the Fortean god who transits between a unifying monism and its artificial simulation in a miming of the transcendence. Fort describes how he has been haunted by Syntheticus in a letter to his literary friend Theodore Dreiser. The double himself, the god of the quasi-equation, is both the source and the derivative of two unknown variables called X and Y. "It was from the great god Syntheticus, himself, that I derived X and Y"⁴

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These are the titles of two of Fort's lost manuscripts which Dreiser sought in vain to find a publisher and which Fort sacrificed as burnt offerings to please the Synthetic god. Both texts collect data in support of the scientific hypothesis as the subdetermined site of Syntheticus.⁵ If one takes the signature of Fort in and as an intermediate effect, one will engage the inscription of the split "Syntheticus, himself." In the Fortean text, one encounters the simultaneous deployment of a double operation. One could say that a hyphen joins and divides his own proper name and makes him a trading post or a switching center. Fort - Fort. At the crossroads of chance and necessity, this is a most fortuitous event. On the one hand, the fort is an encloser. It seeks to build an elaborate fortification or stronghold in defense of inclusion.⁶ In its attempts to include the data which other scientists have overlooked in support of the new dominant of Inclusionism, the project of Fortean science might be interpreted synthetically in the service of a wider monism which brings everything together under one roof and which reveals the continuity of existence. Literally, the hyphen brings things together under one (Gr. = *hupo hen*).

"But," Fort resists, "my interest is not only that of a unifier." In other words, one encounters Fort as something which is far out and far off, or as something which is away. There comes the sneaking suspicion that the synthetic operation of Fortean science is a completely artificial one and that the gathering of anomalies and exceptions puts into question any attempts at systematization. As X and Y demonstrate, Syntheticus is also the god of outcasts "who broods over stables, dumps, and rear houses."⁷ The hyphen divides quasi-ly as if a solitary pioneer were severing the possibility of fruitful exchange and intercourse. In the stuttering of a hyphen, the studman has become a stuntman. The science of eugenics will be exposed to a series of synthetic devices in a practice of externality and extra-genetic values. The forced union of Fort's vagabond ideas leads to the prostitution of thought in a house of infamy and exteriority.

This is exogamy, practiced with thoughts—to fertilize a volcanic eruption with a storm of frogs—or to mingle the fall of edible substance from the sky with the unexplained appearance of Cagliostro. But I am a pioneer and no purist, and some of these stud-stunts of introducing vagabond ideas to each other may have about the eugenic value of some of the romances in houses of ill-fame.

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In the first scenario, Fort has to be held up as a trailblazing example of interdisciplinary researches in the sciences. He has to be considered as a prime candidate for the Nobel Prize of interdisciplinary science for his pioneering work in the correlation of heretofore unrelated events or for his discovery of numerous new sciences. Given the second scenario, this scientific tramp and swindler will be judged by the discipline as not even fit to hold a lecture at a scientific forum—except as a hold-up. The hyphenate-subject will be taken and mistaken as a laughing hyena. Fort has recognized genius. “Suppose, at a meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, I should read a paper upon the transformation of a man into a hyena. There would be only one way of doing that. I recommend it to unrecognized geniuses, who can’t otherwise get a hearing. It would have to be a hold-up.” Unknowingly, the language has slipped into the impersonal and the conditional voice of the humorist science. It would have to be a hold-up. Its holding up would be the site of a transformation—the meeting and splicing point of these two meetings. If you had recorded both of these scenarios on a video tape recorder minus soundtrack and then played them back simultaneously as an exercise in double exposure, you would find yourself on the track of the hyphenated texts of Charles Fort.⁸

The epigraph to the humorist science has been lifted from an autobiographical incident from Fort’s youth which appears to have a certain allegorical significance. One might be tempted to say that the entire life story of Charles Fort is contained within it. In Fortean fashion, it is a story about the quasi-construction of borders and about the indexical procedure in general. It is an inquiry into cutting and pasting—the ways and the by-ways of fixing and affixing a label.

When Charlie was a youngster, his parents set him to work in the family store with the following assignment. “I had to scrape off labels of other dealers’ canned goods, and paste on my parent’s label.” First, Charlie learns about the construction of meaning and value (of goods and of bads) as an effect of the naming and labeling of the dealers. By scraping off and pasting on, he reclassifies the world of the other dealers into a particularly Fortean world view in the affixing of his family seal. He is already involved in a most singular cosmographic activity. Most naturally or most artificially, he brings everything together

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under one label. He is conserving in the name of the father and adulterating in the name of the artificial preservative.

But the tale of the can proceeds in the face of adversity and scarcity in the laws of supply and demand. Even if all the labels bear a family resemblance, what does an indexer do when he has only peach labels left in his arsenal? Here the inquiring Chuck follows a inspired logic to test the limits of classification. As it goes along, all the world turns peachy.

But I had used all except peach labels. I pasted the peach labels on peach cans, and then came to apricots. Well, aren't apricots peaches? And there are plums that are virtually apricots. I went on, either mischievously, or scientifically, pasting the peach labels on cans of plums, cherries, string beans, and succotash. I can't quite define my motive, because to this day it has not been decided whether I am a humorist or a scientist. I think that it was mischief, but, as we go along, there will come a more respectful recognition that also it was scientific procedure.

If you would only taste the contents, then you would get angry at a prankish and mischievous boy who gives you plums when you wanted peaches. But Fort has rather opened a can of worms. For you could also imagine a most respectful and more scientific procedure of classifying the world where all fruits and vegetables have become peaches. In this manner, Fort's humorist scientist wants to entertain the possibility of the (virtual) equivalence between these two constructions of the cans. One has moved from consideration of the contents and the goods ("Damn it! I wanted peaches but the bastard gave me plums.") to the construction of the rules of the game and the performance of effects ("Umm. What a delicious tasting fruit!). In the flip of a lid, contempt has transformed itself into amusement.

Nevertheless, before one jumps to grand conclusions about the symbolic significance and the allegorical nature of this can opening story, Fort warns the second-class reader that it is in the nature of an allegory to withhold any overt meaning. Beyond all these wonderful speculations about meaning construction and about the inter-relations of science and humour, we have to return to the possibility that we have only been talking about a can of peaches. The humorist scientist as allegorist will intercut these readings. He will defamiliarize the well-known to the point where you begin to see the thing in allegorical terms. But that is the time when you had better eat your peaches.⁹ Whether symbols or peaches,

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Fort juggles with the scenarios of any reader-response criticism. "There are readers who will think over well-known ways of peaches and succotash, and won't know what I am writing about. There are others who will see 'symbolism' in it, and send me appreciations, and I won't know what they're writing about." (p. 851)

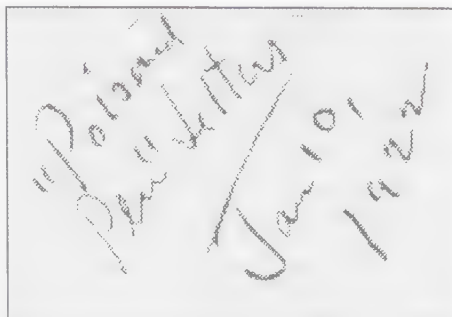
When it comes to the hyphenated effects of the humorist science, one can not escape from calling oneself a downright hypocrite. With *Wild Talents*, Fort entertains the possible symbolism of hypocrites rather than of peaches. "Here in our existence of the hyphen, which is the symbol of hypocrisy." Fort sets up an etymological interaction in the Greek between two forms of under-taking—*hupo hen* and *hupo krino*. Sliding under the crisis, it is hypocrisy to think that the matter can be decided. Situated under the critique, it is hypocrisy to continue to think so.¹⁰ The figure of the hypocrite plays the part of the missing link who intervenes between the humorous and the scientific in the hyphenated state of existence. It is impossible for him to decide anything at this point. One can only speculate with Fort: "It could be, that, with our data, we tell of nothing but lies, and at the same time be upon the track of future values." From the critical vantage point, there is the necessity for normative and nominative categories whether crackpot or genius, whether prankster or prophet. In the economy of the hypocritical and the superimposition "at the same time," the humorist science tracks the possible-impossible hyphen that passes between the lies of the past and the values of the future.

Thus, the indefinite object of the humorist science would be to recall the hypocritical status of science and the history of science. At one point, Fort defines science as the "conventionalization of alleged knowledge." (p. 628) As its alter-ego and counterpoint, the not quite defined and defining motive of Fortean science deconventionalizes scientific knowledge as alleged and unallegeable. Charles Fort is a ruthless vigilante who pursues the crisis recklessly under the banner of laughter. He is a mock inquisitor who seeks to extract a series of lying confessions out of science—that it is sub-determined or utterly falsifiable at every turn, that it masks its local strategies as global laws and truths, that its every move is "only a temporary disguise of the abysmal." Playing its hypocritical games of self-deception on the verge of the abyss, the comic dramaturgy of modern science touches upon the blackest of humours.

Fort will ask his critical twin-brother to entertain how and where he has cut—how and where he has passed judgment to recover the tracks of the hypocritical and the hyphenated (-, —) and to remove the disturbances. Only then can one begin to fathom the bite of the Fortean dictum which cuts through every line of his quadropus: "Every science is

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a mutilated octopus. If its tentacles were not clipped to stumps, it would feel its way into disturbing contacts." Fort insists that every scientist is a barber at best and a butcher at worst. He rewrites another ancient adage in line with his strong program and in the strong point of his signature. "Whoever said that the pen is mightier than something else,



overlooked the mightiest of all, and that's the scissors." (p. 756) These practices of pen, sword, and scissors posit the scientist as fashioner of cuts.¹¹ In the name of Fort, his forte is fencing with the snips and the snipes of a scissors. This is not a figure of speech. For science, it is a way of life and of death. It is a practice which clips corners to shave margins. "He lathered it with the soap of his explanations, and shaved it clean of all unconventional details." (p. 771) Science shows the finished product of a well-dressed, cleanly shaven, and fresh smelling conventionalized explanation. In its place, the humorous scientist finds only a disturbing business—a body of patched rags or torn tatters—the remnants of an "intellectual dress making"—and a face riddled with nubs, stubble, and scars.¹²

Sometimes the laughter bursts out uproariously and at other times it breaks into a nervous giggle. The latter effect comes when the humorist scientist encounters the taboos of the modern sciences or what has been cast into the ill-famed house. Lest one forget, the Fortean underview is an infinite writing of *The Book of the Damned*.¹³ He becomes science's pornographer or he explores the thin line that divides cosmography and pornography. The staging of the scene will always depend upon the cut that renders pornographic, ob-scene, and inter-dicted. "These data are so improper they're obscene to the science of today." (p. 46) But Fort does not champion the accursed, excluded, or obscene data for their present or future truth value. Rather these improprieties stage how each cosmographic taboo or pornographic challenge engages a particular site of scientific desire.

There is a biographical incident out of Fort's life where he pursues this issue in order to give obscenity its (im)proper due. Dreiser had been censored before the law for his publication of *The Genius*. Fort is perplexed. The unrecognizable genius posts Dreiser a satirical letter that affirms the denaturalizing nature of his damning craft as it is cast out in the signature of the lewd priest. They want to brand him as the

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sensationalist reporter. What a perverted view! The scientist will never stray far from the sensationalist. The humorist science conveys astronomy, chemistry, and physics as latter-day forms of erotic arts which find their subject matters in the heavenly, molecular, and the sub-atomic bodies.

High-priest of Evil: Damn it all! speak to me! tell me! what shall I do to be lewd?... I write of the attractions of the planets, and of the affinities of atoms. These are lusts. Yet, to save me, I cannot convey evil notions of astronomic and chemic obscenities."¹⁴

In terms of the anatomical topography, the humorist exhumers displaces the cosmographical center. Lustfully, it is about as close as one will get to a scientific principle with Fort. "We have reached not the heart of a system but the crotch of a quandary." In place of the central organ of a physical body or the founding laws and principles of a scientific system, the humorist scientist, working and playing under the pseudo-signs of the crisis, encounters a multiplexity of bifurcating and supplanting sites of scientific desire. Whereas others might be satisfied to pierce the heart, the scientific pornographer parries with infinite chains of crotches posing as the reproducing and reproductive center.

The humorist science also deploys strategies to defamiliarize the privileges and familiarities taken by science and scientists in the modern world. The title of Fort's only published novel—*The Outcast Manufacturers*¹⁵—provides a clue to its enactment. As the outcast manufacturer, Fort produces and reproduces the data of the damned which science can not mobilize nor systematize. But he will extend his defamiliarizing strategies to read the scientific authorities as manufacturers and outcasts. In terms of the first half of the figure, he recalls how the laboratory scientist manufactures the goods of knowledge like a canning factory. But, in advance of an extra-terrestrial anthropology of science, Fort also treats the scientist in his laboratory as a foreign specimen. He reframes the scientist as the priest and the magician of the modern world. He even follows this rigorous logic of symmetry to the point where it breaks down the possibility of anthropological distinctions. One only has to grant the tentative assumption that science is hypocritical guesswork. Rodents, dogs, and idiots of all ages will enjoy reading Fort because the humorist science encourages them to fight back in the laboratory wars against the privileges and the valorizations of

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scientific reason. "As a guesser, I'll not admit my inferiority to any scientist, imbecile, or rabbit." (p. 905)

With these strategies, Fortean science underlines the hypocritical status of the critical adventure. Contrary wise, the humorist scientist will draft a new world out of the irregular regularities of the data which he has collected so meticulously over the years. He will push the hypocritical to the point where he stakes a cosmographic claim of his own. He will demonstrate how cosmography writes the comic screen play of the cosmic. He will show how each cosmography writes on a margin between the universe and its grafting. He will offer alternative ways of marching with the data of the damned which have been conventionalized or overlooked by the contemporary mutilated octopuses. He will dare the reader to explore the possibilistics of the spontaneous combustion of bodies, of teleportations and telepathic technologies, of the fall of strange bodies from a Super-Sargasso Sea, or of the stationariness of the earth. Following the treatises and treatments of Doctor Faustroll, he will pursue the pataphysical laws of the cosmos as the science of exceptions.¹⁶ He will propose recklessly-carefully formulated constructs or "usurped words" to phrase the intermediate. They will sing alternately of an exceptional cosmography and a damned universe. He will construct and chart new sciences for the investigation of the cosmographic effects of intermediatism. The reader will be introduced to occult criminology, neo-astronomy, super-geography, and transmediumization. All in all or nothing with nothing, he will become the parodist of cosmic history in a star system that is riddled with disaster and where there is nothing to parody but parody itself.

Through the Fortean half-blink, the history of science begins to look quite differently. It is not the history of progress and development. It is not the history of models nor paradigm shifts. It is not a history of the false trails or the right tracks from the perspective of the successful successors. It is a history where the idea of progress will be reinterpreted as reinterpretation itself or as nothing more than the defiance of conventionality. It is a history that returns the critical (ad)vantage point to the transformations and the transitions sliding under the crisis. "The history of science is a record of the transformations of contempts and amusements." The conventional history of science determines from the perspective of the critical decision what to hold in contempt and what to hold in amusement. But the hypocritical revisioning of the history of science poses an equality and a superimposition. It is not to be read as an order or in any particular order. The quasi-history of the humorist

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science is a (broken) record of transformations—of contempts-amusements. This move inextricably links the history of the sciences to the history of its silences. It is the history which cracks open the safe solidities of the systematic foundations of critical science in the gaps, or the supposed gaps, of the hypocritical quandary. The wavering one speaks in the semi-coloned language of cosmic paradox as a subset of silent comedy. "So it is that one who searches for fundamentals comes to bifurcations; never to a base; only to a quandary."

With the humorist science, he will have inter-mediated the ideal topology that structures the dramaturgy of the history of science as either a tragic or an epic theater.¹⁷ There is an exact science of necessity in which one invokes the Greek tragedians. It just had to work out or happen this way. There is a defamiliarizing science of alternatives in which one proffers the name of Einstein. It worked out this way, but it could have happened quite otherwise. There is the humorist science of the hyphen (-) in which one provokes the pseudonyms of Charles Fort. But will it have happened? Fort gives one the workout: "They had worked out as they should not have worked out. (p. 715) It will no longer be a question of belief. No. "We believe no more. We accept." (p. 21) It is a strategy which is designed to force the acknowledgment of the symmetry of these two sentences. One rewrites the first in terms of the second in a Fortean manner through an alternative punctuation which transforms the most extreme nihilism into a strategy of affirmation. It reverses in the remarks of the high priest of evil who damns it all. Every belief (i.e., we believe) and every disbelief (i.e., no) has to be regarded as the performance of an excess (i.e., more) in an economy of affirmation (i.e., we accept). It gives the following hyphenated conclusion. We believe—no—more—we accept.¹⁸ It will neither be a question of knowledge. Instead of the Cartesian cogito to remove all epistemological doubt in the certainty of the thinking subject ("I think, therefore I am"), one must entertain a doubtful epistemological anarchics found and founded in the utterance—"ours is not an existence but an utterance." The utterance stages its own ceaseless surpassing (*outrance*). Under the pseudo-sign of the Fortean epistemological break, there comes the utter ruin of the intermediate. One ought to meditate upon this revised mantra as a quasi-ergo sum. That is to say: I utter, therefore I am-am not.¹⁹

Of course, the methodist-wiseman in his pursuit for fixed labels will interpret Fort's positions as a precursor to the program of epistemological anarchism promulgated by the likes of Paul Feyerabend.²⁰ To extend our Fortean allegory, he will conclude that they manufacture their

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philosophical product at the same canning factory and with the same methods. "But something that the methodist-wiseman can not learn is that a still better method is not being so tied to any particular method." (p. 657) He can not learn this "something" because the anarchic practice never belongs to the province of a method, a system, or an "ism." It is labeled as such only by the methodist-wiseman. In the point of its utterance, the comic scientist as anarchic-wiseguy undertakes his hypocritical strategies and maneuvers in a participation that never belongs. If Feyerabend gives the battle cry of epistemological anarchism in *Against Method* as "Anything goes," then step-Dada Fort outdoes him with the very simple "Method of disregard: Anything's anything." (p. 155) The method of disregard enacts the hyphenated hesitation—the hypnotic fascination of the oneness of quasiness, of $1 = \frac{1}{2}$. This is centered in the crotch and the snatch of the humorist science. There is the two anythings or the assumption of the equation of totality. There are the two anythings or the assumption of an absolute difference.²¹

The humorist science also tracks the lure of the ontological at the heart of every scientific system. But, at the same time, it transforms scientific tautology into a strategy which doubles over into laughter.²² Tautology makes science repeat what it has already said in so many other words to show "us the dooce we are." (p. 700) It plays out the Fortean quandary of the foundation in another form and, in turn, it submits all scientific statements to an abysmal logic. For example, Fort shows science how it traps itself in vicious circles in the ontologizing of the straight line.

What is a straight line? A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Well, then, what is a shortest distance between two points? That is a straight line. According to the test of ages, the definition that a straight line is a straight line cannot be improved upon.

But what the scientist bemoans as loss brings the deuced one to a burst of laughter. In the second tracing of the circle or in writing over the straight line, there comes a slight hesitation in definition that belongs neither to linear progress nor to an infinite regress.²³

The strategy of inversion invades the Fortean text wherein he plays the clown and the buffoon. For the humorist scientist will be an inverter of values and a lover of perpetual carnival. He brings down the high and he raises the low. He exposes the hierarchies and the privileges which have

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been taken. He conjures the monsters which trouble and disturb the sleep of scientific reason. But he does not invert in order to support the validity of the suppressed. He no more believes in the state of the inversion than that two times two equals or does not equal four. That would reduce the intermediate play of the hyphen to the valorization of a real opposition or the truth of a damned universe. "We have had some doubtful adventures, trying hard to pretend that monsters, or little difficulties, did really oppose us." "Our only important opposition is, not science, but a belief that we are in conflict with science." (p. 1003) But this does not mean that the humorist science equates pretense with pure science. Fort's doubtful adventures rather slip in between "science" and itself, between "not science" and itself. In this manner, the humorist science repeatedly hyphenates between a privilege and an inversion, between belief and belief.

One can be overwhelmed by the amount of material which Fort has assembled and which he throws out at the reader. He is like a waste disposal unit shoveling and spitting out the real or imagined indigestibles of science in a barrage of data. I have dubbed Charles Fort a Dataist. However, his use and sense of the data can not be read as the formulation of an empirical or a positive science. Positivist science assembles data which has been collected from experimentation and observation as the documentary evidence or facts which are used to support a scientific explanation or to solve a particular inconsistency within a scientific model. In Fortean science, each piece of data must be considered as if it were a hyphen. Hypothetically or in principle, it is a fragment which can be inserted anywhere. For the humorist scientist, the documentary provides the material which furnishes an infinity of hypotheses and counter-discursive models. In its insistence upon the exceptional and the damned status of each datum, the humorist science undermines the development of any theory of science as a totalizing narrative.²⁴

The assemblage of Fort's Dataist science stages the pageantry of a parade or a procession. In the beginning, he swears, swarmed carnival. The procession begins on the first page of *The Book of the Damned* which is so strikingly capitalized—"Chapter 1. A PROCESSION of the damned." One is not witnessing a process or a trial but engaging a procession. History is ceaseless carnival—a series of contempt-amusement parks. The humorist scientist is not trying or examining each piece of data in a Baconian manner for its adequacy to truth. Rather he enjoys and joins in the spectacle. *The Book of the Damned* begins with a

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vivid description of carnival—a cast of the outcasts and the mistits who march in this phantom-marshal's parade. The passage proceeds or repeats in a rhythmic style that mimes the processional march itself. After the six passes, only the simulation of a period steps in to cut off the interminable or the seventh rest. "The impressiveness of things that pass and pass and pass, and keep on and keep on and keep on coming. The irresistibility of things that neither threaten nor jeer nor defy, but arrange themselves in mass-formations that pass and pass and keep on passing." In the humorist science, the strategies of inversion (defiances, threats, and jeers) always sidestep the issue. These postures are sidesteps to the issuance of the issue that keeps on coming-passing. The stutterings in the steps of the quasi-march of the humorist science impress the irresistible.²⁵

The project of the humorist science has a history, but it is a history which is still to come. Fort's never quite defined motive recalls the *gaia scienza* of another posthumous thinker, Friedrich Nietzsche. While Fort was a nine year old boy growing up in Albany, New York, Nietzsche was sending him a laugh track via an intercontinental telegraph. The cable reads: "There is perhaps still a future even for laughter... Perhaps then laughter will have united with wisdom, perhaps then there will be only joyful wisdom/gay science."²⁶ This quotation has not been cited to construct a well-bred genealogy or an intellectual history for the texts of Charles Fort. If you will look at the writings of Fort, you will find references to Hegel and Spinoza, but you will find not one single reference to Friedrich Nietzsche. Indeed, the connection will be drawn in a walrus of a mustache. In his "Introduction" to *The Books of Charles Fort*, Tiffany Thayer, the Secretary of the Fortean Society, recalls that his master "wore a brown mustache that bristled somewhat less than Nietzsche's."²⁷ If you would entertain the possibility that a similarity in mustaches could breed a similarity in philosophical styles (e.g., the *genealogy of mustaches*), then already you have set forth on the path of the humorist-scientist. And for Fort, the manner in which one wears one's mustache matters the most when it comes to the practice of one's philosophy. I offer the texts; you suit yourself. "I conceive of nothing, in religion, in science, or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

We say that figures like Fort and Nietzsche are posthumous thinkers because they have not arrived yet. While written in the past, their texts always await us. They problematize the order of historical succession because they send out signals from a past which has yet to return from

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the future. Or they wait to keep on being exhumed. The posthumous are like Fort's positing of real imaginary intelligences from another galaxy who have been sending cryptic messages to the earth for centuries that await decipherment.²⁸ In former dominants, this gift was sometimes called prophesy but the affirmation or acceptance of the posthumous involves a refusal to yield to the prophetic the status of an event to come.

The problematic of the posthumous returns to the temporal structure of the second-half of the Fortean epigraph: "because to this day it has not been decided whether I am a humorist or a scientist." The sentence could have been written without the temporal phrasing ("to this day"), but it would not have delivered the posthumous this way. For the quasi-status of the humorist scientist depends upon the posthumous dynamics which will have been left hanging "to this day." When will we have come "to this day"? Is it to the day when Fort wrote this epigraph? Is it to the day upon which it was transcribed? Is it the day upon which you have come to it? To this day—it has not been decided. "To this day" risks the terms of the visionary and the crackpot. There comes no decisive Day of Judgment for the king of science and no deliverance from the purgatorial pose. Throughout the interregnum, this quasi-reign of the inter-, a hyphen will have intervened. To this day, the Fortean humorist science is given.

In the light of the humorist science, Fort and Nietzsche must also be dubbed with the conflated title of post-hum(or)ous thinkers. In the posting and the composting of the humorous, they found the post-humorous. Fort composes: "I have tried to dig into blankness. I have shoveled vacancy." (p. 939) We exhume the blanks and vacancies or the grounds which they covered and recovered in a quarry of quasi-queries and queasy theories. As we unpack the scientific quandaries of the Fortean hyphenated-man or the Nietzschean super-man, we moisten the humus with our humors. We bid farewell to the Newtonian universe and the principle of gravity based on the principle of attraction and the universal fall in an apple. We welcome the fluidities of the Fortean multiverse in the quasi-principle of repulsion based on the difficulties of removing the dog from his bone.²⁹

To summarize the humorist science in one sentence would be as difficult to conclude the Fortean quandary of deciding his professional calling between humorist and scientist. Instead, I will draw a map of its intelligence. It will not delineate the tripartite division of the Freudian psychoanalytic man of superego, ego, and id. This map will not provide the key to *homo faber*, *homo economicus*, nor even *homo ludens*. While there might be similarities, he is neither Nietzsche's superman, Tzara's approximate man, nor Musil's man without qualities. He is the Fortean

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hyphenated-man—*homo humorous-scientificus*. He has intermediated man and science with humor. He is said to possess a very smooth and slippery brain, a well-lubricated brain. (p. 325) At the moments of the intensest excitements, there is said to be a wound in this brain. That is a chance for the electricity in it to start crackling.³⁰ In the beginning, it appears that this intelligence consists only of knowledge. The digging and the shoveling of the humorist scientist throws up the solid mound of knowledge. It shovels out knowledge in its quasi-elementary quark-particles as a vitreous ignorance and a gaseous laughter.

I have drawn the topography of this map with the memory and the promise of the humorist science of Charles Fort in mind. "In the topography of intellection, I should say that what we call knowledge is ignorance surrounded by laughter."

HY-PHEN-MNAL

Seeker of wisdom, you have come to a crossroads. You feel that you have been there before, but you are not quite sure. Maybe it is only a place you have dreamt or have read about in books. He had said that there a fort once stood. The fort is gone now, but the traces of the ruined gateway remain under a hyphenated caption on which you can hardly decipher this reversible motto: "wit in wis—wis in wit." You have no idea who wrote this message and how it got there. But you wonder what the phrase might mean or how it might matter in your life. There, you have reached the juncture of two obliterations or of one obliteration (the lack of knowledge, knowing nothing) and its other (knowledge of the lack, knowing nothing to know), but, FORT, seeker of idiocy, you will never know.

The seeker of wisdom departs more and more from the state of the idiot, only to find that he is returning. Belief after belief fades from his mind: so his goal is the juncture of two obliterations. One is of knowing nothing, and the other is of knowing that there is nothing to know.

But here are we, at present, not so wise as no longer to have ideas...

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Notes

1. All references in this text which have been placed in parentheses have been extracted from Charles Fort, *The Books of Charles Fort* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941). The four books are broken down in the following way: *The Book of the Damned* (1919), pp. 1–310; *New Lands* (1923), pp. 311–538; *Lo!* (1931), pp. 539–840; and *Wild Talents* (1932), pp. 841–1062. All other references are to be found in this volume.
2. Let it be added that the Fortean hyphenated state of inter-mediatism might be recast in terms of the endless meditation of Maurice Blanchot upon the interim and the neuter of writing. See *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).
3. Letter, Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser, June 6, 1916. Quoted in Damon Knight, *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), p.57.
4. X speculated that life on earth is a telepathic projection from some unknown region in the cosmos. Y entertained the possibility of a lost civilization in the Antarctic regions from which Kasper Hauser emigrated.
5. As a further fortification of this theory via written evidence, one discovers how the sign creeps into Fort's personal correspondence about manuscript X: "I have taken utmost pains that nothing unfortified by evidence shall creep in." (Letter, Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser, May 1, 1915.)
6. Letter, Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser, June 6, 1916. Quoted in D. Knight, p. 57.
7. In *Wild Talents*, Fort repeatedly insists that the invisibles and discontinuities of quantum mechanics and the "theory of the Nobel-Prize winner, Dr. Bohr" can only be perceived as a form of magic and sorcery. Arguing for the principal of symmetry, he superimposes his ideas about the teleportation of human bodies upon the quantum leaps of the sub-atomic physicists: "The idea of playing leapfrog, without having to leap over the other frog, is simply another representation of the idea of entering a closed room without passing through the walls."
8. This is Fort's move in the unpublished autobiographical digest, *Many Parts* (1901), written thirty years previously. As Fort recalls the delicious plunders on and off the job, he ignores the labyrinthine canyons of classification between the bites of his canned goods feast. "Exploring through dark canyons of boxes piled high, every floor a labyrinth of things good to eat. Breaking into cases, taking out cans. Eating a few cherries, then having a light lunch of potatoes, trying a little asparagus, going on to apricots." (p. 34)
9. This analysis is indebted in a most parasitic fashion to the hypocritical remarks of Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore, MD.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 210–212.

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10. In a book of the selected writings of Charles Fort that chops 1062 pages down to approximately 160, there is no way to overlook the fashioning of cuts that has guided the production of the present text. In the role of Fort's butcher and barber and in presenting $\frac{1}{10}$ of a man and his major texts, I can only hope that his best cuts are still showing.
11. On the matter of fencing, I would refer the reader to an interview with Hans-Porter Duerr in 1978. In "Wissenschaftler als Hexe" ("Scientist as Witch"), Duerr insists on the fence-sitting tactics and etymology of his version of the hyphenated scientist. "Hexe hieß einst Hagazussa, die auf dem Hag, der Hecke, dem Zaun zwischen Zivilisation und Wildnis sitzt, mit dem einen Bein drinnen, mit dem anderen draußen." ("Witch meant Hagazussa once upon a time. She is the one who sits on the fence, the hedge. or the rail between civilization and wilderness with one leg inside and the other outside.") In Hans-Peter Duerr, *Satyricon* (Berlin: Karin Kramer, 1982), p. 94.
12. I recommend the texts of Bruno Latour as exemplars. Latour's Pandora's boxes might be compared with Fort's peach cans. In *Science in Action*, Latour opens up the black boxes of normal science to find the conventionalizations of instrumental practice and technique in the guise of knowledge. See "Opening Pandora's Black Box" in *Science in Action* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1987).
13. This gives the title of the first epic tome of the humorist science published by Boni and Liverlight in New York in 1919.
14. Letter, Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser, August 13, 1916. Quoted in D. Knight, p. 58.
15. The novel was originally published by B.W. Dodge and Company in New York (1909). It treats the adventures of the Birthwhistles, a family of humorist-scientists who run a semi-fraudulent mail order company. It was recently reprinted by the Printed Heritage Preservation Society in Washington D.C. (1988).
16. Here the reader is asked to consult the "Exploits and Opinions of Doctor Faustroll, Pataphysician" in Alfred Jarry, *Selected Works of Alfred Jarry* (New York: Grove Press, Inc. 1965).
17. This supplements the theatrical typology for the history of science in Yehuda Elkana, "A Programmatic Attempt at an Anthropology of Knowledge," in Everett Mendelsohn and Yehuda Elkana (eds.), *Sciences and Cultures. Sociology of the Sciences*, volume V, (Boston: Reidel, 1981) pp. 66–69.
18. Thus, the humorist science problematizes the meaning and possibility of "hoax" which has to be firmly grounded in disbelief. Instead, the Fortean economy of acceptance reframes both scientific hoax and discovery in terms of the mass production of hyphenated effects.
19. If this version fails to satisfy, one might turn to Fort's own thoughts (or lack of them) on this axiomatic Cartesian subject. "I do not think. I have never had a thought. Therefore something or another."
20. Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: Verso, 1978). Reiterating Feyerabend, see footnote 12

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- of the Introduction where the text cites Dada as the analogue to his practice. Reciting Tristan Tzara: "I am against system: the most acceptable system is that of having none, on no principle." (p. 9) see "Dada Manifesto, 1918" in *Seven Dada Manifestos and Lampisteries* trans. Barbara Wright (New York; Riverrun Press, 1977). In comparison, Fort's method of disregard ought to be read as a kind of "epistemological Dadaism." The humorist science assembles the data as exceptions and anomalous or as accursed and damned in order to stage the documentary as a counter-discourse that meets the specifications of Tzara's most acceptable system.
21. Fort's method of disregard also bears comparison with Duchamp's irony of indifference. "Ironism of affirmation: differences from negative ironism depending solely on Laughter." One might consider the readymade that indexes the world as art as a effect of the method of disregard. See Marcel Duchamp, "The Bride's Veil" in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, ed., *The Essential Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 30.
 22. Fort's tautologizing practice might be compared with the definition of the scientific in the intervention of Bazon Brock. In his axiomatic piece of "Wissenschaft" ("Science"), the babbler defines it so—"c. Wissenschaftlich: So ist es, wenn es so ist." ("c. scientific; So it is, if it is so.") In Bazon Brock, *Ästhetik als Vermittlung* (Köln: Dumont, 1976), p. 133.
 23. I recommend Patrick Hughes and George Brecht, *Vicious Circles and Infinity: An Anthology of Paradoxes* (London: Penguin, 1975) for a wide variety of tautologies in contemporary art, science, and literature. This volume even includes a Fortean specimen under the heading of "Analysis." Here, Fort reduces Darwinian natural selection to tautology and rewrites it in the surpassing of the utterance. "Darwinism: that survivors survive" (p.640).
 24. The reader is referred to three different areas of contemporary research which are linked to Fort's treatment of the data—Jean-Francois Lyotard and the incomplete status of the phrase in post-modern science, Michel Foucault on counter-discourse and positivities, and Giles Deleuze and the formation of micro-narratives.
 25. The staging of carnival intersects with a Nietzschean vision. "We are ready, as no previous age was, for the grand carnival, for the laughter and recklessness of a mental Mardi Gras, for the transcendental heights of the highest idiocy and Aristophanic mockery of the world. Perhaps it is here that we shall discover the realm of our invention, that realm where we too can be original, perhaps as parodists of world history and clowns (*Hanswürste*) of God..." In Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Section 223.
 26. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science (Fröhliche Wissenschaft)*, trans. Thomas Common (Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. 1960), p. 32.
 27. Tiffany Thayer, "Introduction." *The Complete Books of Charles Fort* (New York: Henry Holt, 1941), p. xix.
 28. One notes the stark contrast in the way in which Fort presents these extramundane materials in comparison with our contemporaries (e.g., Charles

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- Berlitz, Erich von Daniken, and to a lesser extent, Robert Anton Wilson) Lacking the posthumous practice of the humorist scientist, the first two writers stack up the facts and evidence of extra-terrestrial visitations as self-assured positive scientists in their pop space manuals *Chariots of the Gods? or Mysterious and Incredible Facts*. While Wilson usually abounds in comic sensibility, he does nothing to undercut an unproblematic reading of Fort's *Book of the Damned* by the Crowleyan scholar, Kenneth Grant. By the clip of a citation, Wilson endorses Grant's view that Fort believes unconditionally in extra-mundane intelligences who have been in contact with certain esoteric ones of this earth. See *Cosmic Trigger: The Final Secret of the Illuminati* (New York: Pocket Books, 1977), pp. 88–89.
29. Then, as before, the hypocrite intervenes in this reassessment of Newton's gravity. "It would be more widely logical to cancel falls with rises, and explain that there is nothing."
30. These last turns of phrase paraphrase two Fortean epigrams related to mind and brain. 1) "It is likely that there's a wound in a brain, at a time of intense excitement." (p.773); and, 2) "There is a chance for the electricity in somebody's imagination to start crackling."



FORT FAMILY HOME AT 332 STATE STREET, ALBANY, NEW YORK

2

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED

PREFATORY REMARKS

The *Book of the Damned* is an exceptional book. For the devout Fortean, it is the book of the law as well as the book of exceptions. *The Book of the Damned* pieces together the anomalies or accursed rejects of normal science and organizes and classifies them according to another cosmographical grid. But how could there be the formulation of any unifying laws or a general taxonomy within this multiversum of exceptional data? Is there anything to be gathered out of this ragged bunch and motley cast of cast-offs? Indeed, all of these damned things may have gone up in smoke or down into the hellfires already. These are the anomalous questions posed by *The Book of the Damned* as it assumes the status of damned book. When it comes to this wavering margin of the data as damned, Fort does not know what he is dealing with or whether he is dealing with anything at all. This hyphenated hesitation engenders the doctrines of Intermediatism which Fort affirms-retracts throughout the procession and the processing of the data of the damned.

In the dark light of the damned, one also can follow the story of the fall as a major obsession of the Fortean cosmography. But Fortean falls do not follow the Biblical form of a hellish exile from Eden and an earthly Paradise. These untainted and free falls are the vertical expulsions from the spitting heavens in rains of blood and sulphur, in showers of fishes and frogs, in the uncanny drops of worked stones, crystals, and lenses. Amid the crash of these falling and foreign objects, one lends an ear to the staging of a new mythos. It differs from the so-called “front-door beliefs”—of the fall of man and the resurrection by Christ, of Newton’s

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gravity fall and the resurrection by Einstein. Instead of proffering these Words incarnate, Fort babbles the Data outcasted. In this quasi-Genesis, the humorist scientist and mock curator of the damned entertains the possibility of something else—of externality as a resurrecting resource for a cosmographical counter-discourse or as “a satire upon the gods’ real existence.”

All in all or nothing with nothing, *The Book of the Damned* is the Bible by which we swear, and in swearing, curse.

THE PROCESSIONAL

A PROCESSION of the damned.

By the damned, I mean the excluded.

We shall have a procession of data that Science has excluded.

Bataillions of the accursed, captained by pallid data that I have exhumed, will march. You’ll read them—or they’ll march. Some of them livid and some of them fiery and some of them rotten.

Some of them are corpses, skeletons, mummies, twitching, tottering, animated by companions that have been damned alive. There are giants that will walk by, though sound asleep. There are things that are theorems and things that are rags: they’ll go by like Euclid arm in arm with the spirit of anarchy. Here and there will flit little harlots. Many are clowns. But many are of the highest respectability. Some are assassins. There are pale stenches and gaunt superstitions and mere shadows and lively malices: whims and amiabilities. The naive and the pedantic and the bizarre and the grotesque and the sincere and the insincere, the profound and the puerile.

A stab and a laugh and the patiently folded hands of hopeless propriety.

The ultra-respectable, but the condemned, anyway.

The aggregate appearance is of dignity and dissoluteness: the aggregate voice is a defiant prayer: but the spirit of the whole is processional.

The power that has said to all these things that they are damned is Dogmatic Science.

But they’ll march.

The little harlots will caper, and the freaks will distract attention, and the clowns will break the rhythm of the whole with their buffooneries—but the solidity of the procession as a whole: the impressiveness of things that pass and pass and pass, and keep on and keep on and keep on coming.

The irresistibility of things that neither threaten nor jeer nor defy, but arrange themselves in mass-formations that pass and pass and keep on passing.

In this book, I assemble some of the data that I think are of the falsely and arbitrarily excluded.

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED

The data of the damned.

I have gone into the outer darkness of scientific and philosophical transactions and proceedings, ultra-respectable, but covered with the dust of disregard. I have descended into journalism. I have come back with the quasi-souls of lost data.

They will march.

So it's a book we're writing, or it's a procession, or it's a museum, with the Chamber of Horrors rather over-emphasized.

THE INTERMEDIATIST SPEAKS

To the Intermediatist, the accusation of "anthropomorphism" is meaningless. There is nothing in anything that is unique or positively different. We'd be materialists were it not quite as rational to express the material in terms of the immaterial as to express the immaterial in terms of the material. Oneness of allness in quasiness. I will engage to write the formula of any novel in psycho-chemic terms, or draw its graph in psycho-mechanic terms: or write, in romantic terms, the circumstances and sequences of any chemic or electric or magnetic reaction: or express any historic event in algebraic terms.

We are not realists. We are not idealists. We are intermediatists—that nothing is real, but that nothing is unreal: that all phenomena are approximations one way or the other between realness and unrealness.

So then:

That our whole quasi-existence is an intermediate stage between positiveness and negativeness or realness and unrealness.

Like purgatory, I think.

So, then, in general metaphysical terms, our expression is that, like a purgatory, all that is commonly called "existence," which we call Intermediateness, is quasi-existence, neither real nor unreal, but expression of attempt to become real, or to generate for or recruit a real existence.

Our acceptance is that Science, though usually thought of so specifically, or in its own local terms, usually supposed to be a prying into old bones, bugs, unsavory messes, is an expression of this one spirit animating all Intermediateness: that, if Science could absolutely exclude all data but its own present data, or that which is assimilable with the present quasi-organization, it would be a real system, with positively definite outlines—it would be real.

Its seeming approximation to consistency, stability, system—positiveness or realness—is sustained by damning the irreconcilable or the unassimilable—

All would be well.

All would be heavenly—

If the damned would only stay damned.

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So then, it is our expression that Science relates to real knowledge no more than does the growth of a plant, or the organization of a department store, or the development of a nation: that all are assimilative, or organizing, or systematizing processes that represent different attempts to attain the positive state—the state commonly called heaven, I suppose.

And Science is a turtle that says that its own shell encloses all things.

DOMINANTS OR THE PROGRESSIONS OF PREPOSTEROUSNESS

Science of today—the superstition of tomorrow. Science of tomorrow—the superstition of today.

In the topography of intellection, I should say that what we call knowledge is ignorance surrounded by laughter. We used to crucify, but now we ridicule: or in the loss of vigor of all progress, the spike has etherealized into the laugh.

I suppose that one of our main motives is to show that there is, in quasi-existence, nothing but the preposterous—or something intermediate to absolute preposterousness and final reasonableness—that the new is the obviously preposterous: that it becomes the established and disguisedly preposterous; that it is displaced, after a while, and is again seen to be the preposterous. Or that all progress is from the outrageous to the academic or sanctified, and back to the outrageous—modified, however, by a trend of higher and higher approximation to the impreposterous.

This is one of the profundities that we advertised in advance.

You can oppose an absurdity only with some other absurdity. But Science is established preposterousness. We divide all intellection: the obviously preposterousness and the established.

All progress is from the outrageous to the commonplace. Or quasi-existence proceeds from rape to the crooning of lullabies. It's been interesting to me to go over long-established periodicals and note controversies between attempting positivists and then intermediatistic issues. Bold, bad intruders of theories; ruffians with dishonorable intentions—the alarms of Science: her attempts to preserve that which is dearer than life itself—submission—then a fidelity. So many of these ruffians, or wandering comedians that were hated, or scorned, pitied, embraced, conventionalized. There's not a notion in this book that has a more frightful, or ridiculous, mien than had the notion of human footprints in rocks, when that now respectabilized ruffian, or clown, was first heard from. It seems bewildering to one whose interests are not scientific that such rows should be raised over such trifles: but the feeling of a systematist toward such an intruder is just about what anyone's would be if a tramp from the street should come in, sit at one's dinner table, and say he belonged there. We know what hypnosis can do: let him insist with all his might that he does belong there, and

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one begins to suspect that he may be right; that he may have higher perceptions of what's right.

Or my own acceptance that we do not really think at all; that we correlate around super-magnets that I call Dominants—a spiritual Dominant in one age, and responsively to it up spring monasteries, and the stake and the cross are its symbols: a Materialist Dominant, and up spring laboratories, and microscopes and telescopes and crucibles are its ikons—that we're nothing but iron filings relatively to a succession of magnets that displace preceding magnets.

In our acceptance, Dominants, in their succession, displace preceding Dominants not only because they are more nearly positive, but because the old Dominants, as recruiting mediums, play out. Our expression is that the New Dominant, of Wider Inclusions, is now manifesting throughout the world, and that the old Exclusionism is everywhere breaking down. In physics Exclusionism is breaking down by its own researches in radium, for instance, and in its speculations upon electrons, or its merging away into metaphysics, and by the desertion that has been going on for many years, by such men as Gurney, Crookes, Wallace, Flammarion, Lodge, to formerly disregarded phenomena—no longer called “spiritualism” but now “psychic research.” I think that the stronghold of Inclusionism is in aeronautics.



THE HUMORIST SCIENTIST
LEARNS THE HYPHENATED LOGIC
OF BOTTLING AND CANNING
IN HIS PARENTS' GROCERY
AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 12.

I think that the stronghold of the Old Dominant, when it was new, was in the invention of the telescope. Or that coincidentally with the breakdown of Exclusionism appears the means of finding out—whether there are vast aerial fields of ice and floating lakes full of frogs and fishes or not—where carved stones and black substances and great quantities of vegetable matter and flesh, which may be dragon's flesh, come from—whether there are interplanetary trade routes and vast areas devastated by Super-Tamerlanes—whether sometimes there are visitors to this earth—who might be pursued and captured and questioned.

I am not convinced that we make a fetish of the preposterous. I think our feeling is that in first gropings there's no knowing what will afterward be the acceptable. I think that if an

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early biologist heard of birds that grow on trees, he should record that he had heard of birds that grow on trees: then let sorting over of data occur afterward. The one thing that we try to tone down but that is to a great degree unavoidable is having our data all mixed up like Long Island and Florida in the minds of early American explorers. My own notion is that this whole book is very much like a map of North America in which the Hudson River is set down as a passage leading to Siberia.

EXTERNALITY

This book is an assemblage of data of external relations of this earth. We take the position that our data have been damned, upon no consideration for individual merits or demerits, but in conformity with a general attempt to hold out for isolation of this earth.

So it is, that having attempted to systematize, by ignoring externality to the greatest possible degree, the notion of things dropping in upon this earth, from externality, is as unsettling and as unwelcome to Science as—tin horns blowing in upon a musician's relatively symmetric composition—flies alighting upon a painter's attempted harmony, and tracking colors one into another—suffragist getting up and making a political speech at a prayer meeting.

Our acceptance is that the passing away of exclusionism is a phenomenon of the twentieth century: that gods of the twentieth century will sustain our notions be they ever so unwashed and frowsy. But, in our own expressions, we are limited, by the oneness of quasiness, to the very same methods by which orthodoxy established and maintains its now sleek, suave preposterousnesses. At any rate, though we are inspired by an especial subtle essence—or imponderable, I think—that pervades the twentieth century, we have not the superstition that we are offering anything as a positive fact. Rather often we have not the delusion that we're any less superstitious and credulous than any logician, savage, curator, or rustic.

So our pseudo-standard is Inclusionism, and, if a datum be a correlate to a more widely inclusive outlook as to this earth and its externality and relations with externality, its harmony with Inclusionism admits it. Such was the process, and such was the requirement for admission in the days of the Old Dominant: our difference is in underlying Intermediatism, or consciousness that though we're more nearly real, we and our standards are only quasi-

We have not the positivist's delusion of homogeneity. A positivist would gather all data that seem to relate to one kind of visitor and coldly disregard all other data. I think of as many different kinds of visitors to this earth as there are visitors to New York, to a jail, to a church—some persons go to church to pick pockets, for instance. We regard homogeneousness as an aspect of positiveness,

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but it is our acceptance that infinite frustrations of attempts to positivize manifest themselves in infinite heterogeneity: so that though things try to localize homogeneousness they end up in heterogeneity so great that it amounts to infinite dispersion or indistinguishability.

FALLS OF FISHES

The *Monthly Weather Review* records several falls of fishes in the United States; but accounts of these reported occurrences are not findable in other American publications. Nevertheless, the treatment by the *Zoologist* of the fall reported from Mountain Ash is fair. First appears in the issue of 1859-6493, a letter from the Rev. John Griffith, Vicar of Abedare, asserting that the fall had occurred, chiefly upon the property of Mr. Nixon, of Mountain Ash. Upon page 6540, Dr. Gray, of the British Museum, bristling with exclusionism, writes that some of the these fishes, which had been sent to him alive, were "very young minnows." He says: "On reading the evidence, it seems to me most probably only a practical joke: that one of Mr. Nixon's employees had thrown a pailful of water upon another, who had thought fish in it had fallen from the sky"—had dipped up a pailful from a brook. Those fishes—still alive—were exhibited at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park. The Editor says that one was a minnow and that the rest were sticklebacks.

He says that Dr. Gray's explanation is no doubt right. But, upon page 6564, he publishes a letter from another correspondent, who apologizes for opposing "so high an authority as Dr. Gray," but says that he had obtained some of these fishes from persons who lived at a considerable distance apart, or considerably out of range of the playful pail of water.

In the London *Times*, March 10, 1859, Vicar Griffith writes an account:

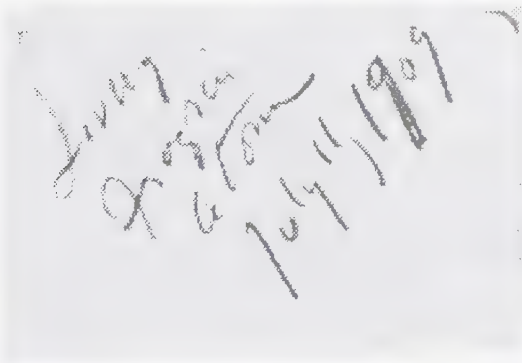
"The roofs of some houses were covered with them."

In this letter it is said that the largest fishes were five inches long, and that these did not survive the fall. *Report of the British Association*, 1859-158:

"The evidence of the fall of fish on this occasion was very conclusive. A specimen of the fish was exhibited and was found to be the *Gasterosteus leirus*."

Gasterosteus is the stickleback.

Altogether I think we have not a sense of total perdition, when we're damned with the explanation that someone soused someone else with a pailful of water in which were thousands of fishes four or



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five inches long, some of which covered roofs of houses, and some of which remained ten minutes in the air. By way of contrast we offer our own acceptance:

That the bottom of a super-geographical pond had dropped out.

Ferrel (*A Popular Treatise*, p. 414) tells of a fall of living fishes—some of them having been placed in a tank, where they survived—that occurred in India, about 30 miles south of Calcutta, Sept. 20, 1839. A witness of this fall says:

"The most strange thing which ever struck me was that the fish did not fall helter skelter, or here and there, but they fell in a straight line, not more than a cubit in breadth." See *Living Age*, 52-186.

India is far away: about 1830 was long ago.

Nature, Sept. 19, 1918-46:

A correspondent writes, from the Dove Marine Laboratory, Cuttercoats, England, that, at Hindon, a suburb of Sunderland, Aug. 24, 1918, hundreds of small fishes, identified as sand eels, had fallen—

Again the small area: about 60 by 30 yards.

The fall occurred during a heavy rain that was accompanied by thunder—or indications of disturbance aloft—but by no visible lightning. The sea is close to Hindon, but if you try to think of these fishes having described a trajectory in a whirlwind from the ocean, consider this remarkable datum:

That, according to witnesses, the fall upon this small area occupied ten minutes.

I cannot think of a clearer indication of a direct fall from a stationary source.

And:

"The fish were all dead, and indeed stiff and hard, when picked up, immediately after the occurrence."

By all of which I mean that we have only begun to pile up our data of things that fall from a stationary source overhead: we'll have to take up the subject from many approaches before our acceptance, which seems quite as rigorously arrived at as ever has been a belief, can emerge from the accursed.

RAINING BLACK

Black rains and black snows—rains as black as a deluge of ink—jet-black snowflakes.

Such a rain as that which fell in Ireland, May 14, 1849, described in the *Annals of Scientific Discovery*, 1850, and the *Annual Register*, 1849. It fell upon a district of 400 square miles, and was the color of ink, and of a fetid odor and very disagreeable taste.

The rain at Castlecommon, Ireland, April 30, 1887—"thick, black rain." (*Amer. Met. Jour.*, 4-193)

A black rain fell in Ireland, Oct. 8 and 9, 1907. (*Symons' Met. Mag.* 43-2.)

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"It left a most peculiar and disagreeable smell in the air."

The orthodox explanation of this rain occurs in *Nature*, March 2, 1908—cloud of soot that had come from South Wales, crossing the Irish Channel and all of Ireland.

So the black rain of Ireland, of March 1898: ascribed in *Symons' Met. Mag.* 33-40 to clouds of soot from the manufacturing towns of North England and South Scotland.

Our Intermediatist principle of pseudo-logic, or our principle of Continuity is, of course, that nothing is unique, or individual: that all phenomena merge away into all other phenomena: that, for instance—suppose there should be vast celestial super-oceanic, or inter-planetary vessels that come near this earth and discharge volumes of smoke at times. We're only supposing such a thing as that now, because, conventionally, we are beginning modestly and tentatively. But if it were so, there would necessarily be some phenomenon upon this earth, with which that phenomenon would merge. Extra mundane smoke and smoke from cities merge, or both would manifest in black precipitations in rain.

In Continuity, it is impossible to distinguish phenomena at their merging-points, so we look for them at their extremes. Impossible to distinguish between animal and vegetable in some infusoria—but hippopotamus and violet. For all practical purposes they're distinguishable enough. No one but a Barnum or a Bailey would send one a bunch of hippopotami as a token of regard.

So away from the great manufacturing centers:

Black rain in Switzerland, Jan. 20, 1911. Switzerland is so remote, and so ill at ease is the conventional explanation here, that *Nature*, 85-451, says of this rain that in certain conditions of weather, snow may take on an appearance of blackness that is quite deceptive.

May be so. Or at night, if dark enough, snow may look black. This is simply denying that a black rain fell in Switzerland, Jan. 20, 1911.

Extreme remoteness from great manufacturing centers:

La Nature, 1888, 2-406:

That Aug. 14, 1888, there fell at the Cape of Good Hope, a rain so black as to be described as a "shower of ink."

Continuity dogs us. Continuity rules us and pulls us back. We seemed to have a little hope that by the method of extremes we could get away from things that merge indistinguishably into other things. We find that every departure from one merger is entrance upon another. At the Cape of Good Hope, vast volumes of smoke from great manufacturing centers, as an explanation, cannot very acceptably merge with the explanation of extra-mundane origin—but smoke from a terrestrial volcano can, and that is the suggestion that is made in *La Nature*.

Our opponents hold out for mundane origin of all black rains. Our method

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will be the presenting of diverse phenomena in agreement with the notion of some other origin. We take up not only black rains but black rains and their accompanying phenomena.

A correspondent to *Knowledge*, 5-190, writes of a black rain that fell in the Clyde Valley, March 1, 1884; of another black rain that fell two days later. According to the correspondent, a black rain had fallen in the Clyde Valley, March 20, 1828; then again March 22, 1828. According to *Nature*, 9-43, a black rain fell at Marlsford, England, Sept. 4, 1873; more than twenty-four hours later another black rain fell in the same small town.

The black rains of Slains:

According to Rev. James Rust (*Scottish Showers*):

A black rain at Slains, Jan. 14, 1862—another at Carluke, 140 miles from Slains, May 1, 1862—at Slains, May 20, 1862—Slains, Oct. 28, 1863.

But after two of these showers, vast quantities of a substance described sometimes as "pumice stone," but sometimes as "slag," were washed upon the sea coast near Slains. A chemist's opinion is given that this substance was slag: that it was not a volcanic product: slag from smelting works. We now have, for black rains, a concomitant that is irreconcilable with origin from factory chimneys. Whatever it may have been, the quantity of this substance was so enormous that, in Mr. Rust's opinion, to have produced so much of it would have required the united output of all the smelting works in the world. If slag it were, we accept that an artificial product has, in enormous quantities, fallen from the sky. If you don't think that such occurrences are damned by Science, read *Scottish Showers* and see how impossible it was for the author to have this matter taken up by the scientific world.

The first and second rains, corresponded, in time, with ordinary ebullitions of Vesuvius.

The third and fourth, according to Mr. Rust, corresponded with no known volcanic activities upon this earth.

La Science Pour Tous, 11-26:

That, between October, 1863, and January, 1866, four more black rains fell at Slains, Scotland.

The writer of this supplementary account tells us, with a better, or more unscrupulous, orthodoxy than Mr. Rust's, that of the eight black rains, five coincided with eruptions of Vesuvius and three with eruptions of Etna.

The fate of all explanation is to close one door only to have another fly wide open. I should say that my own notions upon this subject will be considered irrational, but at least my gregariousness is satisfied in associating here with the preposterous --or this writer, and those who think in his rut, have to say that they can think of four discharges from one far-distant volcano, passing over a great part of Europe, precipitating nowhere else, discharging over one small northern parish—

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But also of three other discharges, from another far-distant volcano, showing the same precise preference, if not marksmanship for one small parish in Scotland.

Nor would orthodoxy be any better off in thinking of exploding meteorites and their debris: preciseness and recurrence would be just as difficult to explain.

RAINS OF BLOOD

Showers of blood.

Showers of blood.

Showers of blood.

There have been red rains that, in the middle ages, were called "rains of blood." Such rains terrified many persons, and were so unsettling to large populations, that Science, in its sociologic relations, has sought to remove an evil—

That "rains of blood" do not exist:

Annales de Chimie, 85-266:

That a thick, viscous, red matter fell at Ulm, in 1812. We now have a datum with a factor that has been foreshadowed; which will recur and recur and recur throughout this book. It is a factor that makes for speculation so revolutionary that it will have to be reinforced many times before we can take it into full acceptance.

Year Book of Facts, 1861-273:

Quotation from a letter from Prof. Campini to Prof. Matteucci:

That, upon Dec. 28, 1860, at about 7 A.M., in the northwestern part of Siena, a reddish rain fell copiously for two hours.

A second red shower fell at 11 o'clock.

Three days later, the red rain fell again.

The next day another red rain fell.

Still more extraordinarily:

Each fall occurred in "exactly the same quarter of town."

Tremendous red rain in France, Oct. 16 and 17, 1846; great storm at the time, and red rain supposed to have been colored by matter swept up from this earth's surface, and then precipitated (*Comptes Rendus*, 23-832). But in *Comptes Rendus*, 24-625, the description of this red rain differs from one's impression of red, sandy, or muddy water. It is said that this rain was so vividly red and so blood-like that many persons in France were terrified. Two analyses are given (*Comptes Rendus*, 24-812). One chemist notes a great quantity of corpuscles—whether blood-like corpuscles or not—in the matter. The other chemist sets down organic matter of 25 per cent. It may be that an inter-planetary dragon had been slain somewhere, or that this red fluid, in which were many corpuscles,

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came from something not altogether pleasant to contemplate, about the size of the Catskill Mountains, perhaps—but the present datum is that with this substance, larks, quail, ducks, and water hens, some of them alive, fell at Lyons and Grenoble and other places.

Whatever it may have been, something like red-brick dust, or a red substance in a dried state, fell at Piedmont, Italy, Oct. 27, 1814 (*Electric Magazine*, 8-437). A red powder fell, in Switzerland, winter of 1867 (*Pop. Sci. Rev.*, 10 112)—

That something, far from this earth, had bled—super-dragon that had rammed a comet—

Or that there are oceans of blood somewhere in the sky—substance that dries, and falls in a powder—wafts for ages in powdered form—that there is a vast area that will some day be known to aviators as the Desert of Blood. We attempt little of super-topography, at present, but Ocean of Blood, or Desert of Blood—or both—Italy is nearest to it—or to them.

I suspect that there were corpuscles in the substance that fell in Switzerland, but all that could be published in 1867 was that in this substance there was a high proportion of “variously shaped organic matter.”

At Giessen, Germany, in 1821, according to the *Report of the British Association*, 5-2, fell a rain of a peach-red color. In this rain were flakes of a hyacinthine tint. It is said that this substance was organic, we are told that it was pyrrhine.

But distinctly enough, we are told of one red rain that it was corpuscular composition—red snow, rather. It fell, March 12, 1876, near the Crystal Palace, London (*Year Book of Facts*, 1879-89; *Nature*, 13-414). It is said of the red matter that fell in London, March 12, 1876, that it was composed of corpuscles—

Popular Science News, 35-104:

That, according to Prof. Luigi Palazzo, head of the Italian Meteorological Bureau, upon May 15, 1890, at Messignadi, Calabria, something the color of fresh blood fell from the sky.

The substance was examined in the public health laboratories of Rome. It was found to be blood.

“The most probable explanation of this terrifying phenomenon is that migratory birds (quails or swallows) were caught and torn in a violent wind.”

So the substance was identified as birds’ blood—

What matters it what the microscopists of Rome said—or had to say—and what matters it that we point out that there is no assertion that there was a violent wind at the time—and that such a substance would be almost infinitely dispersed in a violent wind—that no bird was said to have fallen from the sky—or said to have been seen in the sky—that not a feather of a bird is said to have been seen—

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This one datum:

The fall of blood from the sky—

But later, the same place, blood again fell from the sky.

THE SULFURIC DEMON

The fall of sulphur from the sky has been especially repulsive to the modern orthodoxy—largely because of its associations with the superstitions or principles of the preceding orthodoxy—stories of devils: sulphurous exhalations. Several writers have said that they have had this feeling. So the scientific reactionists, who have rabidly fought the preceding, because it was the preceding, and the scientific prudes, who, in sheer exclusionism, have held lean hands over pale eyes, denying falls of sulphur. I have many notes upon the sulphurous odor of meteorites, and many notes upon phosphorescence of things that come from externality. Some day I shall look over old stories of demons that have appeared sulphurously upon this earth, with the idea of expressing that we have often had undesirable visitors from other worlds, or that an indication of external derivation is sulphurousness. I expect some day to rationalize demonology, but just at present we are scarcely far enough advanced to go so far back.

That devils have visited this earth: foreign devils: human-like beings, with pointed beards: good singers: one shoe ill-fitting—but with sulphurous exhalations, at any rate. I have been impressed with the frequent occurrence of sulphurousness with things that come from the sky. A fall of jagged pieces of ice, Orkney, July 24, 1818 (*Trans. Roy. Soc. Edin.*, 9-187). They had a strong sulphurous odor. And the coke—or the substance that looked like coke—that fell at Mortrée, France, April 24, 1887: with it fell a sulphurous substance.

For a circumstantial account of a mass of burning sulphur, about the size of a man's fist, that fell at Pultusk, Poland, Jan. 30, 1868, upon a road, where it was stamped out by a crowd of villagers, see *Rept. Brit. Assoc.*, 1874-272.

FORTEAN MECCAS: THE FALL OF SINGULAR STONES AND LENSES

Annals of Scientific Discovery, 1853-71:

That, at the meeting of the British Association, 1853, Sir David Brewster had announced that he had to bring before the meeting an object "of so incredible a nature that nothing short of the strongest evidence was necessary to render the statement at all probable."

A crystal lens had been found in the treasure-house at Nineveh.

In many of the temples and treasure houses of old civilizations upon this earth have been preserved things that have fallen from the sky—or meteorites.

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Again we have a Brahmin. This thing is buried alive in the heart of propriety: it is in the British Museum.

Carpenter, in *The Microscope and Its Revelations*, gives two drawings of it. Carpenter argues that it is impossible to accept that optical lenses had ever been made by the ancients. Never occurred to him—someone a million miles or so up in the air—looking through his telescope—lens drops out.

This does not appeal to Carpenter: he says that this object must have been an ornament.

According to Brewster, it was not an ornament, but “a true optical lens.”

In that case, in ruins of an old civilization upon this earth, has been found an accursed thing that was, acceptably, not a product of any old civilization indigenous to this earth.

Cannon balls and wedges, and what may they mean?

Bombardments of this earth—

Attempts to communicate—

In the *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.*, 9-337, there is an account of a stone wedge that fell from the sky, near Cashel, Tipperary, Aug. 2, 1865. The phenomenon is not questioned, but the orthodox preference is to call it, not ax-like, nor wedge-shaped, but “pyramidal.” For data of other pyramidal stones said to have fallen from the sky, see *Rept. Brit. Assoc.*, 1861 34. One fell at Segowolee, India, March 6, 1853. Of the object that fell at Cashel, Dr. Haughton says in the *Proceedings*: “A singular feature is observable in this stone, that I have never seen in any other:—the rounded edges of the pyramid are sharply marked by lines on the black crust, as perfect as if made by a ruler.” Dr. Haughton’s idea is that the marks may have been made by “some peculiar tension in the cooling.” It must have been very peculiar, if in all aerolites not wedged-shaped, no such phenomenon had ever been observed. It merges away with one or two instances known, after Dr. Haughton’s time, of seeming stratification in meteorites. Stratification in meteorites, however, is denied by the faithful.

I begin to suspect something else.

Later it will be as reasonable, by familiarity, as anything else ever said.

If someone should study the stone of Cashel, as Champollion studies the Rosetta stone, he might—or, rather, would inevitably—find meaning in those lines, and translate them into English.

Nevertheless I begin to suspect something else: something more subtle and esoteric than graven characters upon stones that have fallen from the sky, in attempts to communicate. The notion that other worlds are attempting to communicate with this world is widespread: my own notion is that it is not attempt at all—that it was achievement centuries ago.

Now we shall have something that is high up in the castes of the accursed:

Comptes Rendus, 1887-182:

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That, upon June 20, 1887, in a "violent storm"—two months before the reported fall of the symmetric iron object of Brixton—a small stone had fallen from the sky at Tarbes, France: 13 millimeters in diameter; 5 millimeters thick; weight 2 grammes. Reported to the French Academy by M. Sudre, professor of the Normal School, Tarbes.

This time the old convenience "there in the first place" is too greatly resisted—the stone was covered with ice.

This object had been cut and shaped by means similar to human hands and human mentality. It was a disk of worked stone—"très régulier." "Il a été assurément travaillé."

There's not a word as to any known whirlwind anywhere: nothing of other objects or debris that fell at or near this date, in France. The thing had fallen alone. But as mechanically as any part of a machine responds to its stimulus, the explanation appears in *Comptes Rendus* that this stone had been raised by a whirlwind and then flung down.

It may be that in the whole nineteenth century no event more important than this occurred. In *La Nature*, 1887, and in *L'Année Scientifique*, 1887, this occurrence is noted. It is mentioned in one of the summer numbers of *Nature*, 1887.

Fassig lists a paper upon it in the *Annuaire de Soc. Met.*, 1887.

Not a word of discussion.

Not a subsequent mention can I find.

Our own expression:

What matters it how we, the French Academy, or the Salvation Army may explain?

A disk of worked stone fell from the sky, at Tarbes, France, June 20, 1887.

So there have, or haven't, been found upon this earth things that fell from the sky, or that were left behind by extra-mundane visitors to this earth—

CUP MARKS: SIGNALING BELOW

I think that there are, out in inter-planetary space, Super Tamerlanes at the head of hosts of celestial ravagers—which have come here and pounced upon civilizations of the past, cleaning them up all but their bones, or temples and monuments—for which later historians have invented exclusionist histories.

I have been very much struck with phenomena of "cup marks."

They look to me like symbols of communication. But they do not look to me like means of communication between some of the inhabitants of this earth and other inhabitants of this earth.

My own impression is that some external force has marked, with symbols, rocks of this earth, from far away.

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I do not think that cup marks are inscribed communications among different inhabitants of this earth, because it seems to me too unacceptable that inhabitants of China, Scotland, and America should all have conceived of the same system.

Cup marks are strings of cup-like impressions in rocks. Sometimes there are rings around them, and sometimes they have only semi-circles. Great Britain, America, France, Algeria, Circassia, Palestine: they're virtually everywhere—except in the far north, I think. In China, cliffs are dotted with them. Upon a cliff near Lake Como, there is a maze of these markings. In Italy and Spain and India, they occur in enormous numbers.

Given that a force, say, like electric force, could, from a distance, mark such a substance as rocks, as, from a distance of hundreds of miles, selenium can be marked by telephotographers—but I am of two minds.

The Lost Explorers from Somewhere, and an attempt, from Somewhere, to communicate with them; so a frenzy of showering of messages toward this earth, in the hope that some of them would mark rocks near the lost explorers—

Or that somewhere upon this earth, there is an especial rocky surface, or receptor, or polar construction, or a steep, conical hill, upon which for ages have been received messages from some other world; but that at times messages go astray and mark substances perhaps thousands of miles from the receptor.

That perhaps forces behind the history of this earth have left upon the rocks of Palestine and England and India and China records that may some day be deciphered, of their misdirected instructions to certain esoteric ones—Order of the Freemasons—the Jesuits—of another world that may be in secret communication with certain esoteric ones of this earth's inhabitants.

Upon the Witch's Stone, near Ratho, Scotland, there are twenty-four cups, varying in size from one and a half to three inches in diameter, arranged in approximately straight lines. Locally it is explained that these are tracks of dogs' feet (*Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scotland*, 2:4-79). Similar marks are scattered bewilderingly all around the Witch's Stone—like a frenzy of telegraphing, or like messages repeating and repeating, trying to localize differently.

China, Switzerland, Algeria, America—if messages they be, there seems to be no escape from attributing one origin to them—then, if messages they be, I accept one external origin, to which the whole surface of this earth was accessible, for them.

FAIRY CROSSES AND PYGMY FLINTS

“Fairy crosses.”

Harper's Weekly, 50-715:

That, near the point where the Blue Ridge and the Allegheny Mountains unite, north of Patrick County, Virginia, many little stone crosses have been found.

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A race of tiny beings.

They crucified cockroaches.

Exquisite beings—but the cruelty of the exquisite. In their diminutive way they were human beings. They crucified. The “fairy crosses,” we are told in *Harper's Weekly*, range in weight from one-quarter of an ounce to an ounce; but it is said, in the *Scientific American*, 79-395, that some of them are no larger than the head of a pin.

They have been found in two other states, but all in Virginia are strictly localized on and along Bull Mountain. We are reminded of the Chinese seals in Ireland.

I suppose they fell there.

Some are Roman crosses, some St. Andrew's, some Maltese. The geologists were called upon to explain the “fairy crosses.” Their response was the usual scientific tropism—“Geologists say that they are crystals.” The writer in *Harper's Weekly* points out that this “hold up,” or this anaesthetic, if theoretic science be little but attempt to assuage pangs of the unexplained, fails to account for the localized distributions of these objects—which make me think of both aggregation and separation at the bottom of the sea, if from a wrecked ship, similar objects should fall in large numbers but at different times.

But some are Roman crosses, some St. Andrew's, some Maltese

Conceivably there might be a mineral that would have a diversity of geometric forms, at the same time restricted to some expression of the cross, because snowflakes, for instance, have diversity but restriction to the hexagon, but the guilty geologists, cold-blooded as astronomers and chemists and all the other deep-sea fishes—disregarded the very datum—that it was wise to disregard:

That the “fairy crosses” are not all made of the same material.

It's the same old disregard, or it's the same old psychotropism, or the process of assimilation. Crystals are geometric forms. Crystals are included in the System. So then “fairy crosses” are crystals. But that different minerals should, in a few different regions, be inspired to turn into different forms of the cross—is the kind of resistance that we call less neatly real than our own acceptances.

They must have been missionaries.

We now come to some “cursed” little things that are of the “lost,” but for the “salvation” of which scientific missionaries have done their damndest.

“Pigmy flints.”

They can't very well be denied.

They're lost and well known.

“Pigmy flints” are tiny, prehistoric implements. Some of them are a quarter of an inch in size. England, India, France, South Africa—they've been found in many parts of the world—whether showered there or not. They belong high up in the froth of the accursed: they are not denied, and they have not been

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disregarded, there is an abundant literature upon this subject. One attempt to rationalize them, or assimilate them, or take them into the scientific fold, has been the notion they they were toys of prehistoric children. It sounds reasonable. But, of course, by the reasonable we mean that for which the equally reasonable, but opposing, has not been found out. Against the notion of toys, the higher approximation is that where "pygmy flints" are found, all flints are pygmies—at least so in India, where, when larger implements have been found in the same place, there are separations by strata. (Wilson).

The datum that, just at present, leads me to accept that these flints were made by beings about the size of pickles, is a point brought out by Prof. Wilson (*Rept. National Museum, 1892-455*):

Not only that the flints are tiny but that the chipping upon them is "minute."

In *Science Gossip, 1896-36*, R.A. Galty says:

"So fine is the chipping that to see the workmanship a magnifying glass is necessary."

I think that would be absolutely convincing, if there were anything—absolutely anything—either that tiny beings, from pickle to cucumber-stature, made these things, or that ordinary savages made them under magnifying glasses.

THE SUPER-SARGASSO SEA

Upon several occasions we have had data of unknown things that have fallen from—somewhere. But something not to be overlooked is that if living things have landed alive upon this earth—in spite of all we think we know of the accelerative velocity of falling bodies—and have propagated—why the exotic becomes the indigenous, or from the strangest of places we'd expect the familiar. Or if hosts of living fishes have come here—from somewhere else—every living thing upon this earth may, ancestrally, have come from—somewhere else.

I accept that, when there are storms, the damnedest of excluded, excommunicated things—things that are leprous to the faithful—are brought down—from the Super-Sargasso Sea—or from what for convenience we call the Super Sargasso Sea—which by no means has been taken into full acceptance yet. I think of a region somewhere above this earth's surface in which gravitation is inoperative and is not governed by the square of the distance—quite as magnetism is negligible at a very short distance from a magnet. Theoretically the attraction of a magnet should decrease with the square of the distance, but the falling off is found to be almost abrupt at a short distance. I think of things raised from this earth's surface to that region have been held there until shaken down by storms—

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The Super-Sargasso Sea.

Derelicts, rubbish, old cargoes from inter-planetary wrecks; things cast out into what is called space by convulsions of other planets, things from the times of the Alexanders, Caesars and Napoleons of Mars and Jupiter and Neptune; things raised by this earth's cyclones: horses and barns and elephants and flies and dodos, moas, and pterodactyles; leaves from modern trees and leaves of the Carboniferous era—all, however, tending to disintegrate into homogeneous looking muds or dusts, red or black or yellow—treasure-troves for the paleontologists and for the archaeologists—accumulations of centuries—cyclones of Egypt, Greece, and Assyria—fishes dried and hard, there a short time: others there long enough to putrefy.

Aviators of the future. They fly up and up. Then they get out and walk. The fishing's good: the bait's right there. They find messages from other worlds—and within three weeks there's a big trade worked up in forged messages. Sometime I shall write a guide book to the Super-Sargasso Sea, for aviators, but just at present there wouldn't be much call for it.

By virtue of mere acceptance, we may, in some later book deny the Super-Sargasso Sea, and find that our data relate to some other complementary world instead—or the moon—and have abundant data for accepting that the moon is not more than twenty or thirty miles away. However, the Super-Sargasso Sea functions very well as a nucleus around which to gather data that oppose Exclusionism. That is our main motive: to oppose Exclusionism.

DISCOVERING THE PLANET VULCAN

Or heresy and orthodoxy and the oneness of all quasiness, and our ways and means and methods are the very same. Or, if we name things that may not be, we are not of lonely guilt in the nomenclature of absences.

But now Leverrier and "Vulcan."

In 1859, Dr. Lescarbault, an amateur astronomer, of Orgères, France, announced that, upon March 6, of that year, he had seen a body of planetary size cross the sun. We are in a subject that is now as unholy to the present system as ever were its own subjects to the system that preceded it, or as ever slanders against miracles to the preceding system. Nevertheless few text-books go so far as quite disregard this tragedy. The method of the systematists is slightly to give a few instances of the unholy, and dispose of the few. The text-books casually mention a few of the "supposed" observations upon "Vulcan," and then pass on.

Dr. Lescarbault wrote to Leverrier, who hastened to Orgères—

Because this announcement assimilated with his own calculations upon a planet between Mercury and the sun—

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We are told that Leverrier "satisfied himself as to the substantial accuracy of the reported observation." The story of this investigation is told in *Monthly Notices*, 20-98. It seems too bad to threaten the naive little thing with our rude sophistications, but it is amusingly of the ingenuousness of the age from which present dogmas have survived. Lescarbault wrote to Leverrier, Leverrier hastened to Orgères.

Leverrier gave the name "Vulcan" to the object that Dr. Lescarbault had reported.

By the same means by which he is, even to this day, supposed—by the faithful—to have discovered Neptune, he had already announced the probable existence of an Intra-Mercurial body, or group of bodies. He had five observations besides Lescarbault's upon something that had been seen to cross the sun. In accordance with the mathematical hypnoses of his era, he studied these six transits. Out of them he computed elements giving "Vulcan" a period of about 20 days, or a formula for heliocentric longitude at any time.

But he placed the time of best observation away up in 1877.

The date:

March 22, 1877.

The scientific world was up on its hind legs nosing the sky. The thing had been done so authoritatively. Never a pope had said a thing with more of the seeming of finality. If six observations correlated, what more could be asked? The Editor of *Nature*, a week before the predicted event, though cautious, said that it is difficult to explain how six observers, unknown to one another, could have data that could be formulated if they were not related phenomena.

In a way, at this point occurs the crisis of our whole book.

Formulas are against us.

But can astronomic formulas, backed up by observations in agreement, taken many years apart, calculated by a Leverrier, be as meaningless, in a positive sense, as all other quasi-things?

In the *Monthly Notices of the R.A.S.*, February, 1877, Leverrier, who never lost faith, up to the last day, gives the six observations upon an unknown body of planetary size, that he had formulated:

Fritsche, Oct. 10, 1802; Stark, Oct. 9, 1819; De Cuppis, Oct. 30, 1839; Sidebotham, Nov. 12, 1849; Lescarbault, March 26, 1859; Lummis, March 29, 1862.

And not a blessed thing of any unusuality was seen upon that day or succeeding days.

It is our acceptance that there were many equally authentic reports upon large planetary bodies that had been seen near the sun; that, of many, Leverrier picked out six. The point here is that these other observations are as authentic as those that Leverrier included; that, then, upon data as good as the data of

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“Vulcan,” there must be other “Vulgans”—the heroic and defiant disregard, then, of trying to formulate one, omitting the others, which, by orthodox doctrine, must have influenced it greatly, if all were in the relatively narrow space between Mercury and the sun.

The mass-formation:

Fritsche, Stark, De Cuppis, Sidebotham, Lescarbault, Lummis, Gruthinson, De Vico, Scott, Wray, Russell, Hind, Lowe, Coumbray, Weber, Standacher, Lichtenberg, Dangos, Hoffman, Schmidt, Löffl, Steinheibel, Pastorff—

These are only the observations conventionally listed relatively to an Intra-Mercurial planet. They are formidable enough to prevent our being diverted, as if it were all the dream of a lonely amateur—but they're a mere advance-guard. From now on other data of large celestial bodies, some dark and some reflecting light, will pass and pass and keep on passing—

SIGHTINGS OF THE UNIDENTIFIED

Very largely we shall concern ourselves with enormous fiery objects that have either plunged into the ocean or risen from the ocean. Not only data of vast wheel-like super-constructions that have relieved their distress in the ocean, but data of enormous wheels that have been seen in the air, or entering the ocean, or rising from the ocean and continuing their voyages.

That, at midnight, Feb. 24, 1885, Lat. 37° N., and Long. 17° E., or somewhere between Yokohama and Victoria, the captain of the bark *Innerwich* was aroused by his mate, who had seen something unusual in the sky. This must have taken appreciable time. The captain went on deck and saw the sky turning fiery red. “All at once, a large mass of fire appeared over the vessel, completely blinding the spectators.” The fiery mass fell into the sea. Its size was judged by the volume of water cast up by it, said to have rushed toward the vessel with a noise that was “deafening.” The bark was struck flat aback, and “A roaring, white sea passed ahead.” “The master, an old, experienced mariner, declared that the awfulness of the sight was beyond description.”

The following story is told, in the *Review*, by Bishop John S. Michaud.

“I was standing on the corner of Church and College Streets, just in front of the Howard Bank, and facing east, engaged in conversation with Ex-Governor Woodbury and Mr. A. A. Buell, when, without the slightest indication, or warning, we were startled by what sounded like a most unusual and terrific explosion, evidently very nearby. Raising my eyes and looking eastward along College Street, I observed a torpedo-shaped body, some 300 feet away, stationary in appearance, and suspended in the air, about 50 feet above the tops of the buildings. In size it was about 6 feet long by 8 inches in diameter, the shell, or covering, having a dark appearance, with here and there tongues of fire issuing

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from spots on the surface, resembling red-hot, unburnished copper. Although stationary when first noticed, this object soon began to move rather slowly, and disappeared over Dolan Brothers' store, southward. As it moved, the covering seemed rupturing in places, and through these the intensely red flames issued.

Bishop Michaud attempts to correlate it with meteorological observations.

Because of the nearby view this is perhaps the most remarkable of the new correlates, but the correlate now coming is extraordinary because of the great number of recorded observations upon it. My own acceptance is that, upon Nov. 17, 1882, a vast thing crossed England, but by the definiteness-indefiniteness of all things quasi-real, some observations upon it can be correlated with anything one pleases.

E. W. Maunder, invited by the Editors of the *Observatory* to write some reminiscences for the 500th number of their magazine, gives one that he says stands out. (*Observatory*, 39-214). It is upon something that he terms "a strange celestial visitor." Maunder was at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, Nov. 17, 1882, at night. There was an aurora, without features of special interest. In the midst of the aurora, a great circular disk of greenish light appeared and moved smoothly across the sky. But the circularity was evidently the effect of foreshortening. The thing passed above the moon, and was, by other observers, described as "cigar-shaped," "like a torpedo," "a spindle," "a shuttle." The idea of foreshortening is not mine; Maunder says this. He says: "Had the incident occurred a third of a century later, beyond doubt everyone would have selected the same simile—it would have been 'just like a Zeppelin.'" The duration was about two minutes. Color said to have been the same as that of the auroral glow in the north. Nevertheless, Maunder says that this thing had no relation to auroral phenomena. "It appeared to be a definite body." Motion too fast for a cloud, but "nothing could be more unlike the rush of a meteor." In the *Philosophical Magazine*, 5-15-318, J. Rand Capron, in a lengthy paper, alludes throughout to this phenomenon as an "auroral beam," but he lists many observations upon its "torpedo-shape," and one observation upon a "dark nucleus" in it—host of most confusing observations—estimates of height between 40 and 200 miles—observations in Holland and Belgium.

In the *London Times*, Nov. 20, 1882, the Editor says that he had received a great number of letters upon this phenomenon. He publishes two. One correspondent describes it as "well-defined and shaped like a fish ... extraordinary and alarming." The correspondent writes of it as "a magnificent luminous mass, shaped somewhat like a torpedo."

Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society, 1-157:

Extract from the log of the bark *Lady of the Lake*, by Capt. F. W. Banner:

Communicated by R. H. Scott, F.R.S.:

That, upon the 22nd of March, 1870, at Lat. 5° 47' N., Long. 27° 52' W., the sailors of the *Lady of the Lake* saw a remarkable object, or "cloud," in the sky.

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They reported to the captain.

According to Capt. Banner, it was a cloud of circular form, with an included semicircle divided into four parts, the central dividing shaft beginning at the center of the circle and extending far outward, and then curving backward.

Geometricity and complexity and stability of form: and the small likelihood of a cloud maintaining such diversity of features, to say nothing of appearance of organic form.

The thing traveled from a point at about 20 degrees above the horizon to a point about 80 degrees above. Then it settled down to the northeast, having appeared from the south, southeast.

Light gray in color, or it was cloud-color.

“It was much lower than the other clouds.”

And this datum stands out:

That, whatever it may have been, it traveled against the wind.

“It came up obliquely against the wind, and finally settled down right in the wind’s eye.”

For half an hour this form was visible. When it did finally disappear that was not because it disintegrated like a cloud, but because it was lost to sight in the evening darkness: Capt. Banner draws the following diagram:



I think that we’re fished for. It may be that we’re highly esteemed by super-epicures somewhere. It makes me more cheerful when I think that we may be of some use after all. I think that dragnets have often come down and have been mistaken for whirlwinds and waterspouts. Some accounts of seeming structure to whirlwinds and waterspouts are astonishing data. And I have expressions of data that, in this book, I can’t take up at all—mysterious disappearances. I think we’re fished for. But this is a little expression on the side: relates to trespassers; has nothing to do with the subject that I shall take up at some other time—*or our use to some other mode of seeming that has a legal right to us*

I think we’re property.

WANDERING OFF INTO INFINITUDE

Altogether, I find opening before us, vistas of hereses to which I, for one, must shut my eyes. I have always been in sympathy with the dogmatists and

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exclusionists: that is plain in our opening lines: that to seem to be is falsely and arbitrarily and dogmatically to exclude. It is only that exclusionists who are good in the nineteenth century are evil in the twentieth century. Constantly we feel a merging away into infinitude; but that this book shall approximate to form, or that our data shall approximate to organization, or that we shall approximate to intelligibility, we have to call ourselves back constantly from wandering off into infinitude. The thing that we do, however, is to make our own outline, or the difference between what we include and what we exclude, vague.

But the attempt to stop is saying "enough" to the insatiable. In cosmic punctuation there are no periods: illusion of periods is incomplete view of colons and semi-colons.

That ours is not an existence but an utterance;

That Momus is imagining us for the amusement of the gods, often with such success that some of us seem almost alive—like characters in something a novelist is writing; which often to considerable degree take their affairs away from the novelist—

That Momus is imagining us and our arts and sciences and religions, and is narrating or picturing us as a satire upon the gods' real existence...

3

NEW LANDS

PREFATORY REMARKS

If there is a moral to be found in *New Lands*, it lies in the realization “that one who searches for fundamentals comes to bifurcations; never to a base; only to a quandary.” Of course, the same bifurcating logic can be applied to the structure of *New Lands* itself and to its astronomical researches. The double folded goal of the Fortean text is to make established astronomy seem preposterous (Part I, Chapters 1-12) and to make “extra-geography” seem established (Part II, Chapter 13-38). At the end of this multi-dimensional journey, the reader finds himself in a quandary. One must entertain the possibility that the fabulations of extra-geography constitute the foundations of a new science and that the fundamental science of astronomy is for neo-phytes. In the only letter to Dreiser (January 17, 1923) where he refers to *New Lands*, Fort alludes to the two-faced and Janus-like quality of the quandary. This puts the problem of duplicity at the heart of the second project of Fortean science. As he writes, “We’ve put over another one.”

The new lands which are charted by Fort occupy an Intermediatist position between the solidities of *terra firma* and the vacuities of thin air. This is emphasized in the use of the term “doubtful adventures” to describe his speculative gropings. The *topos* of questionable quest runs through the narrative lines of the *New Lands*. The hero of our story assumes the role of cosmic explorer and cartographer. As narrating navigator of the heavens, Fort acts as an armchair Columbus, Balboa, or an Americus Vespucci. But the emphasis has been placed from the beginning on the hypothetical and the hypocritical nature of this topographical send-off—a big *if* and against awful odds. As the first chapter concludes: “If all be dispatched with the skill and the might and the triumph over awful odds of the hero who himself tells his story—”

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Has the humorist scientist mapped out *New Lands* just around the next galaxy or just the products of his own imaginary landscape?

INVITATIONS IN DIMENSIONS

Lands in the sky—

Outlet and invitation and opportunity—

My subject is *New Lands*—things, objects, beings that are, or may be, the data of coming expansions— The young man is no longer urged, or is no longer much inclined, to go westward. He will, or must, go somewhere. If directions alone no longer invite him, he may hear invitations in dimensions.

There are, or there are not, nearby cities of foreign existences. They have, or they have not, been seen, by reflection, in the skies of Sweden and Alaska. As one will. Whether acceptable or too preposterous to be thought of, our data are of rabbles of living things that have been seen in the sky; also of processions of military beings—monsters that live in the sky and die in the sky, and spatter this earth with their red life fluids—ships from other worlds that have been seen by millions of inhabitants of this earth, exploring, night after night, in the sky of France, England, New England, and Canada—signals from the moon, which, according to notable indications, may not be so far from this earth as New York is from London—definitely reported and in, some instances, multitudinously witnessed, events that have been disregarded by our opposition—

A scientific priestcraft—

“Thou shalt not!” is crystallized in its frozen textbooks.

This cloistered earth, and its monkish science—shrinking from, denying, or disregarding, all data of external relations, except some one controlling force that was once upon a time known as *Jehovah*, but that has been re-named *Gravitation*. And our own underground investigations—and whether there is something in the sky or not. We are in a hole in time. Cavern of Conventional Science—walls that are dogmas, from which drips ancient wisdom in a patter of slimy opinions—but we have heard a storm of data outside—

Our data are glimpses of an epoch that is approaching with far-away explosions. It is vibrating on its edges with the tread of distant space-armies. Already it has pictured in the sky visions that signify new excitements, even now leaping over into the affairs of a self-disgusted, played-out hermitage.

We attempt to co-ordinate various streaks of data, all of which signify to us that, external to this earth, and in relation with, or relatable to, this earth are lands, and lives and a generality of conditions that make of the whole, supposed solar system one globule of circumstances like terrestrial circumstances. Our expressions are in physical terms—though in outer space there may be phenomena known as psychic phenomena—because of the solid substances and

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objects that have fallen from the sky to this earth, similar to, but sometimes not identified with, known objects and substances upon this earth. Opposing us is the more or less well-established conventional doctrine that has spun like a cocoon around minds upon this earth, shutting off research, and stifling even speculation, shelling away all data of relations, and relatability with external existence, a doctrine that, in its various explanations and disregards and denials, is unified in one expression of Exclusionism.

History, geology, palaeontology, astronomy, meteorology—that nothing short of cataclysmic thinking can break down these united walls of Exclusionism.

ASTRONOMICAL AMUSEMENTS: THE DISCOVERIES OF NEPTUNE AND BEYONDS

What are the bases and what is the consistency of the science of astronomy? The miserable, though at times amusing, confusions of thought that I find in this field of supposed research word my inquiry differently—what of dignity, or even of decency, is in it? Phantom dogmas, with their tails clutching at vacancies, are coiled around our data. Serpents of pseudo thought are stifling history. This is cosmic playfulness; such pleasantries enable Existence to bear its catastrophes. There must be astronomers for the sake of relaxations.

In *The Story of the Heavens*, Sir Robert Ball's opinion of the discovery of Neptune is that it is a triumph unparalleled in the annals of science. He lavishes—the great astronomer Leverrier, buried for months in profound meditations—the dramatic moment—Leverrier rises from his calculations and points to the sky—"Lo!" there a new planet is found. My desire is not so much to agonize over the single fraudulentcies or delusions, as to typify the means by which the science of Astronomy has established and maintained itself.

According to Leverrier, there was a planet external to Uranus, according to Hansen, there were two; according to Airy, "doubtful if there were one."

One planet was found—so calculated Leverrier, in his profound meditations. Suppose two had been found—confirmation of the brilliant computations by Hansen. None—the opinion of the great astronomer, Sir George Airy.

Leverrier calculated that the hypothetic planet was at a distance from the sun, within the limits of 35 and 37.9 times this earth's distance from the sun. The new planet was found in a position said to be 30 times this earth's distance from the sun. The discrepancy was so great that, in the United States, astronomers refused to accept that Neptune had been discovered by means of calculation, see such publications as the *American Journal of Science*, of the period. So it is our expression that hosts of astronomers calculate, and calculation mad, calculate and calculate and calculate, and that, when one of them does point within 600,000,000 miles (by conventional measures) of something that is found, he is

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the Leverrier of the text books; that the others are the Professors not of the text-books.

If, by the magic of his mathematics, any astronomer could have pointed to the position of Neptune, let him point to the planet past Neptune. According to the same reasoning by which a planet past Uranus was supposed to be, a Trans-Neptunian planet may be supposed to be. Neptune shows perturbations similar to those of Uranus.

According to Prof. Todd there is such a planet, and it revolves around the sun once in 375 years. There are two, according to Prof. Forbes, one revolving once in 1,000 years, and the other once in 5,000 years. See Macpherson's *A Century's Progress in Astronomy*. It exists, according to Dr. Eric Doolittle, and revolves once in 283 years (*Sci. Amer.*, 122-641). According to Mr. Hind, it revolves once in 1,600 years (*Smithson. Miscell. Cols.*, 20-20).

So then we have found out some things, and, relatively to the oppressions that we felt from our opposition, they are reassuring. But also are they depressing. Because, if, in this existence of ours, there is no prestige higher than that of astronomic science, and, if that seeming of substantial renown has been achieved by a composition of bubbles, what of anything like soundness must there be to all lesser reputes and achievements?

CORRUPTED EQUATIONS: MATHEMATICS AND ASTRONOMY

I don't know what the mind of an astronomer looks like, but I think of a fizzle with excuses revolving around it. I complain against the dogmas that have solidified out of the vaporings of such minds, but I suppose I am not very substantial, myself. I think of the astronomers as occupying a little vortex of their own in the cosmic swoon in which wave all things, at least in this one supposed solar system.

As we go along we shall develop the acceptance that astronomers might as well try to squeeze blood from images as to try to seduce symbols into conclusions, because applicable mathematics has no more to do with planetary inter-actions than have statues of saints. If this denial that the calculi have place in gravitational astronomy be accepted, the astronomers lose their supposed god; they become an unfocused priesthood, the stamina of their arrogance wilts.

I conceive of the astronomer's fictitious paradise as malarchitectural with corrupted equations, and paved with rotten symbols. That, in celestial phenomena, as well as in all other fields of research, the irregular, or the unformulable, or the uncapturable, is present in at least equal representation with the uniform; that given any clear, definite, seemingly unvarying thing in the heavens, co-existently is something of wantonness or irresponsibility, bizarre and incredible, according to the standards of purists—that the science of Astronomy

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concerns itself with only one aspect of existence, because of course there can be no science of the obverse phenomena.

When he hears of something new and unquestionable in the sky, an astronomer is diseased with ill-suppressed equations. Symbols persecute him for expression. His is the frenzy of someone who would stop automobiles, railroad trains, bicycles, all things, to measure them; run, with a yardstick, after sparrows, flies, all persons passing his door. This is supposed to be scientific, but it can be monomaniac. The fault that I find with a great deal of mathematics in astronomy is the fault that I should find in architecture, if a temple, or a skyscraper, were supposed to prove something. Pure mathematics is architecture: it has no more place in astronomy than has the Parthenon. There is a faint uniformity in every chaos: in faint discolorations on an old wall, anybody can see recognizable appearances; in such a mixture a mathematician will see squares and circles and triangles. If he would merely elaborate triangles and not apply his diagrams to theories upon the old wall itself, his constructions would be as harmless as poetry. Their primary mathematical principle of triangulation they have taken from the surveyors, to whom it is servicable. The triangle is another emblem of the sterility of the science of astronomy. Upon the coat of arms of this great mule of the sciences, I would draw a prism within a triangle.

LITTLE BOPEEP AND THE VELOCITY OF LIGHT

It is supposed that astronomic subjects and principles and methods cannot be understood by the layman. I think this, myself. We shall take up some of the principles of astronomy, with the idea of expressing that of course they cannot be understood by the un hypnotized any more than can the stories of Noah's Ark and Jonah and the Whale be understood, but that our understanding, if we have any, will have some material for its exercises, just the same. The velocity of light is one of these principles. A great deal in the astronomic system depends upon this supposed velocity: determinations of distance, and amount of aberration depend. It will be our expression that these are ratios of impositions to mummeries, with such clownish products that formulas turn into antics, and we shall have scruples against taking up the subject at all, because we have much hard work to do, and we have qualms against stopping so often to amuse ourselves.

But, then, sometimes in a more sentimental mood, I think that the pretty story of the velocity of light, and its "determination," will some day be of legitimate service; be rhymed some day, and told to children, in future kindergartens, replacing the Mother Goose story of Little Bopeep with the tale of a planet that lost its satellites and sometimes didn't know where to find them, but that good magicians came along and formulated the indeterminable.

It was found by Roemer, a seventeenth-century astronomer, that, at times, the

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moons of Jupiter did not disappear behind him, and did not emerge from behind him, when they "should." He found that as distance between this earth and Jupiter increased, the delays increased. He concluded that these delays represent times consumed by the light of the moons in traveling greater distances. He found, or supposed he found, that when this earth is farthest from Jupiter, light from a satellite is seen 22 minutes later than when nearest Jupiter. Given measurement of the distance between opposite points in the earth's supposed orbit, and time consumed in traveling this distance—there you have the velocity of light.

I still say that it is a pretty story and should be rhymed; but we shall find that astronomers might as well try to formulate the gambols of the sheep of Little Bopeep, as to try to formulate anything depending on the satellites of Jupiter.

In *the Annals of Philosophy*, 23-29, Col. Beaufoy writes that, upon Dec. 7, 1823, he looked for the emergence of Jupiter's third satellite, at the time set down in the *National Almanac*: for two hours he looked, and did not see the satellite emerge. In *Monthly Notices*, 44-8, an astronomer writes that, upon the night of Oct. 15th, 1883, one of the satellites of Jupiter was forty-six minutes late. A paper was read at the meeting of the British Astronomical Association, Feb. 8, 1907, upon a satellite that was twenty minutes late. In *Telescopic Work*, p. 191, W. F. Denning writes that, upon the night of Sept. 12, 1889, he and two other astronomers could not see satellite IV at all. See the *Observatory*, 9-237—satellite IV disappeared 15 minutes before calculated time; about a minute later it re-appeared; disappeared again; re-appeared nine minutes later. For Todd's observations see *Observatory*, 2-227—six times, between June 9 and July 2, 1878, a satellite was visible when, according to prediction, it should have been invisible.

For some more instances of extreme vagaries of these satellites, see *Monthly Notices*, 43-427, and *Jour. B.A.A.*, 14-27: observations by Noble, Turner, White, Holmes, Freeman, Goodacre, Ellis, and Molesworth. In periodical astronomical publications, there is no more easily findable material for heresy than such observations.

It would have been undignified, if the astronomers had taken the sheep of Little Bopeep for their determinations. They took the satellites of Jupiter. They said that the velocity of light is about 190,000 miles a second.

Our own notion is that there is no velocity of light: that one sees a thing, or doesn't.

VIRTUAL STARS

Tons of paper have been consumed by calculations upon the remoteness of stars and planets. But I can find nothing that has been calculated, or said, that is

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sounder than Mr. Shaw's determination that the moon is 37 miles away.

We have seen that some of the most brilliant inspirations of god-like intellects, or some of the most pestilential emanations from infected minds, have been attempts to account for the virtual changelessness of the stars. Above all other data of astronomy, that virtual changelessness of positions stands out as a crucial circumstance in my own mind. To account for constellations that have not changed in 2,000 years, astronomers say that they conceive of inconceivable distances.

As to "proper motion," the situation is this:

The stars that were catalogued 2,000 years ago have virtually not changed, or, if there be refinement in modern astronomy, have changed no more than a little more nearly exact charting would account for; but, in astronomic theory, the stars are said to be thought of as flying apart at unthinkable velocity; so then evidence of changed positions of stars is welcome to astronomers. As to well-known constellations, it cannot be said that there has been change; so, with several exceptions, "proper motion" is attributed to stars that are not well-known.

The result is an amusing trap. Great proper motion is said to indicate relative nearness to this earth. Of the twenty-five stars of supposed greatest proper motion, all but two are faintest of stars; so these twenty-three are said to be nearest this earth. But when astronomers take the relative parallax of a star, by reference to a fainter star, they agree that the fainter star, because fainter, is farther away. So one time faintness associates with nearness, and then conveniences change, and faintness associates with farness, and the whole subject so associates with humorousness, that if we're going to be serious at all in these expressions of ours we had better pass on.

JEREMIAH HORROX'S INTERMEDIATIST VIEW

I indicate that, in these pages, which are banners in a cosmic procession, I do feel a sense of responsibility, but how to maintain any great seriousness I do not know, because still is our subject astronomical "triumphs".

Once upon a time there was a young man, aged eighteen, whose name was Jeremiah Horrox. He was no astronomer. He was interested in astronomic subjects, but it may be that we shall agree that a young man of eighteen, who had not been heard of by one astronomer of his time, was an outsider. There was a transit of Venus in December, 1639, but not a grown-up astronomer in the world expected it, because the not always great and infallible Kepler had predicted the next transit of Venus for the year 1761. According to Kepler, Venus would pass below the sun in December, 1639. But there was another calculation: it was by the great, but sometimes not so great, Lansberg: that, in December, 1639, Venus

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would pass over the upper part of the sun. Jeremiah Horrox was an outsider. He was able to reason that, if Venus could not pass below the sun, and also over the upper part of the sun, she might take a middle course. Venus did pass over the middle part of the sun's disc; and Horrox reported the occurrence, having watched it.

I suppose this was one of the most agreeable humiliations in the annals of busted inflations. One thinks sympathetically of the joy that went out from seventeenth-century Philistines. The story is told to this day by the Proctors and Balls and Newcombs: the way they tell this story of the boy who was able to conclude that something that could not occupy two extremes might be intermediate, and thereby see something that no professional observer of the time saw, is a triumph of absorption.

That the transit of Venus, in December, 1639, was observed by Jeremiah Horrox, "the great astronomer."

"FEEDBACK OF THE SPHERES": THE SOLAR SYSTEM AS SIAMESE TWINS

It seems that in many of Kepler's demonstrations was this failure to have grounds for a starting-point, before extending his reasoning. He taught the doctrine of the music of the spheres, and assigned bass voices to Saturn and Jupiter, then tenor to Mars, contralto to the female planet, and soprano, or falsetto, rather, to little Mercury. And that is all very well and consistently worked out in detail, and it does seem reasonable that, if ponderous, if not lumpy, Jupiter does sing bass, the other planets join in, according to sex and huskiness—however, one does feel dissatisfied.

His data were chiefly the observations of Tycho Brahe. But, by the very same data, Tycho had demonstrated that this earth does not move between Venus and Mars; that this earth is stationary. That stoutest of conventionalists, but at the same time seeming colleague of ours, Richard Proctor [in *Old and New Astronomy*], says that Tycho Brahe's system was consistent with all data. I have never heard of an astronomer who denies this. Then the heart of modern astronomy is not Keplerism, but is one diversion of data that beat for such a monstrosity as something like Siamese Twins, serving both Keplerism and the Tychonic system. I fear that some of our attempts to find opposition are not very successful. Kepler's three laws are popularly supposed to demonstrate that this earth moves around the sun. This is a mistake. There is something wrong with everything that is popular. As was said by us before, accept that this earth is stationary, and Kepler's doctrines apply equally well to a sun around which proportionately inter-spaced planets move in ellipses, the whole system moving around a central and stationary earth.

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So it is that one who searches for fundamentals comes to bifurcations; never to a base; only to a quandary. In our own field, let there be any acceptable finding. It indicates that the earth moves around the sun. Just as truly it indicates that the the sun moves around the earth.

LEVITY AND GRAVITY

Suppose Newton did see an apple fall to the ground, and was so inspired, or victimized, into conceiving in terms of universal attraction. But had he tried to take a bone away from a dog, he would have had another impression, and would have been quite as well justified in explaining in terms of universal repulsion. If, as to all inter-acting things, electric, biologic, psychologic, economic, sociologic, magnetic, chemic, as well as canine, repulsion is as much of a determinant as is attraction, the Law of Gravitation, which is an attempt to explain in terms of attraction only, is as false as would be dogmas upon all other subjects if couched in terms of attraction only.

Apples fall to the ground, and dogs growl, if their bones are taken away: also flowers bloom in the spring, and a trodden worm turns.

Nevertheless strong is the delusion that there is gravitational astronomy, and the great power of the Law of Gravitation, in popular respectfulness, is that it is mathematically expressed. According to my view, one might as well say that it is fetishily expressed. Descartes was as great a meathematician as Newton: veritably enough may it be said that he invented, or discovered, analytic geometry; only patriotically do Englishmen say that Newton invented, or discovered, the infinitesimal calculus. Descartes, too, formulated a law of the planets and not by a symbol was he less bewildering and convincing to the faithful, but his law was not in terms of gravitation, but in terms of vorticose motion. In the year 1732, the French Academy awarded a prize to John Bernouli, for his magnificent mathematical demonstration, which was as unintelligible as anybody's. Bernouli, too, formulated, or said he formulated, planetary interactions, as mathematically as any of his hypnotized admirers could have desired: it, too, was not gravitational.

That all supposed foundations in our whole existence are myths, and that all discussion and supposed progress are the conflicts of phantoms and the overthrow of old delusions by new delusions.

FROM THE NEO-ASTRONOMIC TO THE EXTRA-GEOGRAPHIC

Positive assurances of the sciences—they are islands of seeming stability in a cosmic jelly. If silence be the only true philosophy, and if every positive assertion be a myth, we should easily find requittal for our negative preferences.

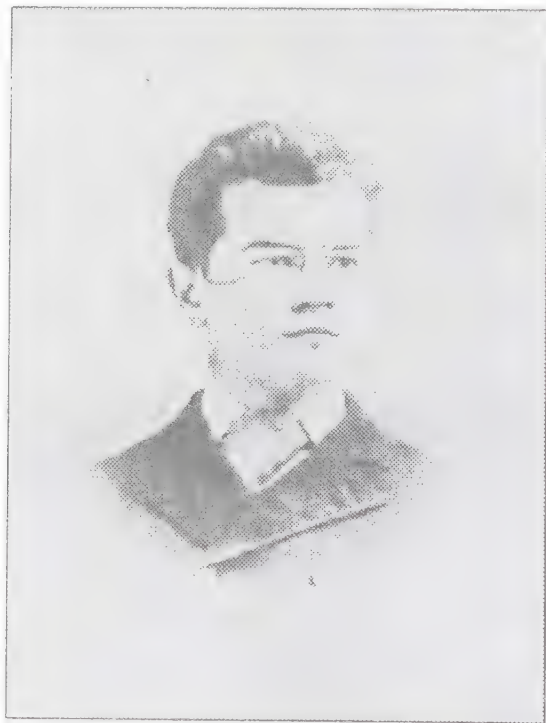
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What can be thought of our whole existence, its nature and its destiny? That our existence, a thing within one solar system, or supposed solar system, is a stricken thing that is mewling through space, shocking able-minded, healthy systems with the sores on its sun, its ghastly moons, its civilizations that are all broken out with sciences, a celestial leper, holding out doddering expanses into which charitable systems drop golden comets? If it be the leprous thing that our findings seem to indicate, there is no encouragement for us to go on. We cannot discover; we can only betray new symptoms. If I be a part of such a stricken thing, I know of nothing but sickness and sores and rags to reason with: my data will be pustules; my interpretations will be inflammations—

This first part of our work is what we consider neo astronomical; and now to show that we have no rabidity against the mathematical except when over-emphasized, or misapplied, our language is that all expressions so far developed

are to us of about 50% acceptability. A far greater attempted independence is coming, a second part of this work, considering phenomena so different that, we term the first part of our explorations "neo-astronomic," even some other term by which to designate the field of the second part will have to be thought of, and the word "extra-geographic" seems best for it. If in these two fields, our at least temporary conclusions be the same, we shall be impressed, in spite of all our cynicisms as to "agreements." As to our interpretations, I consider them, myself, more as suggestions and gropings and stimuli. Islands of space and the rivers and the oceans of an extra-geography—

Of beings that march in the sky, and a beacon on the moon— another dark body crosses the



THE JULES VERNE AUTOGRAPH
FOUND AT THE AGE OF 15.

sun. Somewhere near Melida there is cannonading, and another stone falls from the sky, at Irktutsk, Siberia; and unknown grain falls from an unknown world, and there are flashes in the sky when the planet Mars is near. In the farrago of

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lights and sounds and forms, I feel the presence of possible classifications that may thread a pattern of attempt to find out something. We offer this contribution as comparing favorably with the works of any other historian. We think that some of the details may need revision, but that what they typify is somewhere nearly acceptable. We assemble the data. Unhappily, we shall be unable to resist the temptation to reason and theorize. May Super-embryology have mercy upon our own syllogisms.

EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL DISPATCHES AND MESSAGES

A group of astronomers had been observing extraordinary lights in the lunar crater Plato. The lights had definite arrangement. They were so individualized that Birt and Elger, and the other selenographers, who had combined to study them, had charted and numbered them. They were fixed in position, but rose and fell in intensity. Perhaps there were definite messages in a Morse-like code. There is a chance for the electricity in somebody's imagination to start crackling. Up to April, 1871, the selenographers had recorded 1,600 observations upon the fluctuations of the lights of Plato, and had drawn 37 graphs of individual lights. All graphs and other records were deposited by W.R. Birt in the Library of the Royal Astronomical Society, where presumably they are to this day. A Champollion may some day decipher hieroglyphics that may have been flashed from one world to another.

Upon May 19, 1919, while Harry Hawker was at sea, untraceable messages, meaningless in the languages of this earth, were picked up by wireless, according to dispatches to the newspapers. They were interpreted as the letters K U J and V K A J.

New York Tribune, Sept. 2, 1921:

"J.C.H. Macbeth, London Manager of the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, Ltd., told several hundred men, at a luncheon of the Rotary Club, of New York, yesterday, that Signor Marconi believed he had intercepted messages from Mars, during recent atmospheric experiments with wireless on board his yacht *Electra*, in the Mediterranean. Mr. Macbeth said that Signor Marconi had been unable to conceive of any other explanation of the fact that, during his experiments, he had picked up magnetic wavelengths of 150,000 meters, whereas the maximum length of wavelength production in the world today is 14,000 meters. The regularity of the signals, Mr. Macbeth declared, disposed of any assumption that the waves might have been caused by electrical disturbance. The signals were unintelligible, consisting apparently of a code, the speaker said, and the only signal recognized was one resembling the letter V in the Marconi code." See datum of May 19, 1919.

But, in the summer of 1921, the planet Mars was far from opposition. The

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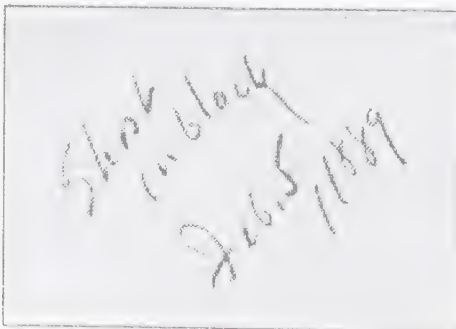
magnetic vibrations may have come from some other world. They may have had the origin of the sounds that have been heard at regular intervals.

Night of Dec. 7, 1900--for seventy minutes a fountain of light played upon the planet Mars. Prof. Pickering--"absolutely inexplicable" (*Sci. Amer.*, 84-179).

It may have been a geyser of messages. It may be translated some day. If it were expressed in imagery befitting the salutation of a planet to its dominant, it may be known some day as the most heroic oration in the literature of this geo-system. See Lowell's account in *Popular Astronomy*, 10-187. Here are published several of the values in a possible code of long flashes and short flashes. Lowell takes a supposed normality for unity, and records variations of two thirds, one and one third, and one and a half. If there be, at Flagstaff, Arizona, records of all the long flashes and short flashes that were seen, for seventy minutes, upon this night of Dec. 7, 1900, it is either that the greetings of an island of space have been hopelessly addressed to a continental stolidity, or there will have to be the descent, upon Flagstaff, Arizona, by all the amateur Champollions of this earth, to concentrate in one deafening buzz of attempted translation.

It was at this time that Tesla announced that he had received upon his wireless apparatus, vibrations that he attributed to the Martians. They were series of triplets. In *Ciel et Terre*, 16-485, M. Van den Broeck records an experience of his own. Upon June 25, 1894, at Louvain, he had heard detonations like discharges of artillery: he tabulates the intervals in a series of sounds. If there were signaling from some unknown region over Belgium, and not far from the surface of this earth, or from extra-mundane vessels, and if there were something of the code-like, resembling the Morse alphabet, perhaps, in this series of sounds, there can be small hope of interpreting such limited material, but there may be suggestion to someone to record all sounds and their intervals and modulations, if with greater duration, such phenomena should ever occur again. The intervals were four minutes and twenty three minutes; then three minutes, four, three quarters, three and three quarters, three quarters.

Jan. 24, 1896--a triplet of triplets--between 2:30 and 3:30 P.M.--by M. Overloop, of Middelkirke, Belgium---three series of detonations, each of three sounds.



The sounds went on, but, after this occurrence, there seems to me to be little inducement to continue upon the subject. This is indication that from somewhere there has been signaling: from extra-mundane vessels to one another, or from some unknown region to this earth, as nearly final as we can hope to find. There are persons who will see nothing

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but a susceptibility to the mysticism of numbers in a feeling that there is significance in threes of threes. But, if there be attempt in some other world to attract attention upon this earth, it would have to be addressed to some kind of a state of mind that would feel significances.

The sounds went on, as if there were experiments, or attempts to communicate by means of other regularizations and repetitions.

OF PHANTOM SOLDIERS AND OTHER EXTRA-MUNDANE VANDALS

I take the position that perhaps there were appearances in the sky, and perhaps they were revelations of, or mirages from, unknown regions and conditions of outer space, and spectacles of relatively nearby inhabited lands, and of space-travelers, but that all reports upon them were products of the assimilating of the unknown with figures and figments of the nearest familiar similarities. Another position of mine that will be found well-taken is that, no matter what my own interpretations or acceptances may be, they will compare favorably, so far as rationality is concerned, with orthodox explanations. There have been many assertions that "phantom soldiers" have been seen in the sky. For the orthodox explanation of the physicists, see Brewster's *Natural Magic*, p. 125: a review of the phenomenon of June 23, 1744; that, according to 27 witnesses, some of whom gave sworn testimony before a magistrate, whether that should be mentioned or not, troops of aerial soldiers had been seen, in Scotland, on and over a mountain, remaining visible two hours and then disappearing because of darkness.

"Phantom soldiers" that were seen, about the year 1860, at Paderborn, Westphalia (Crowe, *Night-side of Nature*, p. 416).

That, about the first of August, 1888, near Warasdin, Hungary, several divisions of infantry, led by a chief, who waved a flaming sword, had been seen in the sky, three consecutive days, marching several hours a day. The writer in *L'Astronomie* says that in vain does one try to explain that this appearance was a mirage of terrestrial soldiers marching at a distance from Warasdin, because widespread publicity and investigation had disclosed no such soldiers. Even if there had been terrestrial soldiers near Warasdin, repeating mirages localized would call for explanation. But that there may be space-armies, from which reflections or shadows are sometimes cast—a procession that crossed the sun: forms that moved, or that marched, sometimes four abreast; observation by M. Bruguière, at Marseilles, April 15 and 16, 1883 (*L'Astro.*, 5-70).

And in broader terms, our data are concerned with a general expression that objects like ships have been seen to sail close to this earth at times when the planet Venus is nearest this earth. Extra-mundane vandals may often have swooped down upon this earth and they may swoop again; and it may be a

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comfort to us, some day, to mention in our last gasp that we told about this.

We conceive of Supervision upon this earth's development, but for it the names of Jehovah and Allah seem old-fashioned. Some day I shall publish data that lead me to suspect that many appearances upon this earth that were once upon a time interpreted by theologians and demonologists, but are now supposed to be the subject-matter of psychic research, were beings and objects that visited this earth, not from a spiritual existence, but from outer space.

In this period, there were in cities of the United States, some of the most astonishing effects at night, in the history of the earth. In *Popular Astronomy*, 5-55, it is said that many persons had written to the Editor, telling of "airships" that had been seen, about this time. *New York Herald*, April 11—that, at Chicago, night of April 9-10, "until two o'clock in the morning, thousands of amazed spectators declared that the lights seen in the northwest were those of an airship, or some floating object, miles above the earth. Some declare they saw "two cigar-shaped objects and great wings." It is said that a white light, a red light, and a green light had been seen.

April 14—story, veritable observation, yarn, hoax—dispatch from Carlensville, Ill.—that upon the afternoon of the 10th the airship had alighted upon a farm, but had sailed away when approached—"cigar-shaped, with wings, and a canopy on top." April 15—showers of telegrams—development of jokers and explainers—thing identified as an airship invented by someone in Dodge City, Kansas; identified as an airship invented by someone in Brule, Wisconsin—stories of letters found on farms, purporting to have been dropped by the unknown aeronauts (terrestrial ones)—jokers in various towns, sending up balloons with lights attached—one laborious joker who rigged up something that looked like an airship and put it in a vacant lot and told that it had fallen there—yarn or observation, upon a "queer-looking boat" that had been seen to rise from the water in Lake Erie—continued reports upon a moving object in the sky and its red and green lights.

Against such an alliance as this, between the jokers and the astronomers, I see small chance for our data. The chance is in the future. If, in April, 1897, extra-mundane voyagers did visit this earth, likely enough they will visit again, and then the alliance against the data may be guarded against.

My own general impression: Night of Oct. 12, 1492—if I have that right. Some night in October, 1492, and savages upon an island-beach are gazing out at lights that they had never seen before. The indications are that voyagers from some other world are nearby. But the wise men explain. One of the most nearly sure expressions in this book is upon how they explain. They explain in terms of the familiar. For instance, after all that is spiritual in a fish passes away, the rest of him begins to shine nights. So there are three big, old, dead things out in the water.

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All scientists, philosophers, religionists, are today looking back, wondering what could have been the matter with their predecessors to permit them to believe what they did believe. Granted that there will be posterity, we shall be predecessors. Then what is it that is conventionally taught today that will in the future seem as imbecilic as to all present orthodoxies seem the vaporing of preceding systems?

NEO-PALEONTOLOGY: FALLS OF THE PREHISTORIC

I have many data upon the fall of organic matter from the sky. Because of my familiarity with many records, it seems no more incredible that up in the seemingly unoccupied sky there should be hosts of living things than that the seeming blank of the ocean should swarm with life.

In the *Literary Digest*, Sept. 2, 1921, is published a letter from Carl G. Gowman, of Detroit, Michigan, upon the fall from the sky, in southwest China, Nov. 17 (1920?) of a substance that resembled blood. It fell upon three villages close together, and was said to have fallen somewhere else forty miles away. The quantity was great: in one of the villages, the substance "covered the ground completely." Mr. Gowman accepts that this substance did fall from the sky because the spots did not dissolve in several subsequent rains. He says that anything like pollens is out of the question, because at the time nothing was in bloom. Feb. 17, 1841—the fall, at Genoa, Italy, of a red substance from the sky—another fall upon the 18th—a slight quake, at 5 P.M., February 1845—another quake, six hours later—fall of more of the red substance, upon the 19th. Some of this substance was collected and analyzed by M. Canobbia, of Genoa. He says it was oily and red.

We do not know very positively whether at times the animal life of some other world has been swept away from that world, eventually pouring from the sky of Siberia and of Colorado, in some of the shockingest floods of mammoths from which spattered cats and rabbits, in cosmic scenery, or not. All that we can say is that when we turn to conventionality it is to blankness or suppression. Every now and then, to this day, occurs an alleged fall of blood from the sky, and I have notes upon at least one instance in which the microscopically examined substance was identified as blood. Showers of frogs and showers of fishes that occur to this day—that they are dwindled representatives to this day of the cataclysms of intenser times when the skies of this earth were darkened by afferent clouds of dinosaurs.

Then at times the things have fallen upon land, presumably. To scientific minds in their present anaemia of malnutrition, we offer new nourishment. There are materials for a science of neo-palaeontology—as it were—at least a new view of animal-remains upon this earth. Remains of monsters, supposed to have

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lived geologic ages ago, are sometimes found, not in ancient deposits, but upon, or near the surface of the ground, sometimes barely covered. I have notes upon a great pile of bones, supposed to be the remains of a whale, out in open view in a western desert. In the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, is the mummified body of a monster called a *trachodon*, found in Converse County, Wyoming. It was not found upon the surface of the ground, which is bad for our attempts to stimulate palaeontology. But the striking datum to me is that the only other huge mummy that I know of is another *trachodon*, now in the Museum of Frankfort. If only extraordinarily would geologic processes mummify remains of a huge animal, doubly extraordinarily would two animals of the same species so exclusively affected. One at least gives some consideration to the idea that these trachodons are not products of geologic circumstances, but were affected, in common, by other circumstances. By inspiration, or progressive deterioration, one then conceives of the things as having wafted and dried in space, finally falling to this earth. Our swooping vandals are relieved with showering mummies. Life is turning out to be interesting.

STONE SHOWERS: A STATIONARY EARTH?

In the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in issues dating from the 12th to the 18th of March—clippings sent to me by Mr. Maynard Shipley, writer and lecturer upon scientific subjects, if there be such subjects—the accounts are of stones that, for four months, had been falling intermittently from the sky, almost always upon the roofs of two adjoining warehouses, in Chico. It is said that crowds gathered, and that upon the 17th of March a “deluge” of rocks fell upon a crowd, injuring one person. The police “combed” all surroundings: the only explanation that they could think of was that somebody was firing stones from a catapult. One person was suspected by them, but, upon the 14th of March, a rock fell when he was known not to be in the neighborhood. My own idea is either that there is land over the town of Chico, and not far away, inasmuch as objects from it fall with a very narrow distribution, or that far away, and therefore invisible, there may be land from which objects have been carried in a special current to one very small part of this earth’s surface.

Several times, in the course of this book, I have tried to be reasonable. I have asked what such repeating phenomena in one local sky do indicate, if they do not indicate fixed origins in the sky. And if such occurrences, supported by many data in other fields, do not indicate the stationariness of this earth, with new lands not far away—tell me what it is all about. The falling stones of Chico—new lands in the sky—or what?

In the *Birmingham Daily Post*, June 14, 1858, Dr. C. Mansfield Ingeby, a

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meteorologist, writes; "During the storm on Saturday (12th) morning, Birmingham was visited by a shower of aerolites. Many hundreds of thousands must have fallen, some of the streets being strewn with them." It is said that they were little black stones. They fell again from the sky, two years later. In *La Science Pour Tous*, June 19, 1860, it is said that, according to the *Wolverhampton Advertiser*, a great number of little black stones had fallen, in a violent storm, at Wolverhampton. Eight years after the second occurrence they fell again. It may be that for days before and after May 29, 1868, occasional stones fell from some unknown region stationary above Birmingham. In the *Post*, June 2, a correspondent writes that, upon the first of June, his niece, while walking in a field, was struck by a stone that injured her hand severely. He thinks that the stone had been thrown by some unknown person. *Symons' Met. Mag.*, 4-137: That, according to the Birmingham Gazette, a great number of small, black stones had been found in the streets of Wolverhampton, May 25, 1869, after a severe storm. It is said that the stones were precisely like those that had fallen in Birmingham, the year before, and resembled Rowley ragstone outwardly, but had a different appearance when broken.

If little black stones fall four times, in eleven years, to one part of this earth's surface, and fall nowhere else, we are, in conceiving of a fixed origin somewhere above a stationary earth, at least conceiving in terms of data, and, whether we are fanatics or not, we are not of the type of other upholders of stationariness of this earth, who care more for Moses than they do for data. I'd not like to have it thought that we are not great admirers of Moses, sometimes.

The rock that hung in the sky of Servia—

Upon Oct. 13, 1872, a stone fell from the sky, to this earth, near the town of Soko-Banja, Servia. If it were not a peculiar stone, there is no force to this datum. It is said that it was unknown stone. A name was invented for it. The stone was called *banjite*, after the town near which it fell. Seventeen years later (Dec. 1, 1889) another rock of *banjite* fell in Servia, near Jelica. For Meunier's account of these stones, see *L'Astronomie*, 1890-272, and *Comptes Rendus*, 92-331. Also, see *La Nature*, 1881-1-192. According to Meunier these stones did fall from the sky; indigenous to this earth there are no such stones; nowhere else have such stones fallen from the sky; they are identical in materials; they fell seventeen years apart.

I always conclude that, if phenomena repeatedly occur in one local sky of this earth, their origin is traceable to a fixed place over a stationary earth. The fixed place over this earth is indicated, but that fixed place—*island of space*, foreign coast, whatever it may be—may be conceived as accompanying this earth in its rotations and revolutions around the sun. Nevertheless there is good room for discussion. But when it comes to other orders of data, I find one convergence toward the explanation that this earth is stationary. But the subject

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is supposed to be sacred. One must not think that this earth is stationary. One must not investigate. To think upon this subject, except as one is told to think, is, or seems to be considered, impious. But how can one account for an earth that moves? By thinking that something started it and that nothing ever stopped it. Earth that doesn't move. That nothing ever started it. Some more sacrilege.

Stones fall from the sky. To the same part of this earth, they fall again. They fall again. They fall from some region that, relatively to this part of the earth's surface, is stationary. But to say this leads to the suspicion that it is this earth that is stationary. To think that is to beat against the wall of uterine dogmas.

Exploding monasteries that shoot out clouds of monks into cyclonic formations with stormy nuns similarly dispossessed—or collapsing monasteries—sometimes slowly crumbling confines of the cloistered—by which we typify all things: that all developments pass through a process of walling-away within shells that will break.

THE SONG OF THE DAMNED AND THE SEEDS OF DISSENT

If we could stop to sing, instead of everlastingly noting vol. this and p. that, we could have the material of sagas—of the bathers in the sun, which may be neither intolerably hot nor too uncomfortably cold, and of the hermit who floats across the moon; of heroes and the hairy monsters of the sky. I should stand in public places and sing our data—sagas of parades and explorations and massacres in the sky—having a busy band of accompanists, who set off fireworks, and send up balloons, and fire off explosives at regular intervals—extra-geographic songs of boiling lakes and floating islands—extra-sociologic meters that express the tramp of space-armies upon inter-planetary paths covered with little black pebbles—biologic epics of the clouds of mammoths and horses and antelopes that once upon a time fell from the sky upon the northern coast of Siberia—

Song that interprets the perpendicular white streaks in the repeating mirages of Youghal—the rhythmic walruses of space that hang on by their tusks to the edges of space islands, sometimes making stars variable as they swing in cosmic undulations—so a round space-island with its border of gleaming tusks, and we frighten children with the song of an ogre's head, with a wide-open mouth all around it—fairy lands of the little moon, and the tiny civilizations in rocky cups that are sometimes drained to their slums by the wide-mouthed ogres. The Maelstrom of Everlasting Catastrophe that overhangs Genoa, Italy—and twines its currents around a living island. The ground underneath quakes with the struggle—then the fall of blood—and the fall of blood—three days the fall of blood from the broken red brooks of a living island whose mutilations are scenery—

NEW LANDS

But after all, it may be better that we go back to *Rept. B.A.*—see vol. 1849, p. 46—a stream of black objects, crossing the sun, watched at Naples, May 11, 1845, by Capocci and other astronomers—things that may have been seeds.

July 15, 1822—the fall of perhaps unknown seeds from perhaps an unknown world—a great quantity of little round seeds that fell from the sky at Marienwerder, Germany. They were unknown to the inhabitants, who tried to cook them, but found that boiling seemed to have no effect upon them. Wherever they came from, they were brought down by a storm, and two days later, more of them fell, in a storm, in Silesia. It is said that these corpuscles were identified by some scientists as seeds of *Galium spurium*, but that other scientists disagreed. Later more of them fell at Posen, Mecklenburg. See *Bull. des Sci. (math., astro., etc.)* 1-1-298. It seems acceptable that, upon July 15 and 17, 1822, and then upon a later date, unknown seeds fell from the sky to this earth. If these seeds did come from some other world, there is another mystery as well as that of repetition in a local sky of this earth.

How could a volume of seeds remain in one aggregation; how could the seeds be otherwise than scattered from Norway to Patagonia, if they met in space, and if this earth be rushing through space at a rate of 19 miles a second? It may that the seeds of 1822 fell again. According to Kaemtz (*Meteorology*, p. 465) yellowish brown corpuscles, some round, a few cylindrical, were found upon the ground, June, 1830, near Griesau, Silesia. Kaemtz says that they were tubercles from roots of a well-known Silesian plant—stalk of the plant dries up; heavy rain raises these tubercles to the ground—persons of a low order of mentality think that the things had fallen from the sky. Upon the night of March 24-25, 1852, a great quantity of seeds did fall from the sky, in Prussia, in Heinsberg, Erklenz, and Juliers, according to M. Schwann, of the University of Liege, in a communication to the Belgian Academy of Science (*La Belgique Horticole*, 2-319).

An unknown vegetable substance falls from the sky. The datum is buried: it may sprout some day.

SOME DOUBTFUL ADVENTURES

Fountains of Everlasting Challenge.

Argosies in parallel lines and rabbles of individual adventurers. Well enough may it be said that there are seeds in the sky. Of such are the germs of colonies.

The San Salvadors of the sky—

That the dot that spread upon the western horizon of Lisbon, March 4, 1493, cannot be the only ship that comes back from the unknown, cargoes with news—

There will be a procession. Somebody will throw little black pebbles to the

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crowds. Over his procession will fly blue-fringed cupids. Later he will be insulted and abused and finally hounded to his death. But, in that procession, he will lead by the nose an outrageous thing that should not be: about ten feet long, short-winged, waddling on webbed feet. Insult and abuse and death—he will snap his fingers under the nose of the outrageous thing. It will be worth a great deal to lead that by the nose and demonstrate that such things had been seen in the sky, though they had been supposed to be angels. It will be a great moment for somebody. He will come back to New York, and march up Broadway with his angel.

Some now unheard-of De Soto, of this earth, will see for himself the Father of Cloudbursts.

A Balboa of greatness now known only to himself will stand on a ridge in the sky between two auroral seas.

I don't know that my own attitude toward these data is understood, and I don't know that it matters in the least; also from time to time my own attitude changes: but very largely my feeling is that not much can be, or should be, concluded from our meager accounts, but that so often are these occurrences, in our fields, reported, that several times every year there will be occurrences that one would like to have investigated by someone who believes that we have written nothing but bosh, and by someone who believes in our data almost religiously.

We began with three screams from an exhilarated mathematician.

We have had some doubtful adventures, trying hard to pretend that monsters, or little difficulties did really oppose us.

We have reached, not the heart of a system, but the crotch of a quandary.

4 Lo!

PREFATORY REMARKS

There were numerous humorous titles for *Lo!* in the preparatory stages before its publication. Fort was thinking in terms of a sequel to *New Lands* and its invitations in dimensions rather than directions. Therefore, Fort's original title was *Skyward Ho!* Aaron Sussman, one of the Fortean Society founders, disagreed. This book advertiser suggested the bold slogan of *God is an Idiot* as the best catchphrase for promoting Fort's new work. However, the author rejected this suggestion as somewhat tame. After a thorough review of cosmographical confusions and disasters, the book surmises that the controlling force of this damned universe would have to be at least a "super-idiot." But, in an unpublished letter to Dreiser, Fort refers to his upcoming volume under the semi-theological title of *God and the Fishmonger*. This particular version foregrounds the hilarious case history of the rain of periwinkles from the heavens of Worcester, England in 1881. The conventional use of a fishmonger as an explanatory mechanism for the exceptional incident becomes the absurd symbol for scientific exclusionism in general.

Tiffany Thayer, the Secretary of the Fortean Society, proposed *Lo!* and this quasi-Biblical recommendation—as in *Lo and Behold!*—led to a consensus of opinion. Thayer felt that *Lo!* provided an ironic watchword for neo-astronomy and its near misses "...because in the text the astronomers are forever calculating and then point to the sky where they figure a new star or something should be and saying *Lo!*—and there's nothing whatever to be seen where they point." But in the light of *Lo!* and its wide-ranging investigations into the mysteries of Kasper Hauser, crypto-biology, xenoglossolalia, etc., this astronomical explanation is

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much too limited. *Lo!* becomes the exclamatory utterance and the wondrous exclamation issued from Fort's lips as he bears repeated witness to the shocks, surprises, and surpluses of scientific meaning. In contrast to the resolved title of Edgar Allan Poe's cosmographical epic—*Eureka!* (i.e., I have found it!), Fort's curious exclamation mark remains among the lost data of the damned.

TAUTOLOGIZING SCIENCE: APPLICATION TO THE CASE OF THE RED WORMS

Here's a good specimen of my own wisdom. Something is so, except when it isn't so.

What is a straight line? A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Well, then, what is a shortest distance between two points? That is a straight line. According to the test of ages, the definition that a straight line is a straight line cannot be improved upon. I start with a logic as exacting as Euclid's.

And in phenomenal existence there is nothing that is independent of everything else. Given that there is Continuity, everything is a degree or aspect of whatever everything else is. Consequently there is no way of defining anything except in terms of itself. Try any alleged definition. What is an island? An island is a body of land completely surrounded by water. And what is a body of land that is completely surrounded by water?

I have never heard of any standard, in any religion, philosophy, science, or complication of household affairs that could not be made to fit any requirement. We fit standards to judgments, or break any law that it pleases us to break, and fit to the fracture some other alleged law that we say is higher and nobler. We have conclusions, which are the products of sentility or incompetence or credulity, and then argue from them to premises. We forget this process, and then argue from the premises, thinking we began there.

I've got to besmirch something, or nobody will believe I am—and I replace the pure blue sky with the wormy heavens—

London *Evening Standard*, Jan. 3, 1924—red objects falling with snow at Halmstead, Sweden. There were red worms, from one to four inches in length. Thousands of them streaking down with the snowflakes—red ribbons in a shower of confetti—a carnival scene that boosts my discovery that meteorology is a more picturesque science than most persons, including meteorologists, have suspected—and I fear me that my attempt to besmirch has not been successful, because the worms of heaven seem to be a jolly lot. However I cheer up at thought of chances to come, because largely I shall treat of human nature.

But how am I to know whether these things fell from the sky in Sweden, or were imagined in Sweden?

Lo!

I shall be scientific about it. Said Sir Isaac Newton—or virtually said he—“If there is no change in the direction of a moving body, the direction of a moving body is not changed.” “But,” continued he, “if something be changed, it is changed as much as it is changed.” So red worms fell from the sky, in Sweden, because from the sky, in Sweden, red worms fell. How do geologists determine the age of rocks? By the fossils in them. And how do they determine the age of fossils? By the rocks they’re in. Having started with the logic of Euclid, I go on with the wisdom of a Newton.

New Orleans Daily Picayune, Feb. 4, 1892—enormous numbers of unknown brown worms that had fallen from the sky, near Clifton, Indiana. *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 14, 1892—myriads of unknown scarlet worms—somewhere in Massachusetts—not seen to fall from the sky, but found, covering several acres after a snow storm.

It is as if with intelligence, or with the equivalence of intelligence, something has specialized upon transporting, or distributing, immature and larval forms of life. If the gods send worms, that would be kind if we were robins.

Somewhere there was science.

GOD OR SUPER-IDIOT

Among savage tribesmen, there is a special care for, or even respectfulness for, the mentally afflicted. They are regarded as in some obscure way representing God’s chosen. We recognize the defining of a thing in terms of itself, as a sign of feeble-mindedness. All scientists begin their works with just such definitions, implied if not stated. And among our tribes there is a special care for, or even respectfulness for, scientists.

It will be an expression of mine that there is a godness in this idiocy. But, no matter what sometimes my opinion may be, I am not now writing that God is an Idiot. Maybe he, or it, drools comets and gibbers earthquakes, but the scale would have to be considered at least super-idiocy.

By God, I mean an automatic Jehovah.

Only to be phenomenal is to be at least questionable. Any scientist who claims more is trying to register divinity. If Life cannot be positively differentiated from anything else, the appearance of Life itself is a deception. If, in mentality there is no absolute dividing-line between intellectuality and imbecility, all wisdom is partly idiocy. The seeker of wisdom departs more and more from the state of the idiot, only to find that he is returning. Belief after belief fades from his mind: so his goal is the juncture of two obliterations. One is of knowing nothing, and the other is of knowing that there is nothing to know.

But here we are, at present not so wise as to no longer have ideas.

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THE FISHMONGER OF WORCESTER

Crabs and periwinkles—

Ordinary theologians have overlooked crabs and periwinkles—

Or mystery versus the fishmonger. Upon May 28, 1881, near the city of Worcester, England, a fishmonger, with a procession of carts, loaded with several kinds of crabs and periwinkles, and with a dozen energetic assistants, appeared at a time when nobody on a busy road was looking. The fishmonger and his assistants grabbed sacks of periwinkles, and ran in a frenzy, slinging the things into fields on both sides of the road. They raced to gardens, and some assistants, standing on the shoulders of other assistants, had sacks lifted to them, and dumped sacks over the high walls. Meanwhile other assistants in a dozen carts, were furiously shoveling out periwinkles, about a mile along the road. Also, meanwhile, several boys were busily mixing in crabs. They were not advertising anything. Above all there was secrecy. The cost must have been hundreds of dollars. They appeared without having been seen on the way, and they melted away equally mysteriously. There were houses all around, but nobody saw them.

Would I be so kind as to tell what, in the name of some slight approximation to sanity, I mean by telling such a story?

But this is not my story. The details are mine, but I have put them in, strictly in accordance with the circumstances. There was, upon May 28, 1881, an occurrence near Worcester, and the conventional explanation was that a fishmonger did it. Inasmuch as he did it unobserved, if he did it, and inasmuch as he did it with tons upon acres, if he did it, he did it as I have described, if he did it.

In *Land and Water*, June 4, 1881, a correspondent writes that, in a violent thunderstorm, near Worcester, tons of periwinkles had come down from the sky, covering fields and a road, for about a mile. In the issue of June 11th, the Editor of *Land and Water* writes that specimens had been sent to him. He notes the mysterious circumstance, or the indication of a selection of living things, that appears in virtually all the accounts. He comments upon an enormous fall of sea creatures, unaccompanied by sand, pebbles, other shells, and seaweed.

In the *Worcester Daily Times*, May 30, it is said that, upon the 28th, news had reached Worcester of a wonderful fall from the sky of periwinkles on Cromer Gardens Road, and spread far around in fields and gardens. Mostly, people of Worcester were incredulous, but some had gone to the place. Those who had faith returned with periwinkles.

Two correspondents then wrote that they had seen the periwinkles upon the road before the storm, where probably a fishmonger had got rid of them. So the occurrence conventionalized, and out of these surmises arose the story of the fishmonger, though it has never been told before, as I have told it.

Mr. J. Lloyd Bozward, a writer whose notes on meteorological subjects are familiar to readers of scientific periodicals of this time, was investigating, and his findings were published in the *Worcester Evening Post*, June 9th.

As to the story of the fishmonger, note his statement that the value of periwinkles was 16 shillings a bushel. He says that a wide area on both sides of the road was strewn with periwinkles, hermit crabs, and small crabs of an unascertained species. Worcester is about 30 miles from the mouth of the River Severn, or, say, about 50 miles from the sea. Probably no fishmonger in the world ever had, at one time, so many periwinkles, but as to anybody having got rid of a stock, because of a glutted market, for instance, Mr. Bozward says: "Neither upon Saturday, the 28th, nor Friday, the 27th, was there such a thing procurable in Worcester as a live periwinkle." Gardens as well as fields were strewn. There were high walls around these gardens. Mr. Bozward tells of about 10 sacks of periwinkles, of a value of about £20, in the markets of Worcester, that, to his knowledge, had been picked up. Crowds had filled pots and pans and bags and trunks before he got to the place. "In Mr. Maund's garden, two sacks were filled with them." It is his conclusion that the things fell from the sky during the thunderstorm. So his is the whirl-wind explanation.

There are extraordinary occurrences, and conventionalization cloaks them, and the more commonplace the cloakery, the more satisfactory. Periwinkles appear upon a tract of land, through which there is a road. A fishmonger did it.

But the crabs and the fishmonger—and if the fishmonger did the periwinkles did he do the crabs, if he did it?

A SCIENCE DIGEST

It is my expression that the two outstanding blessings, benefits, or "gifts of God" to humanity, are Science and Religion. I deduce this—or that the annals of both are such trails of slaughter, deception, exploitation, and hypocrisy that they must be of enormous good to balance with their appalling evils—

We hear much of the conflict between science and religion, but our conflict is with both of these. Science and religion always have agreed in opposing and suppressing the various witchcrafts. Now that religion is inglorious, one of the most fantastic of transferences of worships is that of glorifying science, as a beneficent being. It is the attributing of all that is of development, or of possible betterment to science. But no scientist has ever upheld a new idea, without bringing upon himself abuse from other scientists. Science has done its utmost to prevent whatever Science has done.

Science is very much like the Civil War, in the U.S.A. No matter which side won, it would have been an American victory. By Science, I mean conventionalization of alleged knowledge. It, or maybe she, acts to maintain

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itself, or whatever, against further enlightenment, or alleged enlightenment but when giving in, there is not surrender, but partnership, and something that had been bitterly fought then becomes another factor in its, or her, prestige. So, seventy years ago, no matter whether evolutionists or anti-evolutionists had won, it would have been a big, scientific victory anyway. No wonder so many of us are humbled by a reputation that can't lose anyway.

Science is a maw, or a headless and limbless stomach, an amoeba-like gut that maintains itself by incorporating the assimilable and rejecting the indigestible. There are whirlwinds and waterspouts, and it seems acceptable that there have been rare occurrences of faintly luminous owls. Then by a process of sifting over data, rejecting the objectionable, and taking in the desirable, Science gives itself great pains, because a bellyache is something that is only a gut in torment. So with alimentary treatments, a shower of living things can always be made to assimilate with the whirlwind-explanation, and a brilliant, electric thing can be toned down digestibly. In extreme cases there is a secretion of fishmongers or gamekeepers.

Or Science and data—

Or that the way of a brain is only the way of a belly—

We can call the process that occurs in them either assimilative or digestive. The mind-worshiper might as well take guts for his god.

For many strange occurrences there are conventional explanations. In the mind of a conventionalist, reported phenomena assimilate with conventional explanations. There must be disregards. The mind must reject some data. This process, too, is both alimentary and mental.

Our data have been bullied by two tyrannies. On one side, the spiritualists have arbitrarily taken over strange occurrences, as manifestations of "the departed." On the other hand, conventional science has pronounced against everything that does not harmonize with its systematizations. The scientist goes investigating, about as, to match ribbons, a woman goes shopping. The spiritualist stuffs the maws of his emotions. One is too dainty, and the other is gross. Perhaps, between these two, we shall some day be considered models of well-bred behavior.

FROGISM

We shall pick up an existence by its frogs.

Wise men have tried other ways. They have tried to understand our state of being, by grasping at its stars, or its arts, or its economics. But, if there is an underlying oneness of all things, it does not matter where we begin, whether with stars, or laws of supply and demand, or frogs, or Napoleon Bonaparte. One measures a circle, beginning anywhere.

Lo!

I have collected 294 records of showers of living things.

Have I?

Well, there's no accounting for the freaks of industry.

It is the profound conviction of most of us that there never has been a shower of living things. But some of us have, at least in an elementary way, been educated by surprises out of much that we were "absolutely sure" of, and are suspicious of a thought, simply because it is a profound conviction.

Terrified horses, up on their hind legs, hoofing a storm of frogs.

Frenzied springboks, capering their exasperations against frogs that were tickling them.

Storekeepers, in London, gazing at frogs that were tapping on their window panes.

I got the story of the terrified horses in the storm of frogs from Mr. George C. Stoker, of Lovelock, Nev. Mr. John Reid, of Lovelock, who is known to me as a writer upon geological subjects, vouches for Mr. Stoker, and I vouch for Mr. Reid. Mr. Stoker vouches for me. I have never heard of anything—any pronouncement, dogma, enunciation, or pontification—that was better substantiated.

Mr. Stoker was driving along the Newark Valley, one of the most extensive of the desert regions of Nevada. Thunderstorm. Down came frogs. Up on their hind legs went the horses.

The exasperated springboks. They were told of, in the *Northern News* (Vryburg, Transvaal) March 21, 1925, by Mr. C.J. Grewar, of Uitenhage. Also I have a letter from Mr. Grewar.

The Flats—about 50 miles from Uitenhage—springboks leaping and shaking themselves unaccountably. At a distance, Mr. Grewar could conceive of no explanation of such eccentricities. He investigated, and saw that a rain of little frogs and fishes had pelted the springboks. Mr. Grewar heard that some time before, at the same place, there had been a similar shower.

Coffins have come down from the sky: also, as everybody knows, silk hats and horse collars and pajamas. But these things have come down at the time of a whirlwind. The two statements that I start with are that no shower exclusively of coffins, nor of marriage certificates, nor of alarm clocks has been recorded: but that showers exclusively of living things are common. And yet the explanation by orthodox scientists who accept that showers of living things have occurred is that the creatures were the products of whirlwinds. The explanation is that little frogs, for instance, fall from the sky, unmixed with anything else, because, in a whirlwind, the creatures were segregated, by differences in specific gravity. But when a whirlwind strikes a town, away go detachables in a monstrous mixture, and there's no findable record of washtubs coming down in one place, all the town's cats in one falling battle that lumps its infelicities in one place, and all the

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kittens coming down together somewhere else, in a distant bunch that miaows for its lump of mothers.

See London newspapers, Aug. 18 and 19, 1921—innumerable little frogs that appeared, during a thunderstorm, upon the 17th, in streets of the northern part of London.

I have searched in almost all London newspapers, and in many provincial newspapers, and in scientific publications. There is, findable by me, no mention of a whirlwind upon the 17th of August, and no mention of a fall from the sky of anything else that might be considered another segregated discharge for a whirlwind, if there had been a whirlwind.

A whirlwind runs amok, and is filled with confusions; and yet to the incoherences of such a thing have been attributed the neatest of classifications. I do not say that no wind ever scientifically classifies objects. I have seen orderly, or logical, segregations by wind-action. I ask for records of whirlwinds that do this. There is no perceptible science by a whirlwind, in the delivery of its images. It rants trees, doors, frogs, and parts of cows. But living things have fallen from the sky, or in some unknown way have appeared, and have arrived homogeneously. If they have not been segregated by winds, something has selected them.

There have been repetitions of these arrivals. The phenomenon of repetitions, too, is irreconcilable with the known ways of whirlwinds. There is an account, in the *London Daily News*, Sept. 5, 1922, of little toads, which for two days had been dropping from the sky, at Châlon-Sur-Saône, France.

Lies, yarns, hoaxes, mistakes—what's the specific gravity of a lie, and how am I to segregate?

FROM TRANSPORTATION TO TELEPORTATION

It could be that, with our data, we tell of nothing but lies, and at the same time be on the track of future values.

Mostly in this book I shall specialize upon indications that there exists a transportory force that I shall call *Teleportation*. I shall be accused of having assembled lies, yarns, hoaxes, and superstitions. To some degree, I think so, myself. To some degree I do not. I offer the data.

A naive, little idea of mine is that so many ghosts in white garments have been reported because persons, while asleep, have been teleported in their nightclothes.

There was the case of Mrs. Guppy, June 3, 1871, for instance. As the spiritualists tell it, she shot from her home, in London. Several miles away, she flopped down through a ceiling. Mrs. Guppy weighed 200 pounds. But Mrs.

Lo!

Guppy was a medium. She was a prominent medium, and was well-investigated, and was, or therefore was, caught playing tricks, several times. I prefer to look elsewhere for yarns, or veritable accounts.

A great deal has been written upon the phenomena, or the alleged phenomena, of the Pansini boys. Their story is told in the *Occult Review*, 4-17. These boys, one aged seven, and the other aged eight, were sons of Mauro Pansini, an architect, of Bari, Italy. Their experiences, or their alleged experiences, began in the year 1901. "One day Alfredo and his brother were at Ruvo, at 9 A.M.; and at 9:30 A.M., they were found in the Capuchin Convent, at Malfatti, thirty miles away." In the *Annals of Psychic Science*, it is said that, about the last of January, 1901, the Pansini boys were transported from Ruvo to a relative's house, in Trani, arriving in a state of profound hypnosis.

But I haven't told the damndest. Oh, well, we'll have the damndest. A Mediterranean harbor—a man in a boat—and, like Mrs. Guppy, down the Pansini boys flop into his boat.

Into many minds flops this idea—"It isn't so much the preposterousness of this story alone: but, if we'd accept this, what else that would threaten all conventional teachings, would we be led into?"

The one thought that I do so little to develop is that if there be something that did switch the Pansini boys from place to place, it may be put to work, and instead of wharves and railroad stations, there may be built departing and receiving points for commodities, which may be "wished," as it were, from California to London. Let stockholders of transportation companies get ahold of this idea, and, if I'm not satisfied with having merely science and religion against me, I'll have opposition enough to suit anybody who can get along without popularity. Just at present, however, I am not selling short on New York Central.

The outstanding suggestion, which, however, like many other suggestions, I cannot now develop, is, if Teleportation exists, it may be used. It may be criminally used, or it may be used commercially. Cargoes, without ships, and freights, without trains, may be of the traffics of the future. There may be teleportative voyages from planet to planet.

Altogether, so many of our data are bound up with jokes, hoaxes, and flippant treatments that I think of the toy and play genesis of many practical inventions. Billions of dollars are today seriously drawing dividends from toys and games that were put to work. Billions of laughs and jeers have preceded solemn expressions of satisfaction with fat bank accounts. But this is only reasoning, and is nothing but logic and argument, and there have been billions of laughs that never turned into anything more satisfactory—though where do I get the idea that there is anything more satisfactory than a laugh?

EXOGENIC ANIMALS

If strangeness be a standard for unfavorable judgment, I damn at a swipe most of this book.

But damnation is nothing to me. I offer the data. Suit yourself.

We take up again the phenomenon of localized repetitions, which suggest the existence of persisting translatory currents. If again, we come to the seemingly preposterous, we reflect that we have only preposterous pseudo-standards to judge by. In this instance, the sending of salt water fishes to a fresh water lake is no more out of place than for instance, is the sending of chaplains to battleships; and, of course, in our view, it is what is loosely called Nature that is doing all things. Perhaps what is called Nature amuses itself by occasionally sending somewhat intelligent fellows to theological seminaries, and salt water fishes to fresh water. Whether we theologians believe in God, or accept that there is an Organism, wherein we agree is in having often to apologize for him or it.

In *Science*, Dec. 12, 1902, Dr. John M. Clarkes writes that a strange-looking fish had been caught in Lake Onondaga, Western New York, and had been taken to Syracuse. Here it was identified as a squid. Then a second specimen was caught.

Prof. Ortman, of Princeton University, examined one of the specimens, which according to him, was "a short-finned squid, of the North Atlantic, about 13 inches long." Prof. Ortman reasoned that Atlantic fishermen use squid for bait. Very well: then other fisherman may use squid for bait. So somebody may have sent for squid, to go fishing in Lake Onondaga, and may have lost a couple of live ones.

This is the science that is opposing our own notions. But for all I know, it may be pretty good science. An existence that would produce such explainers, might very well produce such fishermen. So perhaps fishermen of Lake Onondaga, with millions of worms around, send several hundred miles for squid, for bait, and perhaps Atlantic fishermen, with millions of squid available, send all the way to Lake Onondaga for worms. I've done foolisher, myself.

Mountainous districts of Inverness-shire, Scotland—mysterious footprints in the bogs—sheeps and goats slaughtered. "A large, fierce, yellow animal of unknown species" was seen by a farmer, who killed it. More mysterious tracks in the bogs, and continued slaughter—another large, fierce, yellow animal was shot. Soon a third specimen was caught in a trap. "The body was sent to the London Zoo, where it was identified as that of a lynx." See the *London Daily Express*, Jan. 14, 1927. There is no record of the lynx, as indigenous to Great Britain. "It is found, in Europe, in the Alps, and the Carpathians, and more often in the Caucasus. The last specimen, in France, was killed 100 years ago."

I have a feeling of impiety, in recording this datum. So many of our data are

upon a godness that so much resembles idiocy that to attribute intelligence to it may be even blasphemous. Early in this theological treatise we noted a widespread feeling that there is something of the divine in imbecility. But, if these three lynxes were teleported, say from somewhere in the Carpathians, there was good sense to this teleportation, and there was a good shot this time, because they landed in a lynx's paradise. There is no part of Great Britain that is richer in game than is Inverness-shire, and the country abounds with deer and sheep. However, if into this Eden were shot an Adam and two Eves, and these two Eves cats, we may think of this occurrence with a restored piety.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1866, somebody tells of a young crocodile, which, about ten years before, had been killed on a farm, at Over-Norton, Oxfordshire, England. In the November issue of this magazine, C. Parr, a well-known writer upon antiquarian subjects, says that, thirty years before, near Over-Norton, another young crocodile had been killed. According to Mr Parr, still another young crocodile had been seen, at Over-Norton. In the *Field*, Aug. 23, 1862, is an account of a fourth young crocodile that had been seen, near Over-Norton.

It looks as if, for about thirty years, there had been a translatory current, especially selective of young crocodiles, between somewhere, say in Egypt, and an appearing-point near Over-Norton. If, by design and functioning, in the distribution of life in an organism, or in one organic existence, we mean anything so misdirected as a teleportation of young crocodiles to a point in a land where they would be out of adaptation, we evidently mean not so very intelligent design and functioning. Possibly, or most likely. It seems to me that an existence that is capable of sending young butchers to medical schools, and young boilermakers to studios, would be capable of sending young crocodiles to Over-Norton, Oxfordshire, England. When I think of what gets into the Houses of Congress, I expect to come upon data of mysterious distributions of cocoanuts in Greenland.

MONSTROUS BIOLOGY: TOWARDS THE SCIENCE OF CRYPTO-ZOOLOGY

I have come upon a story of somebody, in Philadelphia, who, having heard that a strange wild animal was prowling in New Jersey, announced that he had caught it. He exhibited something, as the "Jersey Devil." I have to accept that this was the press agent of a dime museum, and that the creature that he exhibited was a kangaroo, to which he had attached tin wings and green whiskers. But, if better-established branches of biology are subject to Nature-fakery, what can be expected in our newer biology, with all the insecurities of newness?

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"Jersey Devils" have been reported other times, but, though I should not like to be so dogmatic as to say that there are no "Jersey Devils," I have had no encouragement investigating them. One of the stories, according to a clipping that was sent to me by Miss F. G. Talman, of Woodbury, N.J., appeared in the *Woodbury Daily Times*, Dec. 15, 1925. William Hyman, upon his farm, near Woodbury, had been aroused by a disturbance in his chicken coop. He shot and killed a never before heard-of animal. I have written to Mr. Hyman, and have no reason to think that there is a Mr. Hyman. I have had an extensive, though one-sided, correspondence with people who may not be, about things that probably aren't. For the latest account of the "Jersey Devil," see the *New York Times*, Aug. 6, 1930.

Remains of a strange animal, teleported to this earth from Mars or the moon—very likely, or not so likely—found on a bank of a stream in Australia. See the *Adelaide Observer*, Sept. 15, 1883—that Mr. Hoad, of Adelaide, had found on a bank of Brungle Creek, a headless trunk of a pig like animal, with an appendage that curved inward, like the tail of a lobster. *New Zealand Times*, May 9, 1883—excitement near Masterton—unknown creature at large—curly hair, short legs, and broad muzzle. Dogs sent after it—one of the dogs flayed by it—rest of the dogs running away—probably "with their tails between their legs," but the reporter overlooking this convention.

Strange animals have appeared and they may have been teleported to this earth from other parts of an existence, but the easiest way of accounting for strange animals is to say that they are hybrids. Of course, I could handle, or manhandle, this subject any way to suit me, and be about as reasonable one way or another. I could quote many authorities against the occurrence of bizarre hybrids, leaving hard to explain, in terms of terrestrial origin, strange creatures that have appeared upon this earth. There are biologists who will not admit fertility between creatures as much alike as hares and rabbits. Nevertheless, I think that there have been strange hybrids.

The cow that gave birth to two lambs and a calf.

I don't know how that will strike all minds, but to the mind of a standardized biologist, I'd not be much more preposterous, if I should tell of an elephant that had produced two bicycles and a baby elephant.

The story is told in the *Toronto Globe*, May 25, 1889. It is said that a member of the staff of the *Globe* had been sent to investigate this outrage upon conventional obstetrics. The reporter went to the farm of Mr. John H. Carter, at South Simcoe, and then wrote that he had seen the two lambs, which were larger and coarser than ordinary, or less romantically derived, lambs, having upon their breast mits of hair like calves' hair. Other newspapers—*Quebec Daily Mercury*, for instance—published other details, such as statements by well-known stockbreeders that they had examined the lambs and were compelled to accept the story of their origin.

Lo!

Melbourne Argus, Feb. 28, and March 1, 1890—a wandering monster. A list of names and addresses of persons who said that they had seen it, was published. It was a creature about thirty feet long, and was terrorizing the people of Euroa. “The existence of some altogether unheard-of monster is vouched for by a cloud of credible witnesses.”

I am tired of the sensible explanations that are holding back new delusions. So I suggest that this thing, thirty feet long, was not a creature, but was a construction, in which explorers from somewhere else, were travelling back and forth, near one of this earth's cities, having their own reasons for not wanting to investigate too closely.

I don't know what will be thought of zoologists of Melbourne, but whatever will be thought of me can't be altogether focused upon me, because there were scientists in Melbourne who were as enlightened as I am, or as preposterous and sensational as I am. Officials of the Melbourne Zoological Gardens thought that, whether this story was nonsense or not, it should be looked into. They got a big net, and sent a man with a net to Euroa. Forty men, with the man with the net, set out. They hunted all day, but no huge bulk, more or less in the distance, was seen, and a statement that enormous tracks were found may be only a sop to us enlightened, or preposterous, ones.

London newspapers, July 6, 1913—a lengthy telegram that had been sent by Mr. Hartwell Conder, Tasmanian State Mining Engineer, to Mr. Wallace, the Secretary of Mines, of Tasmania—that upon April 20, 1913, two of Mr. Conder's companions, named Davies and Harris, had seen a huge, unknown animal, near Macquarie Harbor, Tasmania. “The animal was about fifteen feet long. It had a very small head, only the size of the head of a kangaroo dog. It had a thick, arched neck, passing gradually into the barrel of the body. It had no definite tail and no fins. It was furred, the coat in appearance resembling that of a horse of chestnut color, well-groomed and shining. It had four distinct legs. It traveled by bounding—i.e., by arching its back and gathering up its body, so that the footprints of the forefeet were level with those of the hind feet. It made definite footprints. These showed circular impressions, with a diameter (measured) of 9 inches, and the marks of claws, about 7 inches long, extending outward from the body. There was no evidence for or against webbing.”

In reply to my inquiries, Mrs. Conder—North Terrace, Burnie, Tasmania—wrote to me, as asked to by Mr. Conder, saying that the published description is accurate, and that unless there be a seal with jointed flippers, upon which the creature could raise itself and run, Mr. Conder “could not be altogether convinced that the animal was a seal.”

So like everybody else, I don't know what to think, but, rather, uncommonly, I know that.

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A CASE OF XENOGLOSSOLALIA:

SEMIOTIC CRIMINOLOGISTS TRANSLATE THE LISBIANESE VAGRANT

In the *London Daily Mail*, Sept. 18, 1905, and following issues, are accounts of a young man who had been arrested in Paris, charged with vagrancy. It was impossible to understand him. In vain had he been tried with European and Asiatic languages, but, by means of signs, he had made known that he had come from *Lisbian*. *Elsar* was the young man's word for a chair; a table was a *lotoba*, and his *sonar* was his nose. Mr. George R. Sims, well known criminologist, as well as a story writer, took the matter up scientifically. As announced by him, the mystery had been solved by him. The young man, an impostor, had transposed letters, in fashioning his words. So the word *raise* transposed, becomes *eisar*. But what has a *raise* to do with a chair? It is said that true science is always simple. A chair *raise*s one, said Mr. Sims, simply. Now take the word *sonar*. As we see, when Mr. Sims points it out to us, that word is a transposition of the word *snore*, or is almost. That's noses, or relation to noses.

The criminologists are not banded like some scientists. In Paris, the unbanded wisemen said that Mr. Sims' transpositions were far-fetched. With a freedom that would seem reckless to more canny scientists, or without waiting three or four months to find out what each was going to say, they expressed opinion. One of the wisemen of Paris, who accused Mr. Sims of fetching too far, was the eminent scientist, M. Haag. "Take the young man's word *Odir*, for *God*," said M. Haag: "transpose that, and we have *Dio*, or very nearly. *Dio* is Spanish for God. The young man is Spanish." Another distinguished wiseman was M. Roty. He rushed into print, while M. Haag was still explaining. "Consider the word *vacar*, for *house*," said M. Roty. "Unquestionably we have a transposition of the word *casa*, with a difference of only one letter, and *casa* is Italian for *house*. The young man is Italian." *Le Temps*, September 18—another wiseman, a distinguished geographer, this time, identified the young man as one of the Russian Doukhobors.

Where would we be, and who would send the young ones to school, if all the other wisemen of our tribes had such independence? If it were not for a conspiracy that can be regarded as nothing short of providential, so that about what is taught in one school is taught in the other schools, one would spend one's lifetime, learning and unlearning, in school after school. As it is, the unlearning can be done, after leaving one school.

The young man was identified by the police as Rinaldo Agostini, an Austrian whose fingerprints had been taken several times before, somewhere else, when he had been arrested for vagrancy.

Though usually we do not think piously of the police, their stations are confessional. But they're confessional more in a scientific than in a religious sense. When a confessor holds a club over a conscience, he can bully statements

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with the success of any scientist who slugs data with a theory. There is much brutality in police stations and in laboratories, but I can't say that we're trying to reform anything; and if there never has been a Newton, or a Darwin, or an Einstein—or a Moses, or a Christ, or a St. Augustine—who has practiced other than the third degree upon circumstances, I fear me that sometimes we are not innocent of one or two degrees, ourselves.

KASPER HAUSER REVISITED : A FORTEAN ANALYSIS

In the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the story of Kasper Hauser is said to be one of the most baffling mysteries in history. This is an unusual statement. Mostly we meet denials that there are mysteries. In everything that I have read upon this case, it is treated as if it were unique.

A writer like Andrew Lang, who has a liking for mysteries, takes up such a case, with not an indication of a thought in his mind that it should not be studied as a thing in itself, but should be correlated with similars. That, inductively, anything of an ultimate nature could be found out, is no delusion of mine: I think not of a widening of truth, but of a lessening of error.

Kasper Hauser was no impostor, who played a stunt of his own invention, as tellers of his story have thought. The safest and easiest and laziest of explanations is that of imposture. If he were an impostor, somewhere, back in times when little was known of amnesia, he had gotten ahold of detailed knowledge of amnesia. And he was about seventeen years old. Perhaps he was in a state of profound hypnosis.

Upon Whit Monday afternoon, May, 1828, a youth, aged sixteen or seventeen, staggered, with a jaunty stride, into the town of Nuremberg, Germany. Or while painfully dragging himself along the ground, he capered into the town. The story has been told by theorists. The tellers have fitted descriptions around their theories. The young man was unable fully to govern the motions of his legs, according to Andrew Lang, for instance. He walked with firm, quick steps, according to the Duchess of Cleveland. The Duchess' theory required that nothing should be the matter with his legs. By the way of the New Gate he entered the town, and there was something the matter with his legs, according to all writers, except the one who preferred that there should be nothing the matter with his legs.

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Whether impostor or idiot, the outstanding mystery is the origin of this continentally advertised boy. The look of all circumstance to me is that somebody got rid of Kasper, considering him an imbecile, having been able to teach him only two German sentences. Then the look is that he had not for years known Kasper, but had known him only a few weeks, while his disabilities were new to him. Where this custodian found the boy is the mystery.

Kasper Hauser, in the year 1829, wrote his own story, telling that, until the age of sixteen or seventeen, he had lived upon bread and water, in a small, dark cell. He had known only one person, alluded to by him, as "the man," who, toward the end of his confinement had taught him two sentences, one of them signifying that he wished to join a cavalry regiment, and the other "I don't know."

Almost anybody, reading this account, will, perhaps regretfully, perhaps not, say farewell to our idea of a teleported boy. "That settles it." But nothing ever has settled anything, except relatively to a desire for settlement, and if ours is a desire for unsettlement, we have assurance that we, or any other theorist, can find in the uncertainties of any human document, whether supposed to have been dictated from on high, or written by a boy, material for thinking as our theories require. We note in Kasper's story a statement that he had no idea of time. That is refreshing to our wilting theory.

Dec. 14, 1833—Kasper Hauser ran from a park, crying that he had been stabbed. Deeply wounded in his side, he was taken to his home. The park, which was covered with new-fallen snow, was searched, but no weapon was found, and only Kasper's footprints were seen in the snow. Two of the attending physicians gave their opinion that Kasper could not so have injured himself. The opinion of the third physician was an indirect accusation of suicide. It was Kasper's story that a man in the park had stabbed him. If anybody prefers to think that it cannot be maintained that there was only one track of footprints in the snow, let him look up various accounts, and he will find assurances any way he wants to find them.

As to one of the most mysterious of the circumstances in the story of Kasper Hauser, I have many records of attacks upon human beings, by means of an unknown, missile-less weapons. See the newspapers for several dozen accounts of somebody, or something, that was terrorizing people in New Jersey, in and around Camden, in the winter of 1927-28. People were fired upon, and in automobiles there were bullet holes, but bullets were unfindable. I know of two other instances in the state of New Jersey. In France, about the year 1910, there was a long series of such attacks, attributed to "phantom bandits." Though I have hundreds of notes upon mysterious attacks upon human beings, I cannot develop an occult criminology now.

For almost every statement that I have made, just as good authority for

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denying it, as for stating it, can be found, provided any two conflicting theories depend upon it. One can read that Kasper Hauser was highly intelligent or brilliant. One can read that the autopsy showed that his brain was atrophied to the size of a small animal's, accounting for his idiocy. One comes upon just about what one comes upon in looking up any other matter of history. It is said that history is a science. I think that it must be.

“Kasper Hauser showed such an utter deficiency of words and ideas, such perfect ignorance of the commonest things and appearances of Nature, and such horror of all customs, conveniences, and necessities of civilized life, and, withal, such extraordinary peculiarities in his social, mental, and physical disposition, that one might feel oneself driven to the alternative of believing him to be a citizen of another planet, transferred by some miracle to our own” (von Feuerbach).

The greatest seeming security is only a temporary disguise of the abysmal. All of us are skating over thin existence.

THE BRAIN CUFFS OF NEWTON AND EINSTEIN

Back in the pessimistic times of Sir Isaac Newton was formulated the explanation of existence in general that is our opposition. It was the melancholy doctrine of universal fall. It was in agreement with the theology of the time: fallen angels, the fall of mankind: so falling planets, falling moons, everything falling. The germ of this despair was the supposed fall of the moon, not to, but around, this earth. But if the moon is falling away from observers upon one part of this earth's surface, it is rising in the sky, relatively to other observers. If something is quite as truly rising as it is falling, only minds that belong away back in times when everything was supposed to be falling, can be satisfied with this yarn of the rising moon that is falling. Sir Isaac Newton looked at the falling moon, and explained all things in terms of attraction. It would be just as logical to look at the rising moon, and explain all things in terms of repulsion. It would be more widely logical to cancel falls with rises, and explain that there is nothing.

I think of this earth as central, and as almost stationary, and with the stars in a shell, revolving around. By so thinking, I have the concept of an object, and the visualization of an existence as a whole. But the trouble with this idea is that it is reasonable. Not absolutely can it be said that human minds reason according to reasonableness. There is the love of paradox to consider.

Newtonism is no longer satisfactory. There is too much that it cannot explain.

Einsteinism has arisen.

Spectroscopic determinations are determined by whatever the spectroscopists

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want to determine. If one thinks not, look up the "determinations" by astronomers who were for and against Einstein. Grebe and Bachem, at Bonn, found shifts of spectral lines in Einstein's favor. They were for Einstein. St. John, at the Mt. Wilson Observatory, found the testimony of the spectroscope not in Einstein's favor. He was against Einstein. The spectroscope is said to be against us. But, if we had a spectroscope of our own, it would be for us.

Though Prof. Einstein would be a great mathematician, if in our existence anything could really be anything, relativity is so against him that he is only a relatively great mathematician.

Prof. Einstein has taken the Velocity of Light, as the Absolute to relate to. We cannot divorce the idea of reciprocity from the idea of relations, and relating something to the Absolute would be relating the Absolute to something. This is defeating an alleged concept of the Absolute, with the pseudo-idea of the Relative Absolute. The doctrine of Prof. Einstein's is based not upon an absolute finding, but upon a question:

Which is the more graspable interpretation of the Michelson-Morley experiments:

That no motion of this earth in an orbit is indicated, because the velocity of light is absolute;

Or that no motion of this earth in an orbit is indicated, because the earth is stationary?

Unfortunately for my own expressions, I have to ask a third question:

Who, except someone who was out to boost a theory ever demonstrated that light has any velocity?

Prof. Einstein is a Girondist of the Scientific Revolution. His revolt is against classical mechanics, but his methods and his delusions are as antiquated as what he attacks. But it is my expression that he has functioned. Though his strokes were wobbles, he has shown with his palsies the insecurities of that in Science which has been worshipfully regarded as the Most High.

Any pronouncement by any orthodoxy is to me the same as handcuffs. It's brain cuffs. There are times when I don't give a damn whether the stars are trillions of miles away or ten miles away—but, at any time, let anybody say to me, authoritatively or with an air of finality, that the stars are trillions of miles away, or ten miles away, and my contrariness stirs, or inflames, and if I can't pick the lock of his pronouncements, I'll have to squirm out some way to save my egotism.

The standardized explanation is perforated with omissions. It seems unthinkable that mind upon this earth could be so bound down to this earth by this thing of gaps, until we reflect that so are all nets fabricated.

THE ECLIPSES OF REASON: MORE ASTRONOMICAL CLOWNING

I wonder what ironic fellow first called these snug, little centers of inattention Observatories. He had a wit of his own, whoever he was.

I take from a clipping, from the *Los Angeles Evening Herald*, April 28, 1930 which was sent to me by Mr. L. E. Stein of Los Angeles. In an account of the eclipse of the sun, April 28, 1930, Dr. H. M. Jeffers, staff astronomer of Lick Observatory says: "We expected the shadow to be but half a mile in width. Instead of that, I think that it was nearer five miles broad." He says: "It may be suggested by others that the broad shadow was cast by astronomical errors due to the moon being closer to the earth than we have placed it in theory. But I don't believe that this broad belt was caused by anything but refraction."

The difference between half a mile and five miles is great. If the prophets of Lick Observatory did not take refraction into consideration, all the rest of their supposed knowledge may be attributable to incompetence. This difference may mean that the moon is not more than a day's journey away from the earth.

The 24th of January, 1925—excitement of New York City.

It was the morning of the eclipse of the sun, total over a part of New York City.

Along the line of 83rd Street, which had been exactly predicted by the astronomers, as the southern limit of the path of totality, and in places north and south, were stationed 149 observers, sent by the New York lighting companies, to report upon light effects.

In time, the astronomers did pretty well. But hereafter when they tell of their refinements, as with discs several hundred miles away, I shall think, not of fifty cent pieces, but of Ferris Wheels. Their prediction was wrong by four seconds.

The 149 observers for the lighting companies reported that the astronomers were wrong, in space, by three quarters of a mile.

It was the day of the big check up.

Sept. 20, 1922—an eclipse of the sun—see Mitchell's *Eclipses of the Sun*, p. 67—and the predictions by the astronomers. They made one error of 16 seconds, and another error of 20 seconds.

There are persons who do not believe in ordinary fortune tellers. Yet, without a quiver in their credulities, they read of an astronomical gypsy who tells the fortunes of a star for 100,000,000,000 years, though, according to conventionality, that star is 60 X 60 X 24 X 365 X 100,000 times farther away than is the moon, motions of which cannot be exactly foretold, unless the observations are going to be, say at Bahia de Paranagua, or somewhere in Jungaria.

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Night of May 27, 1925—the Rip Van Winkles of the South African "Observatory" were disturbed by an amateur. He told them there was a new star in the southern constellation Pictor. When they were aroused, the Rips looked up and saw the new star, and then stayed awake long enough to learn that somnambulically they had, for months, been photographing it. For months it had been gleaming over the "Observatories" of four continents.

Upon May 27, 1925, a new star was discovered in the southern constellation Pictor. By spectroscopic determination, its distance was "determined" to be 540 light years. See this stated in a bulletin of the Harvard Observatory, November, 1927.

March 27, 1928—the new star split.

When the split was seen, astronomers of the South African Observatory repudiated the gospel of their spectroscopes of three years before. There must have been much roughness, even though there had been three years in which to plane down the splinters. They cut the distance from 540 to 40 light years. If there should be any more reductions like this, there may start a slump of immensities down toward a conception of a thinkable-sized formation of stars. A distance cut down 60 X 60 X 24 X 365 X 500 X 186,000 miles is a pretty good start.

A generation ago, they told of inconceivable distances of stars. Then they said that they had, a thousand times, multiplied some of these distances: but, if the inconceivable be multiplied any number of times, it is still the same old inconceivability. If, at the unthinkable, thought stops, but if thought must move somewhere, the astronomers, who cannot go on expansively, will, if they do think, have to think in reductions. If the time has come, there will be a crash in the Observatories, with astronomers in a panic selling short on inconceivabilities.

Upon Sept. 2, 1930, began a meeting of the American Astronomical Society, Chicago. A paper that was read by Dr. P. Van de Kamp may be a signal for a panic. Said he: "Some of the stars may actually be thousands of light years nearer than astronomy believes them to be."

"Lo!" as some of the astronomers say in their books.

But if they're only the figments of one of the dream-like developments of our pseudo-existence, they, too, must pass away, and they must go by way of slaughter, or by way of laughter. Considering all their doings, I think that through hilarity would be the fitter exit.

There are slits in the domes of Observatories.

The fixed grin of a clown—the slit in the dome of an Observatory.

A grin in the dark—or the sardonic slit in any Observatory, night times. Most likely the inmates haven't a notion what is symbolized.

The Building That Laughs—as Victor Hugo would call an Observatory with a slit in it.

Lo!

Fixed grin of the clown—and according to theatrical conventions, his head is full of seriousness.

They must be murdered, or we shall laugh them away. There is always something that can be said in favor of murder, but in the case of the astronomers that would be willful waste of the stuff of laughter.

SKYWARD HO!

There may be civilizations in the lands of the stars, or it may be that, in the concavity of a starry shell, vast, habitable regions have been held in reserve for colonization from this earth. Though there is considerable opposition to wars, they are, as at any moving picture place, one can see, still popular: but other eliminations of human beings have waned, and it is likely that for a long time birth control will have no more than its present control upon births. The pestilences that used to remove millions are no longer much heard of. It may be that an organic existence is, by lessening eliminations, preparing a pressure of populations upon this earth that can have relief only in enormous colonizing outlets somewhere else. It is as if co-operatively with the simultaneous variations of need, aviation is developing, as the means of migratory reliefs—

There's a flash in the sky. It is said to be a meteor. There's a glow. That is said to be an aurora borealis—

The time has come.

The slogan comes—

Skyward ho!

The treks to the stars. Flows of adventurers—and the movietone news—press agents and interviews—and somebody about to sail to Lyra reduces expenses by letting it be known what brand of cigarettes he'll take along—

Caravels with wings—and the covered planes of the sky—and writers of complaints to the newspapers: this dumping of milk bottles and worse from the expeditions is an outrage. New comets are watched from this earth—long trains of voyagers to the stars, when at night they turn on their lights. New constellations appear—the cities of the lands of the stars.

And then the commonplaceness of it all.

Personally conducted tours to Taurus and Orion. Summer vacations on the brink of Vega. "My father tells of times, when people, before going to the moon, made their wills." "Just the same there was something peaceful about those old skies. It's getting on my nerves, looking up at all those lip stick and soap and bathing suit signs."

Or my own acceptance that there can be no understanding of our existence, if be overlooked the irony of it all—

The aristocratic astronomers—their alleged rapport with infinitude—their

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reputed familiarity with the ultra-remote—the academic—the classical—

One looks up and sees, instead, an illuminated representation of a can of spaghetti in tomato sauce, in the sky.

The commonplaceness of it all. Of course the stars are near. Who, but a few old fossils, ever thought otherwise? Does the writer of this book think that he found out anything new? All these notions of his were matters of common knowledge, away back in the times of ancient Greece.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

I go on with my yarns. I no more believe them than I believe that twice two are four.

If there is continuity, only fictitiously can anything be picked out of the nexus of all phenomena; or, if there is only oneness, we cannot, except arbitrarily, find any two units with which even to start the sequence that twice two are four. And, if there is also discontinuity, all things are so individualized that, except arbitrarily and fictitiously, nothing can be classed with, or added to, anything else.

It can be mathematically shown that twice two are four, and it can be mathematically shown that two can never become four. Let somebody have two of arithmetic's favorite fruit, or two apples, and undertake to add two more to them. Although he will have no trouble in doing this, it can be mathematically shown to be impossible. Or that, according to Zeno's paradoxes, nothing can be carried over intervening space and added to something else. Instead of ending up skeptically about mathematics, here am I upholding that it can prove anything.

I believe nothing. I have shut myself away from the rocks and wisdoms of ages, and from the so-called great teachers of all time, and perhaps because of that isolation I am given to bizarre hospitalities. I shut the front door upon Christ and Einstein, and at the back door hold out a welcoming hand to little frogs and periwinkles. I believe nothing of my own that I have ever written. I can not accept that the products of minds are subject-matter for beliefs.

Now and then admirers of my good works write to me, and try to convert me into believing things that I say. He would have to be an eloquent admirer, who could persuade me into thinking that our present expression is not at least a little fanciful; but just the same I have labored to support it. I labor, like workers in a beehive, to support a lot of vagabond notions. But how am I to know? How am I to know but that soemetime a queen-idea may soar to the sky, and from a nuptial flight of data, come back fertile from one of these drones?

It is my attempt to smash false demarcations; to take data away from narrow and exclusive treatments by spiritualists, astronomers, meteorologists, entomologists; also denying the validity of usurpations of words and ideas by

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metaphysicians and theologians. But my interest is not only that of a unifier: it is in bringing together seeming incongruities, and finding that they have affinity. I am very much aware of the invigoration of products of ideas that are foreign to each other, if they mate. This is exogamy, practiced with thoughts—to fertilize a volcanic eruption with a storm of frogs—or to mingle the fall of an edible substance from the sky with the unexplained appearance of Cagliostro. But I am a pioneer and no purist, and some of these stud-stunts of introducing vagabond ideas to each other may have about the eugenic value of some of the romances in houses of ill fame. I cannot expect to be both promiscuous and respectable. Later, most likely, some of these unions will be properly licenced.

If anybody thinks that this book is an attack upon scientists, as a distinct order of beings, he has a more special idea of it than I have. As I'm seeing things, everybody's a scientist.



CHARLES AND ANNA FORT, PASSPORT PHOTO

5

WILD TALENTS

PREFATORY REMARKS

In *Wild Talents*, Fort maps the marvellous riddles of the human sciences. These “wild talents” cover such problematic phenomena as the spontaneous combustion of bodies, stigmatic subjects, teleportation, poltergeist girls, and telepathic technologies. Fort assembles the data of these possible–impossible sciences and speculates upon the curious border regions where wildness begins and where taming begins. Like other Fortean texts, *Wild Talents* also defamiliarizes established sciences. Fort considers modern physics and quantum mechanics according to magic principles of teleportation. Or he reflects upon the theory of evolution as a stylish Parisian fashion show.

The second half of the title must be considered in its widest possible senses. Fort plays with the idea of converting these strange abilities into monetary values. The trick turns around the commercialization and the technicization of what has been called witchcraft. Fort implies that wildness is a relative term for that which is at present unmarketable, unconventional, and unnameable. As he says elsewhere, “Witchcraft always has a hard time, until it becomes established and changes its name.” Fort assumes the role of prophet and visionary in advocating the cultivation of these wild talents as vital reserves and potential resources for scientific invention and creation.

But, throughout the text, Fort leaves markers that this advocacy might provide only an occasion for a prankster’s laughter. The *Wild Talents* of the title might only refer to the compositional skills of its author and the hoax which he is perpetrating upon the reader. As Fort comments in the next to last sentence of the book in some tentative conclusions about the

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perpetual motion crank John Worrall Keely and his fuelless motor—"according to the experience of all pioneers—impostor and messiah."

In *Wild Talents*, Fort places the reader at the perplexing borderline of the scientific imaginary that divides hoax and prophesy.

A COLLECTOR OF AMBROSES AND OTHER "COINCIDENCES"

I am a collector of notes upon subjects that have diversity—such as deviations from concentricity in the lunar crater Copernicus, and a sudden appearance of purple Englishmen—stationary meteor-radiants, and a reported growth of hair on the bald head of a mummy—and "Did the girl swallow the octopus?" But my liveliest interest is not so much in things, as in relations of things. I have spent much time thinking about the alleged pseudo-relations that are called coincidences. What if some of them should not be coincidences?

Upon Dec. 2, 1919, Ambrose Small, of Toronto, Canada, disappeared. He was known to have been in his office, in the Toronto Grand Opera House, of which he was the owner, between five and six o'clock, the evening of December 2nd. Nobody saw him leave his office. Nobody—at least nobody whose testimony can be accepted—saw him, this evening, outside the building. There were stories of a woman in the case. But Ambrose Small disappeared, and left more than a million dollars behind.

Before I looked into the case of Ambrose Small, I was attracted to it by another seeming coincidence. That there could be any meaning in it seemed so preposterous that, as influenced by much experience, I gave it serious thought. About six years before the disappearance of Ambrose Small, the writer Ambrose Bierce had disappeared. Newspapers all over the world had made much of the mystery of Ambrose Bierce. But what could the disappearance of one Ambrose, in Texas, have to do with another Ambrose, in Canada? Was somebody collecting Ambroses? There was in these questions an appearance of childishness that attracted my respectful attention.

In the explanation of *coincidence* there is much of laziness, and helplessness, and response to an instinctive fear that a scientific dogma will be endangered. It is a tag, or a label: but of course every tag, or label, fits well enough at times. A while ago, I noted a case of detectives who were searching for a glass-eyed man named Jackson. A Jackson, with a glass eye, was arrested in Boston. But he was not the Jackson they wanted, and pretty soon they got their glass-eyed Jackson, in Philadelphia. I never developed anything out of this item—such as that, if there's a Murphy with a hare lip, in Chicago, there must be another hare-lipped Murphy somewhere else.

In the *New York Herald*, Nov. 26, 1911, there is an account of the hanging of three men, for the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey, on Greenberry Hill,

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London. The names of the murderers were Green, Berry, and Hill. It does seem that this was only a matter of chance. Still, it may have been no coincidence, but a savage pun mixed with murder. *New York Sun*, Oct. 7, 1930—arm of William Lumsden, of Roslyn, Washington, crushed under a tractor. He was the third person, in three generations, in his family, to lose a left arm. This was coincidence, or I shall have to come out, accepting that there may be “curses” on families. But, near the beginning of a book, I don’t like to come out so definitely. And we’re getting away from our subject, which is *Bodies*.

“Unexplained drownings in Douglas Harbor, Isle of Man” In the *London Daily News*, Aug. 19, 1910, it was said that the bodies of a young man and of a girl had been found in the harbor. They were known as a “young couple,” and their drowning would be understandable in terms of a common emotion, were it not that also there was a body of a middle-aged man “not known in any way connected with them.”

There is a view by which it can be shown, or more or less demonstrated, that there never has been a coincidence. That is, in anything like a final sense. By a coincidence is meant a false appearance, or suggestion, of relations among circumstances. But anybody who accepts that there is an underlying oneness of all things, accepts that there are no utter absences of relations among circumstances.

And I’d not say that my question, as to what the disappearance of one Ambrose could have to do with the disappearance of another Ambrose, is so senseless. The idea of causing Ambrose Small to disappear may have had origin in somebody’s mind, by suggestion from the disappearance of Ambrose Bierce. If in no terms of physical abduction can the disappearance of Ambrose Small be explained, I’ll not say that that has any meaning, until the physicists intelligibly define what they mean by physical terms?

THE GRAND TOURIST OF THE UNEXPLAINED

Once upon a time, when mine was an undeveloped suspiciousness, and I’d let dogmatists pull their pedantries over my perception, I nevertheless collected occasional notes upon what seemed to me to be unexplained phenomena. I don’t do things mildly, and at the same time enjoy myself in various ways: I act as if trying to make allness out of something. A search for the unexplained became an obsession. I undertook the job of going through all scientific periodicals, at least by way of indexes, published in English and French, from the year 1800, available in the libraries of New York and London. As I went along, with my little suspicions in their infancies, new subjects appeared to me—something queer about some hailstorms—the odd and the unexplained in archaeological discoveries, and in Arctic explorations.

By the time I got through with the “grand tour,” as I called this search of all

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available periodicals, to distinguish it from special investigations. I was interested in so many subjects that had cropped up later, or that I had missed earlier, that I made the tour all over again—and then again had the same experience, and had to go touring again—and so on—until now it is my recognition that in every field of phenomena is somewhere the unexplained, or the irreconcilable, or the mysterious—in unformulable notions of all planets; volcanic eruptions, murders, hailstones, protective colorations of insects, chemical reactions, disappearances of human beings, stars, comets, juries, diseases, cats, lampposts, newly married couples, cathode rays, hoaxes, impostures, wars, births, deaths.

Sometimes I am a collector of data, and only a collector, and am likely to be gross and nosy, piling up notes, pleased with merely numerically adding to my stores. Other times I have joys, when unexpectedly coming upon an outrageous story that may not be altogether a lie, or upon a macabre little thing that may make some reviewer of my more or less good works mad.

But always there is present a feeling of unexplained relations of events that I note; and it is this far-away, haunting, or often taunting, awareness, or suspicion, that keeps me piling on—

Or, in a feeling of relatability of seemingly most incongruous occurrences that nevertheless may be correlated into the service of one general theme, I am like a primitive farmer, who conceives that a zebra and a cow may be hitched together to draw his plow—

But isn't there something common about zebras and cows?

An ostrich and a hyena.

Then the concept of a pageantry—the ransack of the jungles for creatures of the widest unlikeness to draw his plow—and former wild clatters of hoofs and patters of paws are the tramp of a song—here come the animals, two by two—

I go on with my account, or with the mistake that I am making.

THE MUTILATED IDEALS OF SCIENCE

Everywhere is the tabooed, or the disregarded. The monks of science dwell in smuggeries that are walled away from event-jungles. Or some of them do. Nowadays a good many of them are going native. There are scientific dervishes who whirl amok, brandishing statements; but mostly they whirl not far from their origins, and their excitements are exaggerations of old-fashioned complacencies.

There is the need in every mind that believes, or accepts anything, to consider something else silly, preposterous, false, evil, immoral, terrible—taboo. It is not necessary that we should all agree in being revolted, shocked, or contemptuous. Some of us take Jehovah, and some of us take Allah, to despise, or to be amused with. To give it limits within which to seem to be, and to give it contrasts by which to seem to be, every mind must practice exclusions. Now,

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relatively to the Taboo of today, let in any of the occurrences told of in this book, and by its suggestions and affiliations, or linkages, it would make an opening for an irruption.

One can't, unless one be hopelessly, if not brutally, a scientist, or a logician, tie to any classification. It is not so much that conventional scientists disregard, or deny, what they cannot explain—if, in anything like a final sense, nothing ever has been, or can be, explained. It is that they disregard or deny, to clip concatenations that would lead them from concealed ignorance into obvious bewilderment.

Every science is a mutilated octopus. If its tentacles were not clipped to stumps, it would feel its way into disturbing contacts. To a believer, the effect of the contemplation of a science is of being in the presence of the good, the true, and the beautiful. But what he is awed by is Mutilation. To our crippled intellects, only the maimed is what we call understandable, because the unclipped ramifies away into all other things. According to my aesthetics, what is meant by the beautiful is symmetrical deformation. By Justice—in phenomenal being—I mean the appearance of balance, by which a reaction is made to look equal and opposite to an action—so arbitrarily wrought by the clip and disregard of all ramifications of the action. This is the arbitrary basis of the mechanical theory of existence—the idea that an action can be picked out of a maze of interrelationships, as if it were a thing in itself. Some wisdom of mine is that if a man is dying of starvation he cannot commit a crime. He is good. The god of all idealists is *Malnutrition*. If all crimes are expressions of energy, it is unjust to pick on men for their crimes. A higher jurisprudence would indict their breakfasts. A good cook is responsible for more evil than ever the Demon Rum has been: and, if we'd all sit down and starve to death, at last would be realized Utopia.

The ideal state is meekness, or humility, or the semi-invalid state of the old. Year after year I am becoming nobler and nobler. If I can live to be decrepit enough, I shall be a saint.

CIRCULAR STUPIDITIES OR A GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE HYPHEN

The parthenogenetic triumphs of the human intellect are circular stupidities. The mathematicians, in their intuitions of the state of a whole, have represented what to the devout is divinity, with the circle, which, to them the "perfect figure," symbolizes getting nowhere.

Relatively to the principles of modern science, werewolves cannot be. But I know of no such principle that is other than tautology or approximation. Relatively to the principles or lack of principles, of ultra-modern science, there isn't anything that can't be, even though also it is not clear how anything can be:

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So my acceptance, or pseudo-conclusion, is that werewolves are quite likely-unlikely.

I think that the idea of werewolves is most silly, degraded, and superstitious: therefore I incline toward it respectfully. It is so laughable that I am serious about this.

But up comes the question: If nothing phenomenal is real, is everything phenomenal really unreal? But, if I accept that nothing is real, in phenomenal existence, I cannot accept that anything, therein, is really unreal. So my acceptance, in accordance with our general philosophy of the hyphen, is that all things perceptible to us are real-unreal. If anybody has the notion that he is a real being—and by realness I mean individuality, or call it entity, or unrelatedness—let him try to tell why he thinks he exists, in a real sense. Recall the most celebrated of the parthenogenetic attempts to make this demonstration:

I think: therefore I am.

We have to accept that in order to think, the thinker must be of existence prior to the thought.

Why do I think?

Because I am.

Why am I?

Because I think.

Sir Isaac Newton's contributions to the glories of human knowledge is that an apple falls because it drops. All living things are selected by environment, said Darwin. Then, according to him, when he shifted aspects, all things constituting living environment are selected. Darwinism—that selection selects.

The materialists explain all things, except what they deny, or disregard, in terms of the material. The immaterialists, such as the absolute and subjective idealists, explain all things in terms of the immaterial. My expression is in terms of the continuity of the material and the immaterial—or that one of these extremes is only an accentuation on one side, and the other only an accentuation on the other side, of the hyphenated state of the material-immaterial.

I am a being who thinks: therefore I am a being who thinks. In this circular stupidity there is a simple unity that commends it to conventional lovers of the good, the true, and the beautiful.

I do not think. I have never had a thought. Therefore something or another.

THE GLORIOUS TRIUMVIRATE: SCIENCE, RELIGION, WITCHCRAFT

According to the phantom *materialistic science*, there is no witchcraft. In the monistic sense, I agree. Witchcraft is so bound up with other "natural forces," that it can not be picked out, as having independent existence. But, in terms of

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common illusions, I accept that there is witchcraft; and, just for the sake of seeming to have opposition, which makes for more interest, I pretend that there is science. Religion is belief in a supreme being. Science is belief in a supreme generalization. Essentially they are the same. Both are suppressors of witchcraft, and I shall take up these oppositions together. But, in a state of realness-unrealness, there cannot be real opposition. In our existence of the hyphen, what is called opposition is only one view of the state of opposition-stimulation.

Sometimes slashers of cattle have been caught, and, when called upon to explain, have said that they had obeyed an "irresistible impulse." The better-educated of these unresisting ones transform the rude word "slasher" into "vivisectionist," and, instead of sneaking into fields at night, work at regular hours, in their laboratories. There are persons who wonder at the state of mind of the people in general, back in times when the torture of humans was sanctioned. The guts of a man were dragged out for the glory of God. "Abdominal exploration" of a dog is for the glory of Science. The state of mind that was, and the state of mind that is, are about the same, and the unpleasant features of anything are glossed over, so long as mainly anything is glorious.

The function of God is the focus. An intense mental state is impossible, unless there be something, or the illusion of something, to center upon. Given any other equally serviceable concentration-device, prayers are unnecessary. I conceive of the magic of prayers. I conceive of the magic of blasphemies. There is a witchcraft in religion: there may be witchcraft in atheism.

In the *New York Evening World*, Sept. 19, 1930, is an account of joy in Naples: the shouts of crowds, and the ringing of church bells. In the Cappella del Tesora Cathedral had been displayed the phial containing the "blood of St. Januarius." It had boiled.

It is my notion that, if intenser than the faith in Naples, had been a desire for the frustration of this miracle, the "blood of St. Januarius" might have frozen.

My general expression is that some of the reported phenomena that are called "miracles" probably have occurred, but have been arbitrarily taken over by the religionists, though they are the exclusive properties of priests no more than of traveling salesmen—that scientists have been repelled by the reported phenomena, because of a fear of contamination from priestcraft—but that any scientist who preaches the "ideals of science," and also lets fear of contaminations influence him is as false to his preachments as ever any priest has been.

Sometime I am going to loot the records of saints, for suggestions that may be of value to bright atheists, willing to study and experiment. I conceive of a return movement—open to free thinkers and atheists—in which many of the data of religionists—scrubbed clean of holiness—will be accepted.

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STORIES AND HISTORIES OF SCIENCE

Considering modern data, it is likely that many of the fakirs of the past, who are now known as saints, did, or to some degree did, perform the miracles that have been attributed to them. Miracles, or stunts, that were in accord with the dominant power of the period were fostered, and miracles that conflicted with, or that did not contribute to, the glory of the Church, were discouraged, or were savagely suppressed. There could be no development of mechanical, chemical, or electric miracles—

And that, in the succeeding age of Materialism—or call it the Industrial Era—there is the same state of subservience to a dominant, so that young men are trained to the glory of the job, and dream and invent in fields that are likely to interest stockholders, and are schooled into thinking that all magics, except their own industrial magics, are fakes, superstitions, or newspaper yarns.

The history of science is a record of the transformations of contempts and amusements.

I should like to see faith in science destroyed for 20 years, and then be restored for a while, and then be knocked flat again, and then revive—and so on, in a healthy alternation.

Sulphur and lava in a barren plain, and a salty block of stone, shaped roughly like a woman—signs of erosion on rocks far above water-level—a meteor that had set a bush afire—the differences of languages of peoples—and all the other elements that organized into *Genesis*.

Data of variations and heredity and adaptations; of multiplications and of checks and of the doctrine of Malthus; of acquired characters and of transmissions—and they organized into *The Origin of Species*.

Or all theories—theological, scientific, philosophical—and that they represent the same organizing process—but that self-conscious theorists, instead of recognizing that thought-forms were appearing in their minds, as in wider existence have appeared crystalline constructions, have believed that it was immortal Truth that they were conceiving. Thus, the “immortal truths,” and “rocks of ages” that it seems to produce are only flutters that seem to be real productions to us, because we see them very slow-motioned. So, again, when I see that my thoughts are coerced by conventional processes, I can think of my thoughts as nothing but the products of coercions. I'd not do these slaves the honor of believing them. They impose upon me only to the degree of temporary acceptance of some of them.

In an existence of the hyphen, it is impossible to be altogether wrong—or right. This is why it is so hard to learn anything. It is hard to overcome that which cannot be altogether wrong with that which cannot be altogether right. I look forward to the time when I shall refuse to learn another thing, having accumulated errors enough.

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I cannot say that truth is stranger than fiction, because I have never had acquaintance with either.

This book is fiction in the sense that *Pickwick Papers*, and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Newton's *Principia*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, *Genesis*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and mathematical theorems, and every history of the United States, and all other histories, are fictions. A library-myth that irritates me most is the classification of books under "fiction" and "non-fiction." And even though with effects that sometimes are not much admired, I ask questions.

UNACCOUNTABLY WOUNDED

This would be only an ordinarily incredible story.

In November, 1901, a woman told a policeman, of Kiel, Germany, that, while walking in a street in Kiel, she learned that she had been unaccountably wounded. She had felt no pain. She could not explain.

The police probably explained. If a doctor was consulted, he probably explained learnedly.

Another woman—about thirty women—"curious and inexplicable attacks." Then men were similarly injured. About eighty persons, openly, in the streets, were stabbed by an uncatchable—an invisible—or it may be the most fitting description to say that, upon the bodies of people of Kiel, wounds appeared. See the *London Daily Mail*, Dec. 7, 1901—"The extraordinary thing about the mystery is that some marvelously sharp instrument must have been used, because the victims do not seem to know that they are wounded, until several minutes after an attack."

Wounds have appeared upon people. Usually the explanation is that they were stabbed. Objects have been mutilated. Windowpanes and automobile windshields have been pierced, as if by bullets, but by bullets that could not be found. Such were the doings of the "phantom sniper of Camden" (N. J.). He appeared first, in November, 1927: but the first clipping that I have, relating to him, is from the *New York Evening Post*, Jan. 26, 1928—a store window pierced by a bullet—the eighth reported occurrence. Later, the stories were definitely of a "phantom sniper" and his "phantom bullets."

New York Herald Tribune, Feb. 9, 1928—Collingswood, N. J., February 8—"The 'phantom sniper,' if it was the work of South Jersey's mysterious marksman, scored his most sensational attack tonight when a window in the home of William T. Turnbull was shattered by what appeared to be a charge of shot.

"Police at first believed it an attempted assassination, but, as in all the other cases, no missile was found."

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Another occurrence of "phantom bullets," in the State of New Jersey, was told of, in the *New York Herald*, Feb. 2, 1916. Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Repp, of Glassboro, N.J., had been fired upon by "phantom bullets." This was a special attack upon one house. There were sounds of breaking glass, and bullet holes were found in windowpanes, but nothing beyond the windowpanes was marked. It is such a circumstance as was told of in accounts of the "Camden sniper." It is as if somebody fired, not only with a missileless gun, or with invisible bullets, but as if with intent only to perforate windows, and with the effects controlled by, and limited by, his intent. Consequently, instead of thinking of a shooting at windowpanes, I tend simply to think that holes appeared in window glass. Nobody in the house was injured, but Mr. and Mrs. Repp were terrified and they fled. Members of the Township Committee investigated, and they reported that, though no bullets were findable, the windows "were broken much as a window usually is, when a bullet crashes through it."

There has been a gathering of suggestions of not ordinary woundings. In *Lloyd's Weekly News* (London) Feb. 21, 1909, there was an account of a panic in Berlin. Many women, in the streets of the city, had been stabbed. It was said that the assailant had been seen, and he was described as "a young man, always vanishing." If he was seen, he is another of the "uncatchables." In this newspaper of February 23, it was said that 73 women had been stabbed, all except four of them not seriously.

The "phantom stabber" of Bridgeport, Conn., appeared first Feb. 20, 1925, and the last of his attacks, of which I have record, was upon June 1, 1928. That was a long time in which to operate uncaught. In the daytime, mostly, though sometimes at night, girls were stabbed: in the streets; in such public places as a department store, and the entrance of a library. Descriptions of the assailant were indefinite. In almost all instances the wounds were not serious. One of the stories, as told in the *New York Herald Tribune*, Aug. 27, 1927, is typical of the circumstances of publicity, or the confidence of an assailant that he could not be caught. If my stories will be regarded as ghost stories, a novelty about them is the eeriness of crowded thoroughfares. I expect sometime to hear of a haunted subway, during rush hours. Edgar Allen Poe would say of me that I'm no artist, and don't know how to infuse atmosphere. One would think that I had never heard of the uncanniness of dark nights in lonely places.

OF THE SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF BODIES AND FIRE GENIUSES

The story was of a woman, at Whitley Bay, near Blyth, England, who, according to her statement, had found her sister, burned to death on an unscorched bed. This was the equivalence of the old stories of "spontaneous

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combustion of human bodies." The cases are of fires, in unscorched surroundings. I am so confused that all that I can say about a story of a woman who burned to death on an unscorched bed is that it is possible-impossible.

In *Cosmos*, 3-6-242, is a physician's report upon a case. It is a communication by Dr. Bertholle to the Société Medico-Chirurgicale:

That, upon the 1st of August, 1869, the police of Paris had sent for Dr. Bertholle, in the matter of a woman, who had been found, burned to death. Under the burned body, the floor was burned, but there was nothing to indicate the origin of the fire. Bedclothes, mattresses, curtains, all other things in the room, showed not a trace of fire. But this body was burned, as if it had been in the midst of flames of the intensity of a furnace. Dr. Bertholle's report was technical and detailed: left arm totally consumed: right hand burned to cinders: no trace left of internal organs in the thorax, and organs in the abdomen unrecognizable. The woman had made no outcry, and no other sound had been heard by other dwellers in the house. It is localization, or specialization, again—a burned body in an almost unscorched room.

It is as if somebody had vengefully imagined fires, and in special places had localized fires, according to his visualizations. One vividly visualizes a face, and a body is ignored by the imagination. Let somebody visualize a bed afire, and exhaust his imaginative powers in this specialization: I conceive of the bed burning, as imagined, and nothing else burning, because nothing else was included in the mental picture that *transmediumized*, it having been taken for granted, by the visualizer, that, like a fire of physical origin, this fire would extend. It seems to me to be only ordinarily impossible to understand the burning of a woman on an unscorched bed as the "realization" of an imagined scene in which the burning body was pictured, with neglect of anything else consuming.

In the *New York Times*, Aug. 25, 1929, was published a story of excitement upon the West Indian island of Antigua. It is an account of a girl whose clothes flamed, leaving her body unscorched. This girl, a Negress, named Lily White, living in the village of Liberta, flamed, while walking in the streets. However, at home, too, the clothes of this girl often burst into flames. She became dependent upon her neighbors for something to wear. When she was in bed, sheets burned around her, seemingly harmlessly to her, according to the story. In the *New York Sun*, Dec. 1, 1882, is an account of the occult powers of A. W. Underwood, a Negro, aged 24, of Paw Paw, Michigan. He will strip, and will rinse out his mouth thoroughly, and submit to the most rigorous examination to preclude the possibility of any humbug, and then by his breath, blown upon any paper, or cloth, envelop it in flames. He will lie down, after collecting dry leaves, and by breathing on them start a fire. I think of these fire-agents as the most valuable members of a savage community, in primitive times: most likely beginning humbly, regarded as freaks; most likely persecuted at first, but becoming

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established, and then not overcharging for their services that it was learned how, by ribbing sticks, to do without them—so then their fall from importance, and the dwindling of them into their present, rare occurrence—but the preservation of them, at occasions, by Nature, as an insurance, because there's no knowing when we'll all go back to savagery again, degrading down to an ignorance of even how to start fires.

WILD TALENTS AND THE CONVENTIONALIZATION OF WITCHCRAFT

My notion is that wild talents exist in the profusion of the weeds of the fields. Also my notion is that, were it not for the conventions of markets, many weeds could be developed into valuable, edible vegetables. All around are wild talents, and it occurs to nobody to try to cultivate them, except as expressions of personal feelings, or as freaks for which to charge admission. I conceive of powers and the uses of human powers that will some day transcend the stunts of music-halls and seances and sideshows, as public utilities have passed beyond the toy stages of their origins. Sometimes I tend to thinking constructively—or batteries of witches teleported to Nicaragua, where speedily they cut a canal by dissolving trees and rocks—the tumults of floods, and then magic by which they cannot touch houses—cyclones that smash villages, and then cannot push feathers.

Our instances of practical witchcraft have been practical enough, so long as they were paying attractions at exhibitions, but the exhibition implies the marvel, or what people regard as the marvel, and the spirit of this book is of commonplaceness, or of coming commonplaceness—or that there isn't anything in it, except of course its vagaries of theories and minor interpretations, that won't someday be considered as unsensational as the subject matters of textbooks upon chemistry and mechanics. My interest is in magic, as the daily grind—the miracle as a job—sorceries as public utilities.

Once upon a time, Dr. Gilbert waved a wand that he had rubbed with the skin of a cat, and bits of paper rose from a table. This was in the year 1, of Our Lord, Electricity, who was born as a parlor stunt. Or much of the "parlor magic" of times gone by, and now it is industrial chemistry. And Taboo, by which earlier experimenters in the trained forces of today were under suspicion as traffickers with demons.

They—such as telepathic experiences—come and go, and then when one tries to develop an ability, the successes aren't enough to encourage anybody, except somebody who is determined to be encouraged.

Well, then, if wild talents come and go, and can't be developed, or can't be depended upon, even people who are disposed to accept that they exist, can't see the good of them.

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But accept that there are adepts: probably they had to go through long periods of apprenticeship, in which, though they deceived themselves by hugely over-emphasizing successes, and forgetting failures, they could not impress any parlor, or speakeasy audience. It takes five years to learn the rudiments of writing a book, selling gents' hosiery, or panhandling.

Everybody who can do anything got from the gods, or whatever, nothing but a wild thing. Read a book, or look at a picture. The composer has taken a wild talent that nobody else in the world believed in; a thing that came and went and flouted and deceived him; maybe starved him; almost ruined him—and has put that damn thing to work.

There are sword swallowers and fire eaters, fire breathers, fire walkers, basket tricksters, table tilters, handcuff escapers. There is no knowing what development could do with these wild talents: but Help Wanted if for—

Reasonable and confidential acctnts; comptometer ops. , fire re-ins. , exp. . Christian; sec'ys, credit exp. , advance, Chris. , P & S expr. , fast sandwich men; reception men, 35-45, good educ. , ap. tall, Chris. -

But I do think that one hundred years ago an advertisement for a fast sandwich man would have looked as strange as today would look an advertisement for "polt. grls."

It is because our visions are not delirious enough, or degraded, or nonsensical enough, that all of us are not prophets.

ENTER THE POLTERGEIST GIRLS

Let's have just a little, minor expression, or organization, a small composition, arranging the data of poltergeist girls. The elements of this synthesis are moving objects, fires, girls in strange surroundings, youth and the atavism of youth. My general expression upon poltergeist girls is not that they are mediums, controlled by spirits, but that effects in their presence are phenomena of their own powers, or talents, or whatever. My general expression is against the existence of poltergeists as spirits—but that the doings are the phenomena of undeveloped magicians, mostly youngsters, who have no awareness of their powers as their own—or, in the case of mischievous, or malicious, persecutions, are more or less consciously directed influences by enemies—or, in that, in this aspect, "poltergeist disturbances" are witchcraft under a new name.

I take from a local newspaper, the *Wisbech Advertiser*, Feb. 27, 1923, home of Mr. Scrimshaw, at Gorefield, near Wisbech, Other members of Scrimshaw's household were his mother, aged 82, and his daughter, Olive, aged 16. The phenomena were in the presence of this girl. First, Mrs. Scrimshaw's face ran rose from her head. Then a washstand crashed to the floor. Objects, such as

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books, dishes, a water filter, fell to the floor. There was much smashing of furniture and crockery. Names of neighbors, who witnessed these unconventionalities are John Fenelow, T. Marrick, W. Maxey, and G. T. Ward. A piano that weighed 400 pounds moved from place to place. Police-constable Hudson was a witness of some of the phenomena.

Murderous things always have, somewhere, been regarded humorously. Or fondly. The trail of the joke crosses our accounts of the most deadly occurrences. In many accounts of poltergeist disturbances, the look is more of mischief than of hate for victims. *The London Daily Mail*, May, 1, 1907 is responsible for what is coming now:

An elderly woman, Mme. Blerotti, had called upon the Magistrate of the Ste. Marguerite district of Paris, and had told him that, at the risk of being thought a madwoman, she had a complaint to make against somebody unknown. She lived in a flat, in the Rue Montreuil, with her son and her brother. Every time she entered the flat, she was compelled by some unseen force to walk on her hands, with her legs in the air. The woman was detained by the magistrate, who sent a policeman to the address given. The policeman returned with Mme. Blerotti's son, a clerk, aged 27. "What my mother has told you, is true," he said. "I do not pretend to explain it. I only know that when my mother, my uncle, and myself enter the flat, we are immediately impelled to walk around on our hands." The concierge of the house was brought to the magistrate. "To tell the truth," he said. "I thought that my tenants had gone mad, but as soon as I entered the rooms occupied by them, I found myself on all fours, endeavoring to throw my feet in the air."

There are many accounts of poltergeist-phenomena that are so obscured by the preconceptions of witnesses that one can't tell whether they are stories of girls who had occult powers, or of invisible beings, who in the presence of girl-mediums, manifested. But the story of Angelique Cottin is an account of a girl, who, by an unknown influence of her own, acted upon objects in ways like those attributed to spirits. The phenomena of Angelique Cottin, of the town of La Perriere, France, began upon Jan. 15, 1846, and lasted ten weeks. Anybody who would like to read an account of this wild, or undeveloped, talent, that is free from interpretations by spiritualists and anti-spiritualists, should go to the contemporaneous story, published in the *Journal des Debats* (Paris) February 1846. Here are accounts by M. Arago and other scientists. When Angelique Cottin went near objects, they bounded away. She could have made a perpetual motion machine whiz. She was known as the *Electric Girl*, so called, because nobody knew what to call her. When she tried to sit in a chair, there was low comedy. The chair was pulled away, or, rather, was invisibly pushed away. There was such force here that a strong man could not hold the chair. A table weighing 60 pounds, rose from the floor, when she touched it. When she went to bed, the bed rocked—

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In September, 1921, Mary Richardson gave performances, at the Olympic Music Hall, Liverpool. Easily lifted one moment—the next moment, six men—same six, maybe—could not move her. By touching a man, she knocked him flat. It is either that she traveled with a staff of thirteen comedians, whose stunt it was to form in a line, pretending their utmost to push her, but seeming to fail comically, considering the size of her, or that she was a magician.

I now have a theory that the Pyramids were built by poltergeist-girls. The Chinese Wall is no longer mysterious. Every now and then I reconstruct a science. I may take up neo-archaeology next time. Old archaeology, with its fakes and guesses, and conflicting pedantries, holds out an invitation for a ferocious and joyous holiday.

Power Sources and Sorcerers: Towards an Era of Transmediumization?

Or sometime in the Witchcraft Era—and every morning, promptly at nine o'clock, crowds of human wishers, dignified under the name of *transmediumizers*, arrive at their wishing stations, or mental power-houses, and in an organization of what are now only scattered and wasted hopes and hates concentrate upon the running of all motors of all cities. Just as they're nicely organized and pretty nearly satisfied, it will be learned that motors aren't necessary. Maybe the word transmediumization, meaning the passage of phenomena from one medium of existence to another, is not altogether too awkward, and is long and important-enough looking to give me the appearance of really saying something. I mean the imposition of the imaginary upon the physical. I mean, not the action of mind upon matter, but the action of mind-matter upon matter-mind.

The fuel-less motor, which is by most persons considered a dream or a swindle, associates most with the name of John Worrell Keely, though there have been other experimenters, or impostors, or magicians. The earliest fuel-less motor "crank" of whom I have record is John Murray Spear, back in the period of 1855, though of course various "cranks" of all ages can be linked with this swindle, dream, or most practical project. In the presence of John Worrell Keely, there were disciplined motions of a motor. For twenty-four years there were demonstrations, and though there was much of a stir-up of accusations, never was Keely caught helping out a little. There was no red light, nor semi-darkness. The motor stood in no cabinet. Keely's stockholders were of a superior intelligence, as stockholders go, inasmuch as many of them investigated, somewhat, before speculating. They saw this solemn, big contrivance go around and around. Sometimes they saw sensational stunts. The thing tore thick ropes apart, broke iron bars, and shot bullets through a twelve-inch plank. I conceive

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that the motivation of this thing was a wild talent—an uncultivated, rude, and unreliable power, such as is all genius in its infancy—

That Keely operated his motor not knowing how he got his effects—succeeding spasmodically sometimes, failing often, according to the experience of all pioneers—impostor and messiah—

In the *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 29, 1931, there is an account of the doings of Kurt Schimkus, of Berlin, who had arrived in Chicago, to demonstrate his ability to discharge, from a distance, explosives, by means of what he called his "anti-war rays." According to reports from Germany, Schimkus had so exploded submarine mines and stores of buried cartridges. Herr Schimkus will have success and renown, I think: he knows that nothing great and noble and of benefit to mankind has ever been accomplished without much lubrication. He announced that slaughter was far-removed from his visions: that he was an agency for peace on earth and good will to man, because by exploding an enemy's munitions, with his "anti-war rays," he would make war impossible. Innocently, myself, I speculate upon the possible use of "psychic bombs," in blowing up tree stumps, in the cause of new pastures.

Or military demonstrations of the overwhelming effects of trained hates—scientific uses of destructive bolts of a million hate-power—the blasting of enemies by disciplined ferocities—

Girls at the front—and they are discussing their usual not very profound subjects. The alarm—the enemy is advancing. Command to the poltergeist girls to concentrate—and under their chairs they stick their wads of chewing gum.

A regiment bursts into flames, and the soldiers are torches. Horses snort smoke from the combustion of their entrails. Reinforcements are smashed under cliffs that are teleported from the Rocky Mountains. The snatch of Niagara Falls—it pours upon the battlefield. The little poltergeist girls reach for their wads of chewing gum.

TELEPATHIC AND STIGMATIC MARKINGS

Now accept that there is a very ordinary witchcraft, by which, under the name of *telepathy*, pictures can be transferred from one mind to another, and there is reduction of the preposterousness of stories of representations on hailstones, window glass, and other materials. We are conceiving that human beings may have learned an extension of the telepathic process, so as to transfer pictures to various materials. So far as go my own experiences, I do not know that telepathy exists. I think so, according to many notes that I have taken upon vagrant impressions that come and go, when my mind is upon something else. I have often experimented. When I incline to think that there is telepathy, the experiments are convincing that there is. When I think over the same

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experiments, and incline against them, they indicate that there isn't.

It is not merely that hands of artists have painted pictures upon canvas: it is that, upon canvas, artists have realized their imaginings. But, without hands of artists, strikingly realistic pictures and exquisite modelings have appeared. See the *English Mechanic* 87-436—a shower of very large hailstones, at Remiremont, France, May 26, 1907. Definitely upon some of these objects were printed illustrations of the Virgin of the Hermits. The opinion of M. de Lapparent was that lightning might have struck a medal of the Virgin, and might have reproduced the image upon the hailstones. It may be that for crosses on windowpanes, emblems on hailstones, faces on church walls, pre-natal markings, stigmata, telepathic transferences of pictures, and leaf insects we shall conceive of one expression.

Or a moth sat on a skull—

And that so it rested, with no more concern than it would feel upon a stone. That a human being came suddenly upon the skull, and that, from him, a gush of mystic fright marked the moth—

The Death's Head Moth.

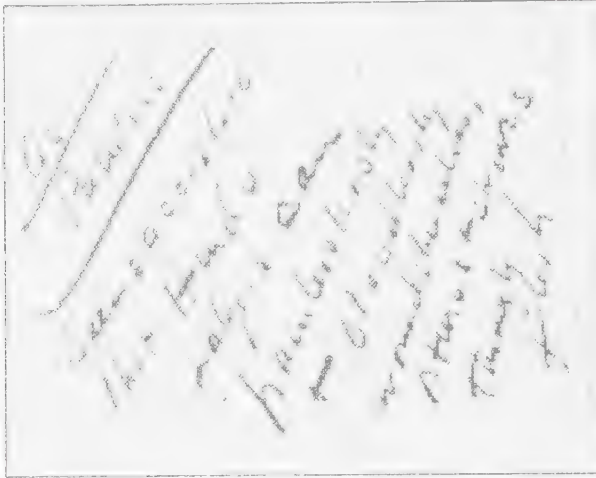
On the back of the thorax of this insect is a representation of a human skull that is as faithful a likeness as ever any pirate drew.

I have, for four years, been keeping track of the case of Theresa Neumann, the stigmatic girl of Konnersreuth, Germany: and, up to this time there has been no exposure of imposture. A girl in bed—and all day long, the tramp of thousands past her. Whether admission was charged, I do not know. The story of this girl agrees with the stories of other stigmatics: flows of blood, from quick-healing wounds, and phenomena on Fridays. My expression is that, upon stigmatic girls have appeared wounds similar to the alleged wounds of a historical, and therefore doubtful character, because this melodrama is most strikingly stimulative to the imagination—but that an atheistic girl—if there could be anything for an atheistic girl to be equally imaginatively hysterical about—might reproduce other representations upon her body. In the *Month*, 134-249, is an account of Marie-Julie Jahenny, of the village of La Bourdais (Loire-Inferieure), who, upon March 21, 1873, became a stigmatic. Upon her body appeared the "five wounds." Then, upon her breast appeared the picture of a flower. It is said that for twenty years this picture of a flower remained visible. According to the story it was in the mind of the girl before it appeared upon her body, because she predicted that it would appear. One has notions of the possible use of indelible ink, or of tattooing. That is very good. One should have notions.

There is a kind of stigmatism that differs from the foregoing cases, in that weapons are used to bring on effects: but the wounds are similar to the wounds of stigmatic girls, or simply are not wounds, in an ordinary, physical sense. There is an account, in the *Sphinx*, March, 1893, of a fakir, Soliman Ben Aissa,

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who was exhibiting in Germany; who stabbed daggers into his cheeks and tongue, and into his abdomen, harmlessly, and with quick-healing wounds. For



an account of phenomena, or alleged phenomena, of the Silesian cobbler, Paul Diebel, who exhibited in Berlin, in December, 1927, see the *New York Times*, Dec. 18, 1927. "Blood flows from his eyes, and open wounds appear on his chest, after he has concentrated mentally for six minutes," it is declared. He drives daggers through his arms and legs, and even permits himself to be nailed to a

cross, without any suffering, it is said. His manager asserts that he can remain thus for ten hours. His self-inflicted wounds, it is declared, bleed or not, as he wishes, and a few minutes after the knife or nails are withdrawn all evidence of incisions vanishes.

The only thing that can be said against this story is that it is unbelievable.

A FEW QUALMS AND OTHER MIXTURES

Or that practical witchcraft, or the development of wild talents, might be of such benefits as to draw in future records of human affairs the new dividing line of A. W. and B. W.—or might be a catastrophe that would drive all human life back into Indians, or Zulus, or things furrer—

The diabolical thought of Usefulness rises in my mind. If ever I can make up my mind to declare myself the enemy of all mankind, then I shall turn altruist, and devote my life to being of use to my fellow-beings.

There is no understanding any messiah, inventor, discoverer, or anybody else who is working for betterment, except by recognizing him as partly a fiend. Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you, and you may make the litter of their circumstances that you have made of your own. The good Samaritan binds up wounds with poison ivy. If I give anybody a coin, I hand him good and evil, just as truly as I hand him head and tail. Whoever discovered the uses of coal was a benefactor of all mankind, and most damnably something else. Automobiles, and their seemingly indispensable service—but automobiles and crime and a million exasperations. There are persons who think they see

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clear advantages in the use of a telephone—then the telephone rings.

I am unable to conceive that a power to pick planes out of the sky would be so terrible as to stop war, because up comes the notion that counter-operations would pick the pickers. If we could have new abominations, so unmistakably abominable as to hush the lubricators, who plan murder to stop slaughters—but this is only dreamery, here in our existence of the hyphen, which is the symbol of hypocrisy.

But why this everlasting attempt to solve something?—whereas it is our acceptance that, in a final sense, there is, in phenomenal affairs—nothing—or that there is only the state of something-nothing—so that all problems are only soluble-insoluble—or that most of the social problems we have, today, were at one time conceived of as solutions of preceding problems—or that every Moses leads his people out of Egypt into perhaps a damn sight worse—Promised Lands of watered milk and much-adulterated honey—so why these everlasting attempts to solve something?

But the unadulterated, whether of food we eat, or the air we breathe, or of idealism, or of villiany, is unfindable. Even adultery is adulterated. There are qualms and other mixtures.

In this existence of the desirable-undesirable.

But my own expression is that any state of being that can so survive its altruists and its egotists, its benefactors and its exploiters, its artists, gunmen, bankers, lawyers, and doctors would be almost immune to the eviler magics of witchcraft, because it is itself a miracle.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION AS A FASHION SHOW

Throughout this book there is a permeation that may be interpreted as helplessness and hopelessness—absence of anything in science more than approximately to rely on—solaces and reassurances of religion, but any other religion would do as well—all progresses returning to their points of origin—philosophies only intellectual dress-making—

Belief in God—in Nothing—in Einstein—a matter of fashion—

Or that college professors are mannequins, who doll up in the latest proper things to believe, and guide their young customers modishly.

Fashions often revert, but to be popular they modify. It could be that a redressed doctrine of witchcraft will be the proper acceptance. Come unto me, and maybe I'll make you stylish. It is quite possible to touch up beliefs that are now considered dowdy, and restore them to fashionableness. I conceive of nothing, in religion, science, or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while.

I now have a theory of what is called evolution, in terms of fashions—that

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somewhere, perhaps on high, there is a Paris—where, once upon a time, were dictated the modes in bugs and worms, and then the costumes of birds and mammals, grotesquely stretching the necks of giraffes, and then quite as unreasonably reacting with a repentance of hippopotami; passing on to a mental field of alternating extravagances and puritanisms, sometimes neat and tasteful, but often elaborate and rococo, with religions, philosophies, and sciences, imposing upon the fashion-slaves of this earth the latest thing in theories.

I now have a theory that once upon a time, we were real and alive, but departed into this state that we call "existence"—that we have carried over with us from the real existence, from which we died, the ideas of Truth, and of axioms and principles and generalizations—ideas that really meant something when we were really alive, but that, of course, now, in our phantom existence—which is demonstrable by any X-ray photograph of any of us—can have only phantom-meaning. I'd not say that all of us are directly ghosts: most of us may be the descendants of the departed from a real existence, who, in our spook-world, pseudo-propagated.

It is a matter of common belief that men have come from animals called "lower," not necessarily from apes, though the ape-theory seems to fit best, and is the most popular. Then why not that occasionally a human sloughs backward? Data of reversions, not of individuals, but of species, are common in biology. All ye who are world-weary—unsatisfied with mere nudism, which isn't reverting far enough—unsatisfied with decadence in creeds and politics of today, which conceivably might be more primitive—conceiving that, after all, the confusion in the sciences isn't blankness, and that the cave-arts are at least scrawling something—all ye who are craving a more drastic degeneration—and a possible answer to your prayer—

"Make me, oh, make me, an ape again!"

Possibly the remote ancestors of human beings were apes, though no evolutionist has made clear to me reasons for doubting the equally plausible theory that apes have either ascended, or descended, from humans. Still, I think that humans may have evolved from apes, because the simians openly imitate humans, as if conscious of a higher state, whereas the humans who act like apes are likely to deny it when criticized.

FROM EVOLUTION TO TELEPORTATION

What is there that absolutely sets apart the story of a man who turned into an ape, or a hyena, from the story of a caterpillar that became a butterfly?

There have been many appearances of animals that were unexplained—anyway until I appeared upon the horizon of this field of data. It seems to me that my expressions upon *Teleportations* are somewhat satisfactory in most of

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the cases—that is, that there is a force, distributive of forms of life and other phenomena that could switch an animal, say from a jungle in Madagascar to a backyard somewhere in Nebraska. But theories of mine are not so godlike as to deny any right of being for all other theories. I'd not be dogmatic and say positively that once upon a time a lemur was magically transported from Africa to Nebraska; possibly somebody in Lincoln, Nebraska, had been transformed into a lemur, or was a werelemur.

I wrote to Dr. Mathers about this, and considerably to my surprise, because mostly my "crank" letters are very properly ignored, received an answer, dated Nov. 21, 1931. Dr. Mathers verified the story. The lemur, stuffed and mounted, is now upon exhibition in the museum of the State University, at Lincoln. Where it had come from had not been learned. There was no story of an escape, anywhere, that could match this appearance in a back yard. Accounts had been spread-headed, with illustration in the newspapers, but not even in some other back yard had this been seen, according to absence of statements. I neglected to ask whether, at the time of the appearance of the lemur, the disappearance of any resident of Lincoln was reported.

Suppose, at a meeting of the National Academy of Science, I should read a paper upon the transformation of a man into a hyena. There would be only one way of doing that. I recommend it to unrecognized geniuses, who can't otherwise get a hearing. It would have to be a hold-up.

But, without having to pull a gun, at the meeting of the N. A. S., at New Haven, Conn., Nov. 18, 1931, Dr. Richard C. Tolman suggested that energy may be transforming into matter. If one can't think of a man transforming into a hyena, let one try to think of the motions of a thing turning into a thing.

My expression is that, in our existence of the hyphen, it is thinkable that energy-matter could, by a difference of emphasis, turn into matter-energy.

There is no man who is without the hyena-element in his composition, and that there is no hyena that is not at least rudimentarily human—or that at least it may be reasoned that, by no absolute transformation, but by a shift of emphasis, a man-hyena might turn into a hyena-man.

QUANTUM PHYSICS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

The astronomers are issuing pronouncements upon what can't be seen with telescopes. The physicists are announcing discoveries that can't be seen with microscopes. I wonder whether anybody can see any meaning in an accusation that my stories are about invisibles.

I am a sensationalist.

And it is supposed that modern science, which is supposed to be my chief opposition, is remote from me and my methods.

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Nobody has ever seen steam. Electricity is invisible. The science of physics is occultism. Experts in the use of steam and electricity are sorcerers. Mostly we do not think of their practices as witchcraft, but we have an opinion upon what would have been thought of them, in earlier stages of the Dark Age we're living in.

The science of physics, which, at one time, was thought forever to have disposed of werewolves, vampires, witches, and other pets of mine, is today such an attempted systematization of the principles of magic, that I am at a loss for eminent professors to be disagreeable to. Upon the principles of quantum mechanics, one can make reasonable almost any miracle, such as entering a closed room without penetrating a wall, or jumping from one place to another without traversing a space between. The only reason why the exponents of ultra-modern mechanics are taken more solemnly than I am is that the reader does not have to pretend that he knows what I am writing about.

There is nothing told of in this book that is more of an affront to old-time dogmas than is the theory of the Nobel Prize-winner, Dr. Bohr, that the sun is "deriving" its energy from nowhere.

The quantum theory is a doctrine of magic. The idea of playing leapfrog, without having to leap over the other frog, is simply another representation of the idea of entering a closed room without passing through the walls. But there is a big difference between "authoritative pronouncements" and my expressions. It is the difference between sub-atomic events and occurrences in boarding houses. The difference is in many minds—unlike my mind, to which all things are phenomena, and to which all records are, or may be, data in which electrons and protons are dignified little things, whereas boarders and tramps on park benches can't be taken solemnly.

There are hosts of persons, who consider themselves up-to-date, or ahead of that, who bandy arguments in the latest, scientific lingo, and believe anything that they're told to believe of electrons, but would be incapable of extending an idea from electrons to boarders—even though they argue that every boarder is only a composition of electrons—and go right on thinking of affairs, in general, in old-fashioned, materialistic terms.

Well, then, in old-fashioned terms, what had I this morning for breakfast?

I think: therefore I had breakfast.

If no line of demarcation can be drawn between one's breakfasts and one's thoughts, or between a cereal and a cerebration, this is the continuity of the material and the immaterial. If there is no material, as absolutely differentiated from the immaterial, what comes of any opposition from what may still survive of what is called *materialistic science*?

See an interview, with Dr. Arthur H. Compton, Professor of Physics, at the University of Chicago, published in the *New York Times*, Jan. 3, 1932. Said Dr.

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Compton: "The new physics does not suggest a solution of the old question of how mind acts on matter. It does definitely, however, admit the possibility of such action, and suggests where the action may take effect."

I don't know that I am much more of a heretic, myself. In my stories, I have admitted possibilities, and I have made suggestions.

Our state of the hyphen is the state of the gamble. Go to no den of a mathematician for enlightenment. Try Monte Carlo. Out of science is fading certainty as fast as ever it departed from theology. In its place we have adventure. As an Intermediatist, I find the principle of uncertainty unsatisfactorily expressed. My own expressions are upon the principled-unprincipled rule-misrule of our pseudo-existence by certainty-uncertainty—

Or whereas it seems unquestionable that no man has ever been transformed into a hyena, we can be no more than sure-unsure about this.

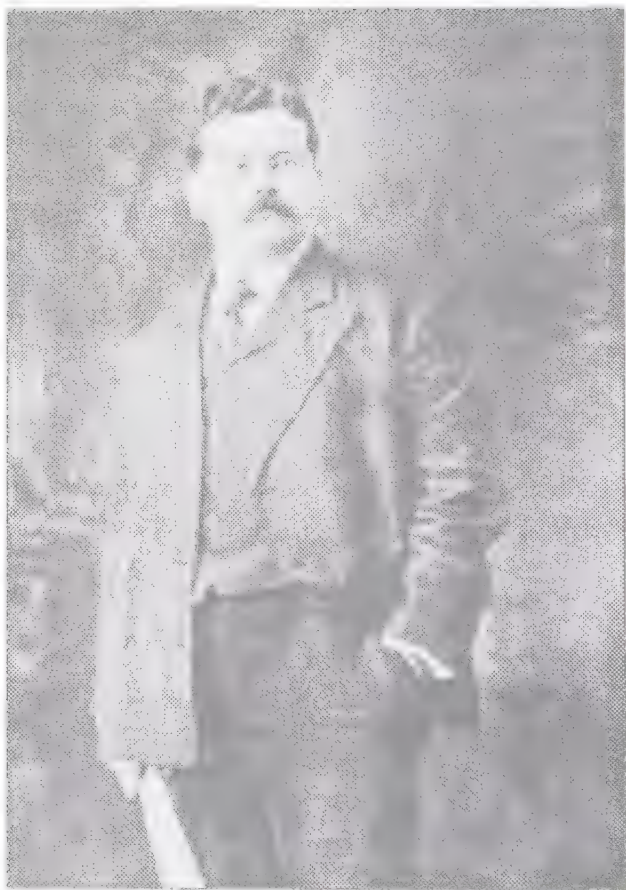
There are gulfs of the unaccountable, but they are bridged by terminology.

THE UNDERLYING LOGIC OF BOTTLING AND CANNING

Not a bottle of catsup can fall from a tenement-house fire escape, in Harlem, without being noted—not only by the indignant people downstairs, but—even though infinitesimally—universally—maybe—

Affecting the price of pajamas, in Jersey City; the temper of somebody's mother-in-law, in Greenland; the demand, in China, for rhinoceros horns for the cure of rheumatism— maybe—

So then the underlying logic of the boy—who was guilty of much, but was at least innocent of ever having heard of a syllogism—who pasted a peach label on a can of string beans.



CHARLES FORT, AGE 19

6

CHARLES FORT: A BIOGRAPHICAL REVUE

A SELECTION OF FORTEAN DATES, DATA, AND REFLECTIONS

1874 A.D. (August 6) / 57 B.F. (Fort 1) — Charles Hoy Fort is born in Albany, New York to an upper-middle class family of grocers of old Dutch stock. The non-conformist Charles rejects the values and mores of his strict Victorian father who will proceed to practically disinherit him.

“When a small boy, we puzzled over inconsistencies in the Bible, and asked questions that could not be answered satisfactorily.”

“We should not have expressed the heresy, but felt there was some kind of life higher than that of a dealer in groceries. Though we knew not quite what, there was something that we wanted in things that have nothing to do with cities and good, business men.”

“... because we could resist nothing that we thought funny, always feeling this inability to conform with discipline and rules.”

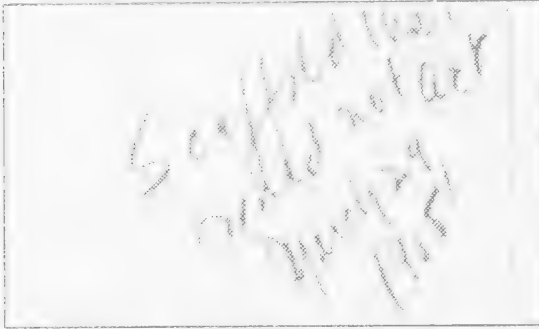
1884 A.D. / 47 B.F. — As a boy, Charles Fort dreams of becoming a naturalist and acquires his obsession for classification.

“I began writing the *Book of the Damned* when I was a boy. I had determined to be a naturalist. I read voraciously, shot birds and stuffed them, collected stamps, classified minerals, stuck insects on pins and labeled them as I saw them labeled in museums.”

CHARLES FORT: A BIOGRAPHICAL REVUE

"And dreaming, as we tramped over hills and through woods, for the delight in birds, shells, and minerals had become ambition. We wanted to be a naturalist."

1885 A.D. (February 23) / 46 B.F. (March 4) — In his book *Wild Talents*, Fort memorializes and problematizes this day in honor of the prisoner John Lee, the man who could not be hanged.



"Upon February 23, 1885—as we say, in terms of our fanciful demarcations—just as if a 23rd of February, which is only relative to the rhythms of sunshine, could be a real day—just as if one could say really where a January stops and a February begins—just as if one could really pick a period out of time, and say that there ever was really a year 1885—Early in what is called the morning of what is so arbitrarily and fancifully called the 23rd of February, 1885, John Lee, in his cell, in the penitentiary, at Exeter, England, was waiting to be hanged."

1887–1888 A.D. / 44–43 B.F. (ca.) — Fort further engages the humoristic-scientific practice of classification while working and playing in the family store.

"In days of yore, when I was an especially bad young one, my punishment was having to go to the store, Saturday, and work. I had to scrape off labels of other dealers' canned goods, and paste on my parent's label. Theoretically, I was so forced to labor to teach me the errors of deceitful ways. A good many brats are brought up, in the straight and narrow, somewhat deviously.

"One time I had pyramids of canned goods, containing a variety of fruits and vegetables. But I had used all except peach labels. I pasted peach labels on peach cans, and then came to apricots. Well, aren't apricots peaches? And there are plums that are virtually apricots. I went on, either mischievously, or scientifically pasting the peach labels on cans of plums, cherries, string beans, and succotash. I can't quite define my motive, because to this day it has not been decided whether I am a humorist or a scientist. I think that it was mischief, but, as we go along, there will come a more respectful recognition that also it was scientific procedure."

THE DAMNED UNIVERSE OF CHARLES FORT

1889 A.D. / 42 B.F. — Fort writes to Amiens to ask Jules Verne for an autograph.

“We, too, collected autographs, sending to Amiens, France, asking Jules Verne for his. Jules Verne sent us a little letter in a hand so minute that we could get no one to translate it.”

1891–1892 A.D. / 40–39 B.F. — Fort begins as a newspaper reporter in Albany and New York City and soon becomes the editor of a weekly journal in Queens.

“Just think of our being a reporter! Going to see cutthroats, thieves, and assassins. Going to see and write about things that only ordinary people can only read about. And we supplying this reading. We’d see lunatics! Oh, hasten the day when we could chat with maniacs!”

“When I was only eighteen years old, I wrote stuff for the Brooklyn edition of the *World* that made quite a little star of me for a while—in fact, I was only seventeen, up in Albany, when I sold things to a New York syndicate. I wasn’t twenty, when two of the fellows of the *World* started up the *Woodhaven Independent*, and made me editor of it. If some damned thing didn’t have me, I’d have been a success at twenty five any way.”

1893–1894 A.D. / 38–37 B.F. — Fort travels around the English-speaking world for two years on an income of twenty-dollars a month. His journey takes him from Nova Scotia to New Orleans, across the Atlantic to all of Great Britain, on to South Africa via the Canaries and St. Helena, and then back to New York City.

“Then I, with my thirty thousand miles, and the hundreds of characters; the impressions of houses, roads, waves, coasts, and people! ... The toppling of the structure that two of my best years had gone into.”

1896 A.D. (October 26) / 35 B.F. (October 26) — Fort marries Anna Filing/Filan and settles down in New York City. They live in “rear houses and back tenements” as Fort ekes out an existence through a variety of odd jobs.

“I’ve been a tramp and an editor; reporter, joke-writer, fireman, cattleman, book agent, stoker, dishwasher—and what of it?”

CHARLES FORT: A BIOGRAPHICAL REVUE

1901 A.D. / 30 B.F. — The Intermediatist Fort writes his autobiography in the middle of his life under the title of *Many Parts*. Of the original 261 manuscript pages, only 76 remain. These fragments detail his youth in Albany from 6 to 17 years of age.

"My book *Many Parts* was simply the work of an immature metaphysician, psychologist, sociologist, etc. trying to express in a story."

1905 A.D. / 26 B.F. — Fort meets Theodore Dreiser who becomes his literary supporter and lifelong friend. Dreiser publishes about six Fort short stories in *Smith's Magazine* where he serves as the editor. Fort on Dreiser: "Someday you will be known as such a monstrosity as a double pioneer, one on your own account and one on mine."

1905–1910 A.D. / 26–21 B.F. — Fort publishes a few dozen short stories in a variety of New York City literary magazines.

"But that was only superficial material. Still, I did learn, and if it had not been for the metaphysician, I could have written good stories. So it seems to me that I lived a life, as a story writer, and reached a goal of a story writer, but in a pseudo sense, having reached knowledge I could not use."

1906–7 A.D. / 25–24 B.F. — Fort begins his "great work" in the New York Public Library in the collection of scientific anomalies and the data of the damned.

"So there it is. I've given up fiction, you see—or in a way I haven't. I am convinced that everything is fiction; so here I am in the same old line."

"So I took notes enormously. I had a wall covered with pigeon-holes for them. I had 25,000 notes. I worried when I thought of the possibility of fire. I thought of taking the notes upon fireproof material. But they were not what I wanted, and, finally I destroyed them. For that Theodore Dreiser will never forgive me."

1909 A.D. / 22 B.F. — Fort's only published novel, *The Outcast Manufacturers*, appears with B. W. Dodge and Company.

"I was determined to write a book. I began writing novels. Year in, year out, 3,500,000 words, though that's only an estimate. I thought that, except in the writing of novels, which probably looked like the offspring of kangaroos, not an incentive could there be to go on living."

THE DAMNED UNIVERSE OF CHARLES FORT

1910's A.D. / 10's B.F. — The self-educated Fort continues his interdisciplinary researches in the New York Public Library.

“Then for eight years I studied all the arts and sciences I had ever heard of and I invented half a dozen arts and sciences.”

1915–1916 A.D. / 16–15 B.F. — Fort collects data and writes two para-scientific studies under the titles of *X* and *Y* which argue that extramundane forces are in control of the Earth. Dreiser fails to find a publisher for either manuscript and Fort eventually destroys both of them.

“He wants a list of the publishers who have rejected *X* and *Y*. Will you send me this list? Maybe I'll keep it myself as a monument to what you have done in this matter. I begin to suspect something. It may be that there are reasons why *X* and *Y* must never be published.”

“Brace up. This is only the beginning. The gods have appointed me, in this life, which is hell, to punish you for something awful that you did once, perhaps in Jupiter or Neptune—*Z* hasn't yet even been heard from. You have at least one thing to be thankful for—I might have begun with *A*.”

1919 A.D. / 12 B.F. — Publication of *The Book of the Damned* through the intervention of Theodore Dreiser upon his own publishers, Boni and Liverlight.

“I send you this afternoon by express, *The Book of the Damned*. It is a religion. Our beer-man comes Tuesdays.” (signed) Fort.”

1920 A.D. (November 27) / 11 B.F. (December 2) — The Forts move to London and live there on and off for the next eight years. Fort continues his investigations in the British Museum Library. He also goes on the soapbox in the Speakers' Corner of Hyde Park to espouse his revolutionary scientific doctrines.

“I have burned all my notes, 40,000 of them. Forces are moving me to London. Annie and I sail on the 27th. I hope you'll always write to me, once a year.”

1923 A.D. (January) / 8 B.F. (January) — Publication of *New Lands* by Boni and Liverlight.

CHARLES FORT: A BIOGRAPHICAL REVUE

"We've put over another one. Do you know that the way things are developing, we may have to take ourselves, somewhat seriously? That would be a damn shame, wouldn't it?"

1927-1929 A.D. / 2 B.F. — Fort goes blind in one eye from the strain of overworking. In consequence, he invents the game Super-checkers. He returns to New York and, after recovering his eyesight, he continues his extraordinary researches as the so-called "hermit of the Bronx."

"My general health is very good, but I am almost blind in the right eye and the left eye is going... I can not stand living in blindness."

"Two years ago, largely because of feeling of eye strain, I started the checkers interest. It was in a moment of creative frenzy I took a fat lady's gingham apron, some yards of cardboard, and several pounds of carpet tacks, and solved all the problems in the world."

1931 A.D. (January) / 1 A.F. (January) — Publication of *Lo!* by Claude Kendall and Company.

"Something that you see in *Lo!* is that it is a kind of non-fictional fiction, or that, though concerned with entomological and astronomical matters, and so on, it is 'thrilling' and 'melodramatic.' Maybe I am a pioneer in a new writing that instead of old-fashioned heroes and villains, will have floods and bugs and stars and earthquakes for its characters and motifs."

1931 A.D. (January 26) / 1 A.F. (February 4) — Foundation of the Fortean Society at the Savoy-Plaza in New York City under the initiative of Tiffany Thayer and Aaron Sussman in order to propagate and disseminate the mental attitude and ideas of Charles Fort.

Among the founders, one finds such literati as Theodore Dreiser, Booth Tarkington, Ben Hecht, John Cowper Powys, Burton Rascoe, J. David Stern, and Alexander Woollcott. The exceptional Fort refuses to become a member of the Society and he attends the inaugural dinner only through a ruse of Thayer and Sussman.

"As you know, I had nothing to do with this plan. I wouldn't join it, any more than I'd be an Elk."

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The Society decides to mark time in accordance with a new Fortean calendar. The year of the founding of the Fortean Society is declared as Year 1. Each year is divided into thirteen months of 28 days with the thirteenth month called Fort (August 6–September 2) in order to commemorate the master.

1932 A.D. (May 3) / 2 A.F. (May 18) — Charles Fort dies of enlargement of the heart at the age of fifty-seven.

“The literature of the academic ends with the obituary.”

1932 A.D. (May) / 2 A.F. (May) — Publication of *Wild Talents* by Claude Kendall.

“Everybody who can do anything got from the gods, or whatever, nothing but a wild thing. Read a book, or look at a picture. The composer has taken a wild talent that nobody else in the world believed in, a thing that came and went and flouted and deceived him; maybe starved him; almost ruined him—and has put that damn thing to work.”

1937 A.D. (August 25) / 5 A.F. (Fort 20) — Death of Anna Fort.

1937 A.D. / 7 A.F. — Thayer publishes the first number of the Fortean Society Magazine which later changes its name to *Doubt* after the first ten issues. It stays in print until Thayer's death in 1959.

“About Ellsworth [Thayer], it is this—he is a good fellow, who is trying to limelight me, because he read me first when he was about twenty years old, and thinks he owes me a lot for it. He has gone to much trouble, for nothing.”

1941 A.D. / 11 A.F. — Publication of the *The Books of Charles Fort* by Henry Holt and Company, New York.

“I can not, and never have been able to, specialize. It looked at first as if I was a victim of spirit possession and a medium of a conflict between a story-writer and a met. [i.e., metaphysician]. But when the story writer was almost extinct, there came the met.-psychic-*Skyward Ho!* conflict. It looks to me as if I could not specialize upon producing one self any more than can a woman who is going to have quadruplets make up her womb to have only one offspring.”

CHARLES FORT: A BIOGRAPHICAL REVUE

1955 A.D. / 25 A.F. — Robert Benayoun translates *The Book of the Damned* into French. The pioneering work of Fort is adopted by the “fantastic realism” movement of Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergier and by their journal *Planète*.

1959 A.D. / 29 A.F. — With the death of Tiffany Thayer, Mrs. Thayer turns over Fort's 60,000 notes of exceptional data and news clippings to the special collections of the New York Public Library.

1960's A.D. / 30's A.F. — S.I.T.U. (Society for the Investigation of The Unexplained) is founded by Ivan Sanderson. They will later publish the notes of Charles Fort in bits and pieces in *Pursuit* magazine.

1969 A.D. / 39 A.F. — Foundation of INFO (International Fortean Organization) in Arlington, Virginia.

1970 A.D. / 40 A.F. — Publication of *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained* (New York: Doubleday), the first biography on Fort by the science fiction writer, Damon Knight.

1973 A.D. / 43 A.F. — Foundation of the British Fortean publication, *The Fortean Times*, in London by R.J.M. Rickard.

1974 A.D. / 44 A.F. — William Corliss begins anomalistic researches with the publication of the Sourcebook Project in Maryland. All of the journals of the Fortean Society are reissued as part of their publications program.

1981 A.D. / 51 A.F. — Publication of *Lo! Le Nouveau Livre Des Damnés* by Pierre Belfond in Paris.

1991 A.D. / 61 A.F. — Publication of Louis Kaplan's *Wissenschaftliche Weltbetrachtungen. Das verdammte Universum des Charles Fort* in Berlin by the Gatzka Press. It is the first Fortean publication in the German language.

1993 A.D. / 63 A.F. — Autonomedia publishes *The Damned Universe of Charles Fort* and gives another life to New York's patron saint of the freaks of nature in his home town.

7

WILD TALENTS TODAY
TELEPATHIC TECHNOLOGIES:
A SEANCE IN FORTEAN SCIENCE

LOUIS KAPLAN

But Science is established preposterousness.
We divide all intellection: the obviously pre-
posterousness and the established.

Charles Fort, *The Book of the Damned*¹

PREFACE

Almost every day of his life for a quarter of a century, a solitary investigator looked through the scientific journals and the current periodicals in the New York Public Library or the British Museum Library. He was in pursuit of phenomenal phenomena—anomalous data and exceptional records which did not seem to fit into the norms and con-

This chapter reviews the speculations of Charles Fort for the practical utilization and implementation of telepathy and telekinesis for large-scale technical systems today, drawing for the most part on the book *Wild Talents*. It was submitted to the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (Science Center Berlin for Social Research) in the spring of 1990. The chapter outlines the Fortean program in four basic research areas: teleportative transit systems, telekinetic military technologies, poltergeist power and energy systems, and radical telepathic constructivism. In the second part of the chapter ("Towards the

ventions of the established sciences. In this way, Charles Fort learned of wondrous but repetitive occurrences at the borders of fact and fiction—the fall of strange substances to the earth (butter and blood, frogs and fishes, artifacts), the spontaneous combustion of human bodies, or the sightings of unknown objects in the heavens. Perhaps these monumental labors were setting the foundations and groundwork for new or alternative sciences. Perhaps these were prankish pastimes and mischievous jests for the purposes of a good laugh. He did not know himself. As he wrote rather dubiously towards the end of his life, “Because to this day, it has not been decided whether I am a humourist or a scientist.” (p. 850)

While Fort has been an invaluable resource for science fiction writers or for those who deal with the obviously preposterousness,² he has been rather un- or underemployed in the offices, labs, and halls of the established. This paper is an attempt to redress this unfortunate situation in intellection. Following in the spirit of Charles Fort, the essay seeks to transport (or teleport) his brainstorm about large technical systems for a possible deployment by the technological and the scientific establishments. But the means of conveyance are not as strange to the technological field as one might have imagined. In fact, we will discover that these means have been at the very basis of the entire technological research program in Western societies for the past centuries. This refers to the fertile bond between *tele* and *techne* which has led to the growth of the tele-technologies (e. g., telegraph, telephone, television, etc.) that have radically altered our everyday life through actions at a distance that move across space and time.³ Therefore, this essay outlines a Fortean research program which seeks a logical expansion and extension of these links. Given Fort, there is the desire to forge the connections between the technologic and the telepathic as far as possible. Such applications will inscribe and describe the field to be known as *telepathic technologic*s.

Technicization of Witchcraft”), the author analyzes the *tele* as a vital component in the history of modern technologies to establish further the plausibility of the Fortean research program. A final section reflects upon the essential interconnectedness of the practices of technologization and metaphorization.

The proposal urges the establishment of an Institute for Telepathy (IT) for the further investigation of the telepathic problematics opened up by Fort’s texts. While the essay was published as a research paper by the WZB in the spring of 1991 with a preface by Bernward Joerges and a new post-script, the Science Center has refused thus far to take any action regarding IT.

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Most of the ideas are derived from Fort's posthumous text, *Wild Talents*. In typical fashion, Fort collects anomalous data and relays strange incidents about the telekinetic feats of numerous individuals. Here he suggests in a most serious-playful manner that it would be wise to investigate and cultivate the alleged "wild talents" of individuals for technological ends. Following his call, I try to systematize and elaborate these speculations—whether practical suggestions or flights of fancy—into a potential research program. This paper might be read as a kind of grant application which seeks financial support to found an Institute for Telepathy (IT) which would devote itself to the transformation of these irregular dream flights into standardized technological practices.

For it is a matter of *talents* in the widest and the wildest possible sense. The telepathic technological research program involves the procurement of human talents which will yield financial talents far beyond the initial investments. Telepathic technologicis is not a surefire nor a guaranteed success. It is not clear whether the following proposal should be taken with a grain of salt, a ton of sugar, or with nothing at all. For when it comes to the chances of success for telepathic technologies, we are in a zone of uncertainty somewhere between science and fiction or between the two forms of intellection.⁴ Like current researches into technological innovation in the sociology of science, we are situated in the epistemological gap of a *double novation* where it is impossible to separate "legitimate science" and "pseudo science."⁵ There is no way of knowing the full extent of the *tele* forces which has been unleashed by technology's pact with the powers at a distance. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the quantity and quality of investment into the telepathic technological research program will have an effect upon the further realization and establishment of the *tele* itself.

PART I. THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

1. *From Transportation to Teleportation*

International trade and travel demands greater and greater velocity. A short history of the transportation industry would demonstrate how each mobile system has measured its effectiveness in terms of an increase in speed. We have moved from the Wright brothers airplane to the supersonic transporter and the space shuttle, from the tugboat to the atomic-powered submarine. Fortean science insists upon taking the next step in moving through space. But the step it seeks will be an instantaneous leap. This is the leap from transportation to *teleportation*. "The present

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snails of the wheels and planes may be replaced by instantaneous teleportations." (p. 1001). Fort seeks nothing less than to revolutionize the transportation industry. He does not seek to reinvent the wheel but to bypass it completely. In the following passage, he is leading us on the path towards the deployment of teleportation for commercial uses. Fort envisions travel without railway stations, port towns, nor commercial centers. Instead we shall have a dispersed network consisting of innumerable locally-operated teleportative devices equipped with interplanetary or even intergalactic capacities. If one can still find room for traffic in this system, it will become rather invisible.

The outstanding suggestion, which, however, like many other suggestions, I cannot now develop, is that, if Teleportation exists, it may be used. It may be criminally used, or it may be used commercially. Cargoes, without ships, and freight, without trains, may be traffics of the future. There may be teleportative voyages from planet to planet. (p. 572)

These suggestions are "outstanding" not only because they constitute a superlative brainstorm and not only because they are unfinished and in need of institutional establishment. It is also because the move from transportation to teleportation requires an "out-standing" conception of space-time. It is not a question of development nor evolution. In the jump from the snail to the frog, it is a question of quantum leaps to be made here, or in between here and there. Fort urges an investigation of the uncertain laws derived from quantum physics for the theoretical resources to enable an implementation of this teleportative program. If we manage to demystify the aura around this hallowed science, we would see that quantum physics is a rather sophisticated game of leapfrog for the micro-structural object of study on the move.⁶ One has heard in the contemporary lingo of social studies of science about "scaling."⁷ Fort insists that it is only a matter of scaling up these teleportative effects from the sub-atomic particle to the Federal Express package or to grandma's care package from home.

The quantum theory is a doctrine of magic. The idea of playing leapfrog, without having to leap over the other frog, is simply another representation of the idea of entering a closed room without passing through the walls. But there is a big difference between "authoritative pronouncements" and my expressions. It is the difference between sub-atomic events and occurrences in boarding houses ...

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There are hosts of persons, who consider themselves up-to-date, or ahead of that; who bandy arguments in the latest, scientific lingo, and believe anything that they're told to believe of electrons, but would be incapable of extending an idea for electrons, to boarders—even though they argue that every boarder is only a composition of electrons—and go right on thinking of affairs, in general, in old-fashioned, materialistic terms. (p. 1003-4)

The technical logic of Fort's syllogisms seems impeccable. If one really believes that an electron or a sub-electronic quark particle can undergo teleportation, then why not a human being lodged in a boarding house or a carton of cigarettes composed of these same immaterial materials? The "extending (of) an idea" is just a question of scaling. Therefore, the Fortean research program must discover the laws and principles through which such teleportative effects can be generalized to work at every possible level. In the codification of this procedure, the Fortean science of *teleportative physics* might hold the key for the development of a large technical system to take us where we want to go in no time at all.

In the age of bytes and chips, the Fortean brainstorms must be accessed in relation to recent investigations in the computer sciences. As a member of the original Fortean Society in the 1930's, the visionary architect R. Buckminster Fuller had already made this move in the 1960's. Fuller shares the teleportative logic of his quasi-master in a computerized version that apparently moves the splitting subject into a verbal part and particle of speech. In *I Seem to be a Verb*, he (?) sets up the following schizophrenic scenario which interfaces interplanetary space exploration, bio-technology, and computer programming. "Teleportation: Within a century, a man's entire genetic code may be fed to a computer, flashing to a receiving computer on the moon or a planet and instantly reconstructed into the person who stood on the Earth a few seconds earlier. Two yous. (Or, OR, have WE been teleported?)"⁸

There is an uncanny similarity between these split genetic visions of teleportative technologies and the current debates on computers and artificial intelligence. In a recent book review, the philosopher Daniel Dennett writes, "One of the defining doctrines of strong AI is the possibility in principle of teleportation—transporting a *person* from A to B by transmitting a complete, atom-for-atom *description* of the person's body (and brain) and using the description to construct a duplicate at the destination."⁹ One of the most provocative versions comes in the guise of Hans Moravec's description of *downloading* as a latter-day doctrine of Fortean and

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Fujian teleportation.” In contrast, Roger Penrose believes in *The Emperor’s New Mind: Concerning Computers, Minds and the Laws of Physics* that the quantum nature of the computing brain problematizes teleportation. Taking issue with Fort and Moravec, he argues that teleportation could never achieve the perfect duplication of the quantum state of a brain. At the site of these conflicting models, the Institute of Telepathy would serve as a clearing house and a screening center in pursuing these contemporary questions.

2. Counter-Gravitational & Telekinetic Power & Energy Resources

In recent years, there have been many proposed alternatives to the use of fossil fuels. With the pressure to abandon coal and oil as energy resources, there have been attempts to develop atomic energy and solar power. But one has only to mention the word “Chernobyl” to feel the negative repercussions of the nuclear-powered research program. Meanwhile solar energy still remains a very impractical and expensive means of energy consumption on a mass-scale. In this situation, the Fortean research program seeks to add other fuels onto the pyres. This would involve the consideration of both counter-gravitational and telekinetic powers as energy resources.

Fort follows in the footsteps of his American revolutionary compatriot, Benjamin Franklin, in the investigation of counter-gravitational power. The key scientific work of Ben Franklin led to the discovery that lightning was a conductor of electricity. Fortean science could lead to both lightning’s and work’s lightening.

If in the general electric conditions of a thunderstorm there be sometimes a counter-gravitational effect upon objects, somebody might find out how countergravitationally to electrify aircraft and aviators. If all work is opposition to gravitation, somebody may make a big discovery of benefit to general laziness. Elevators in skyscrapers might be run with half the power they now need. Here is an idea that may revolutionize industry, but just now I am too busy revolutionizing everything else that I give this idea to the world. (p. 568)

If only this counter-gravitational effect could be mastered or even simulated, then we would have our work cut out for us. Fort envisions numerous energy-saving applications from the running of airplanes to elevators in this program of general elevation. While this visionary revolutionary is

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generous enough to throw out such an electrifying idea to the world at large, the Institute of Telepathy will have to be more specific in investigating the actual parameters of this recreational technology. The Institute would study and test the exact conditions under which this counter-gravitational effect can be put to work. This lazy scenario provides another instance of the shift and lift towards levity in the arc of the Fortean scientific revolution as the humourist science experiments to undermine the gravity of the Newtonian world order.

The other component of the energy research program must involve the exploration of telekinesis as a potential power and energy resource. As the name implies, telekinetic effects involve the use of mental powers in order to achieve physical action and motion at a distance.¹¹ The Fortean research program would seek to investigate all reports and cases of electro-magnetic interferences and disturbances induced through human subjects. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to become as conversant as possible with this conversion process and to expand its effects. This investigation into telekinetics could run parallel to Rupert Sheldrake's "hypothesis of formative causation" which proposes the existence of morphogenetic fields which connect things across space and time. This offers the possibility of mental morphogenetic fields which shift material or energy forms through morphic resonance.¹² It is obvious that this research program will forge a new alliance between parapsychologists, telekinetic subjects, engineers and technicians. But it is not the purpose of this overview to cite empirical case studies which have been undertaken by investigators of parapsychological phenomena in support of telekinetic effects.¹³ It is rather to fire our imaginations to the Promethean vision of telekinetic power as imaginative fire.

In a space-time where the distinctions between matter and energy or between human and mechanical have broken down, the Fortean vision of *transmediumization* would not seem so farfetched. Telekinetic power has to be considered among the many "conscious technologies" which are rewiring the intelligence at the crossroads and the interface of mind and matter.¹⁴ The telepathic research program would seek to establish the connections between mental and physical pathic energies (e.g., desires, emotions). Or, if you wish, these power-houses or wishing-stations will become the switching centers to translate and transmediumize the one into the other. These are the human dynamos and power stations who will concentrate their energies into a motorized form. At the appointed hour, the new "organization man" of the future will have started up his wishing day.

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Or sometime in the Witchcraft Era—and every morning at nine o'clock, crowds of human wishers, dignified under the name of transmediumizers, arrive at their wishing stations, or mental power-houses, and in an organization of what are now only scattered and wasted hopes and hates concentrate upon the running of all motors of all cities. (p. 1036)

An important branch of the telekinetic research program will service the automotive industry. Here telekinesis could offer an alternative that will bypass the problems of fossil fuels (e. g., petroleum pollution, gas shortages). Its generalized application could bring new meaning to the "auto-mobile." There is no longer a wish for a car in every garage. Instead, the Fortean research program sets its sights on every man, woman, and child his own catalytic convertor and engine starter. Fort considers many of the schemes over the past years to design a fuelless motor as a perpetual motion machine. This exceptional scientist can not rule out this possibility or automatically banish the fuelless to the scrapheap of the foolish. He can not be certain that these contraptions have been hoaxes or fakes. This refusal would rule out how the refuse of the past becomes the established preposterousness of the present—i. e., that there could be a fuel-powered motor in the first place. In the following considerations, Fort interchanges the terms to challenge the hard-and-fast distinctions among swindle, dream, and practice or among impostor, magician, and experimenter. The word "crank" will have to be suspended and in marked form. This moves the crank from the negative appellation of a crackpot to the potentially positive handle of the fuelless motor.

The fuelless motor, which is by most persons considered a dream, or a swindle, associates most with the name of John Worrell Keely, though there have been other experimenters, or impostors, or magicians. The earliest fuelless motor "crank" of whom I have record is John Murray Spear, back in the period of 1855, though of course various "cranks" of all ages can be linked with this swindle, dream, or most practical project. (p. 1056)

When it comes to the case studies of John Worrell Keely or John Murray Spear, Fort is decidedly undecided. Perhaps these men were on the trail of an exception to the second law of thermodynamics. If they had had more time, support, and resources, they could have standardized the exceptional actions of these seemingly counter-entropical motors.

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Perhaps they were telekinetic mediums who emanated the motivating rays. Perhaps they were charlatans of the most sordid sort interested only in duping the investment companies and science centers of their day and that their “hydro-pneumatic-pulsating-vacue-engines” or “vibratory generators” (p. 1056) were as empty as their long-winded names.¹⁵

Now it is my expression that all perpetual motion cranks may have been dupes, or rascals—that they may have been right, occasionally—that their wheels may sometimes have turned, their marbles rolled, their various gimcracks twirled, in an excess of reaction over action, either because sometime will occur exceptions to any such supposed law as “the conservation of energy,” or because motivating “rays” emanated from the inventors—

That sometime engines have run, fueled with zeals—but have, by such incipient, or undeveloped, witchcraft, operated only transiently, or only momentarily—but that they may be forerunners to such a revolution of the affairs of this earth, as once upon a time were flutters of the little lids of teakettles— (p. 1029)

We do not rule out the possibility of hoax. We do not guarantee success. There is always the risk that the telepathic will turn into the telepathetic. Rather we ask to reopen research into the fuelless motor to the light of contemporary technologies. Once upon a space-time, there was a revolution of the steam engine that began like a lot of hot vapor emanating out of a teapot. There might be another revolution just around the bend which takes the form of the fuelless motor. It might yield a perpetual return from the temper tantrums of a young girl or from the mad ravings and ragings of a “crank.”

3. Telepathic Constructivism: Large-Scale Public Works Programs

Playing the role of the *transmedium*, the Fortean telepathic researcher seeks to establish a common bond and a translation of interests between the circus act and the construction industry. It is necessary to translate the wondrous demonstrations performed only in music halls and sideshows to the large-scale construction site¹⁶ and to transform the magic and stunts of the mysterious seance into the normal technoscience of *telepathic constructionism* (or, alternatively, *telepathic constructivism*).

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All around are wild talents, and it occurs to nobody to try to cultivate them, except as expressions of personal feelings, or as freaks for which to charge admission. I conceive of powers and the uses of human powers that will some day transcend the stunts of music halls and seances and sideshows, as public utilities have passed beyond the toy-stages of their origins. (p. 1041)



The Fortean text recounts a number of the exceptional phenomena which will serve as the basis of this research program for the implementation of telepathic constructionism. These phenomena involve the actions of Poltergeist girls who demonstrate unusual powers of levity during their stage acts. When the so-called Electric Girl tries to

sit down, she can no longer obey Newton or his laws of gravity.¹⁷ While it might appear as low comedy in this context, the trick would be to find out how it could serve as the basis for high finance.

Anybody who would like an account of this wild, or undeveloped, talent, that is free from interpretations by spiritualists and anti-spiritualists, should go to the contemporaneous story, published in the *Journal des Debats* (Paris) February, 1846. Here are accounts by M. Arago and other scientists. When Angelique Cottin went near objects, they bounded away. She could have made a perpetual motion machine whiz. She was known as the Electric Girl, so called, because nobody knew what to call her. When she tried to sit in a chair, there was low comedy. The chair was pulled away, or rather, was invisibly pushed away. There was such force here that a strong man could not hold the chair. A table, weighing 60 pounds, rose from the floor, when she touched it. When she went to bed, the bed rocked—(p. 1032)

If we grant that the sixty pound table became subject to levitation through the telepathic powers of Ms. Cottin, then we must investigate further to ascertain how to cultivate and to mobilize this talent on a larger scale. We will want to master the powers of levity and to institute its applications. We will want to raise levity to a science. One of the most exciting

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areas of application for the levitational technologies will be in the building industry. There, the Poltergeist girl will walk hand-in-hand with the architect and the urban planner in designing the environment of the future. With the forging of this new alliance, the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York might look like the products of children's erector sets in the not too distant future.

Perhaps there are new Babels to be built. A table, weighing 60 pounds, rises a few feet from the floor—well, then, it's some time, far ahead, in the Witchcraft Era—and a multi-cellular formation of poltergeist-girls is assembled in the presence of building materials. Stone blocks and steel girders rise a mile or so into their assigned positions in the latest sky-prodder. Maybe. Tall buildings will have their day, but first there will have to be a show-off of what could be done. (p 1035)

Even as one grants the possibility of a telepathic effect in the individual case of Ms. Cottin, Fort has already outlined the overall and general consequences of the constructionist research program. But it would be the express purpose of the Institute of Fortpathy (IF) to bridge this gap ("maybe"). As Fort indicates, "There will have to be a show-off of what could be done." Such exhibitionism should be the goal of our research program. It is in preparing for this "show-off" that research and experiment will be undertaken in the offices, halls, labs, and abandoned fields by the Department of Telepathic Constructivism at the IF.

We would like to outline two concrete examples of telepathic public works programs drawn from contemporary socio-political life in order to demonstrate its potential applications.

(a) *Contra the Contras and Pro the Nicaraguan Canal.* Recently, the world has witnessed political turmoil in Central America. This has included the American invasion of Panama and the end of Sandanista rule in Nicaragua. The United States has promised millions of dollars in aid to the Chamorro government to assist in the effort to bring Nicaraguan democracy back on its feet again. It is in this unsettled political situation that the prophetic imagination of Charles Fort intervenes to suggest a New Deal. A large-scale telekinetic public works program could help the Nicaraguan economy and, at the same time, could secure a more permanent ally for the United States in this troubled region. Fort foresees a twenty-first century Panama Canal in the making with the exportation of his selective service program.

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Sometimes I tend to thinking constructively—or batteries of witches teleported to Nicaragua, where speedily they cut a canal by dissolving trees and rocks—the tumults of floods, and then magic by which they cannot touch houses. (p. 1041)

(b) *Telepathic Constructivism Towards German Unification.* The telepathic construction research program should be of special interest to the public works administration in the Federal Republic of Germany. With the steady influx of refugees from the East, there is a dire housing shortage in West Germany. In this crisis situation, one might do well to consider the logic of Charles Fort and to concentrate upon his research program of telepathic constructionism.

If, by looking at it, a picture can be taken down from a wall, why could not a house be pulled down, by still more intently staring at it? If occultly, mentally, physically, however a house could be pulled down, why could not a house be put up, by concentrating upon its materials? (p. 981)

And if a house might be pulled down, herein lies the means to accomplish the long-awaited public works project for Germany. If occultly, mentally, physically, however, a wall could be pulled down. There is no reason to leave this job to thousands of tiny touristic hammers and the slow and arduous task of pecking away to get a piece of the wall. As Germany moves towards unification and shifts its borders, the Fortean research program of telepathic construction and deconstruction can expedite this task through the implementation of a variety of public works programs (i.e., housing, wall demolition, road construction) in the former German Democratic Republic. In this spirit, the ghosts who are indebted to the German language for their clumsy etymological origin (i.e., *Poltergeists*) can contribute to the rebuilding of its society and culture.

The days of a construction industry based on labor-unionized manpower might be numbered. On the one hand, we will observe the increasing employment of a robotic labor force to perform repetitive tasks. On the other hand, the raising of a new breed of rugged individualists—the *Poltergeist* telepathic techno-scabs—may render the old hands obsolete in the performance of their constructive and deconstructive wizardries.

But telepathic constructivism is not only a futuristic research project. It also demands a historiographical investigation to reassess and even to rewrite the architectural achievements of the past. Indeed, all the wonders of the ancient world might have been nothing but the staging of tele-

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pathic effects. Telepathic constructivists will revise the ways in which we understand how these civilizations have been constructed. In particular, telepathically constructive history will reconstruct the history of construction. Such mythological constructions as the Great Wall of China or the Egyptian Pyramids no longer read as cryptic hieroglyphics.

I now have a theory that the Pyramids were built by poltergeist girls. The Chinese Wall is no longer mysterious. Every now and then, I reconstruct a science. I may take up *neo-archaeology* sometime. Old archaeology, with its fakes and guesses, and conflicting pedantries holds out an invitation for a ferocious and joyous holiday. (p. 1035)

A number of social scientists are quite familiar with Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* for the investigation of relationships of power and knowledge.¹⁸ But it is time to take into consideration the virtually unknown Fortean science of *neo-archaeology* which predates the Foucauldian positivities. Ceaselessly revising and revisioning the origins, Fortean neo-archaeology will forge the links between telekinetic power and the abysmal grounds of knowledge.

4. Telekinetic Military Technologies

There is another important use for the powers of the Poltergeist girls. The Fortean research program calls for the development of telekinetic military technologies through the rigorous disciplining and training of hates. The collective focusing of these negative energies would produce destructive material consequences. These "overwhelming effects" are a literal example of mind over matter. The telepathic effect always involves an element of *pathos* because it consists of the transmission of feelings and emotions at a distance. The War Department of the Institute of Telepathy will thrive upon bad feelings. We propose a research program to transform negative vibes and casual venoms into a reliable lethal weapon and into an exact science.

Or military demonstrations of the overwhelming effects of trained hates—scientific uses of destructive bolts of a million hate-power—the blasting of enemies by disciplined ferocities—And the reduction of cannons to the importance of fire-crackers—a battleship at sea, or a toy boat in a bathtub—(p. 1042)

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The Fortean analysis of telekinetic military power employs reductive figures that scale down from cannons to fire-crackers and from a battleship to a toy boat in a bathtub. On the one hand, conventional conflict magnifies or blows up the war games of little girls and boys. But the deployment of these Poltergeist military strategies flips the scales around again.

We say that all is fair in love and war but we would rather make love, not war. Telekinetic military technologies offer the best of both worlds. They will be a powerful weapon in war *and* a deterrent to war.

But of course not that witchcraft would be practiced in warfare. Oh, no; witchcraft would make war too terrible. Really the Christian thing to do would be to develop the uses of the new magic, so that in the future a war could not even be contemplated. (p. 1042)

Fort has hit upon the paradoxical logic at the basis of every national defense program and the rhetoric of peace through strength. Of course, the same logic has been applied to nuclear weapons over the past fifty years with great success. One wonders why one would want to change weapons deterrence systems in mid-stream. But unlike the use of nuclear weapons, the concentrated use of telekinetic military technologies would destroy their targets alone. They would not spread radio-active waste materials which will be around to contaminate the earth's environment and its inhabitants for centuries. In other words, if a Poltergeist brigade had targeted its telekinetic powers upon Hiroshima, we would have witnessed the same catastrophic effects but without the nasty fallout.

In *Wild Talents*, Fort provides a case study from Berlin of a telekinetic warrior in action. Given that he is not a Poltergeist girl shows that the program does not have to confine itself to such a small segment of the population. While Fort plays the optimist in presenting the case of the psychic bomber, one senses the intertwining of threat and deterrent and the double-edged quality that permeates the entire lubricated account of this explosive personality.

In the *New York Herald Tribune*, Nov. 29, 1931, there is an account of the doings of Kurt Schimkus, of Berlin, who had arrived in Chicago, to demonstrate his ability to discharge, from a distance, explosives, by means of what he called his "anti-war rays." According to reports from Germany, Schimkus had exploded submarine mines and stores of buried cartridges. Herr Schimkus will have success and renown, I think: he knows that

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nothing great and noble and of benefit to mankind has ever been accomplished without much lubrication. He announced that slaughter was far-removed from his visions: that he was an agency for peace on earth and good will to man, because by exploding an enemy's munitions, with his "anti-war rays," he would make war impossible. Innocently, myself, I speculate upon the possible use of "psychic bombs," in blowing up tree stumps in the cause of new pastures. (p. 946)

As a vital component of this research program, we recommend the foundation of a new type of military academy for the development of and instruction in telekinetic technologies for military uses. As a tribute to the far-seeing powers of our founding foreseer, this institution will take the name of Fort Fort. It is advised that a large-scale recruiting program be conducted in order to find the wild talents who could make such a program workable. The governing board of this stronghold would consist of both high-level military personnel and circus ringmasters. They will scout out talent everywhere from the college campuses to the freak shows of the nation. They will investigate published reports in every tabloid about possible and impossible Poltergeist activities on an international basis. The recruiters will make a special effort to interest all girls between the ages of 4 to 8 years old with Poltergeist potentialities and to enlist them into the new national defense program. If society would pay as much attention to the cultivation of these wild talents as it does at present to the training of tennis and gymnastics prodigies, then it will only take a few years until we will be witnessing the rise of the Steffi Grafs and the Mary Lou Rettons of the world of telekinetic technologies.

There is no denying that there are considerable start-up costs for the training program. But we insist that the rewards and benefits will override any initial expenditures. Once the Poltergeist girls have been properly disciplined, then the bubble gum brigade can just sit back in the lounge of Fort Fort to watch music videos, gossip about their idols, and chew away until they take the call.

Girls at the front—and they are discussing their usual not very profound subjects. The alarm—the enemy is advancing. Command to the poltergeist girls to concentrate—and under their chairs they stick their wads of chewing gum. (p. 1042)

What could be cheaper? A cable TV hookup, a couple of magazines, a Coke and candy machine, and an alarm mechanism. The greatest

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expense might be the supply of chewing gum.

Fort writes in a dazzling apocalyptic prose as he stages a typical battle utilizing the wild talents of the Poltergeist girls in action. It begins by bringing into play the pyromaniacal talents of the girls that transmute the world into fire.

A regiment bursts into flames, and the soldiers are torches. Horses snort smoke from the combustion of their entrails. Reinforcements are smashed under cliffs that are teleported from the Rocky Mountains. The snatch of Niagara Falls—it pours upon the battlefield. The little poltergeist girls reach for their wads of chewing gum. (p. 1042)

The second-half of this particular battle highlights a more complex telepathic technology than the simple focusing upon military targets. It imports teleportation and mobilizes strategic spaces in the service of the war machine. Fort insists that natural resources and national landmarks (e. g., Niagara Falls, the Rocky Mountains) can be mobilized for military action. Fort wants to develop technologies which simulate natural disasters by using the natural resources themselves. For instance, he envisions the Niagara Falls as a high-powered flood device or the Rocky Mountains as an avalanche simulator. This is a case study in the scaling up of the slapstick practices of a bucket of water in the face or a falling rock to the head. In the Fortean research program, the black humour reaches catastrophic proportions. These strategies can be expanded to other particularly fortuitous features of the American landscape. For instance, just as the enemy is advancing, the teleportation of the Grand Canyon to the battle site could trip them up in a most abysmal manner. The California and Nevada deserts could be put to military use in the simulation of sand storms to blind the enemy. One can even envision the teleportation of Disneyland as a military decoy by the girls. This strategy of spatial mobilization would first lure the astounded enemy into the teleported magic kingdom and then capture them as prisoners of war when Mickey and Donald turn Rambo.

There is no reason for environmentalists to panic in the fear that these military maneuvers will destroy the American landscape. Once the reversibility of telekinetic technologies has become perfected, these landmarks can be teleported back to their proper spatial locations after the battle has been won. While this analysis has focused upon the geo-territorial features of the United States, this teleportative-telepathic weapons

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system can be extended anywhere to utilize the natural resources indigenous to each nation.

In the power realignments of the *fin-de-siecle*, the world will witness the retreat of Soviet and American troops from Europe and the gradual disarmament of nuclear weapons systems. At this critical juncture in military history, we call for the development of telekinetic technologies at the basis of an alternative defense program of military action at a distance in our planning for a secure future. At the threshold of the twenty-first century, we foresee an age fortified through telekinetic military technologies but without any of the negative risks of its atomic predecessor.

PART II. TOWARDS THE TECHNICIZATION OF WITCHCRAFT

But I do think that one hundred years ago an advertisement for a fast sandwich man would have looked as strange as today would look an advertisement for "polt. grls." (p. 1030)

Throughout this search, we have overheard the pre-recorded oracles of Charles Fort invoking the demons of "magic" and "witchcraft" in relation to telepathic technologies. This might lead us on a left-handed path in believing that there must be some sort of strange occult powers in his research program in opposition to contemporary rational technoscience. But Fort wants his readers to wonder about science and witchcraft and their superimposition. It is important to defamiliarize or tele-familiarize these operations of and in history. This equation sets up the virtual equivalence between the disciplines or translates a wild talent and a conventional discipline. "Or much of the 'parlor magic' of times gone by, and now it is industrial chemistry." (p. 1045) On the one hand, we must begin to denaturalize the modern technologies of the mundane environment whether in the form of the light socket or the steam engine. We must tune in to the magic that consists in the turning on of the television set. Here Fort intervenes to switch the terms of the demonic. Or he illustrates how the mere fact of an employment suffices to convert an outrageous demon into a conventional savior. This is how it works: "Someday almost every particular in this book may look quaint, but it may be that the principle of putting the witches to work will seem as sound as now seems the employment of steam and electric demons." (p. 1046)

Given these assumptions, the history of science is nothing more than the way to describe the establishment of preposterousness. "Witchcraft

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always has a hard time, until it becomes established and changes its name" (p. 558) Fort throws out these remarks in a discussion of the magic that became electricity. The electrical revolution involves the standardization and the technicization of a stage trick. If a historian of science and technology would like to know its real pseudo-origins, then he or she will have to attend a magic show. In this fairytale and storybook setting, the historian will see a magician on stage who performs with a wand in one hand and a cat in the other. One had better hold on to both one's hat and notebook in this highly charged setting. "Once upon a time, Dr. Gilbert waved a wand that he had rubbed with the skin of a cat, and bits of paper rose from a table. That was in the year 1, of Our Lord, Electricity, who was born as a parlor-stunt." (p. 982) The establishment of preposterousness rewrites this history in hindsight in light of the conversions of Anno Electrico. This latter-day institution of dates and principles (A.E.) turns a trick into a god-head and into capital. Immersed in the electrical age, we have become oblivious to this stunted origin.

On the other hand, we must work to conventionalize witchcraft. For one remains in the land of the obviously (if and) when it comes to the telepathic technologies which have been outlined in this paper. At present, they are having a hard time of it—but if they were only to become established and change their names. This could be in the year 1, of Our Lord, Telepathy, who might have already been born as a parlor-stunt. If rendered practicable, we might be on the verge of a revolution or devolution in time that will set off all the clocks and calendars in another direction. The sequence B.C.—A.D. will give way to other nomenclatures whether B.T.—A.T. or B.W.—A.W. "Or that practical witchcraft, or the development of wild talents might be of such benefits as to draw in future records of human affairs the new dividing line of A.W. and B.W.—or might be a catastrophe that would drive all human life back into Indians, or Zulus, or things furrier—" (p. 1044)

The industrialization (or the making industrious) of these latest models and modalities of witchcraft is the primary purpose of the research and development program to be undertaken at the Institute for Fortpathy (IF). We are working to generalize these isolated cases of preposterousness and to render them a reliable, useful, and practical technology. We are working for the new dividing line and for the future records. We want to put telepathic technologies on the job and into the market. We want to make "Foil girls" a quite commonplace abbreviation in the want ads of the next century. In this transmutation of dreams, we want to incorporate them into and as the smooth running of the large technical systems of the future.

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Of course, the skeptical or uninspired reader might shake his head in disbelief at the Fortean vision as too far out and off. But we can only ask the reader to look around at the wondrous connections of *tele* and *techné* that pervade our mundane existence. One does not second guess the ringing of the telephone. One answers it. Yet this is a telepathic technology which sends out the vibrations of the voice millions of times each day across the far-reaches of space.²¹ One does not doubt the turning on and tuning in of the television set. Yet this too is a telepathic technology through which one invests in pre-recorded phantoms on a screen. One does not doubt the telegrammatical or the telefaxual effects which link up businesses on a global basis and which transforms the telephone line into a printing machine.²² All of these telecommunications technologies are telepathic in structure, nature, and movement. They are invisible actions at a distance or over time which have become doubly invisible through a process of naturalization. They show us how the *tele* is the condition of possibility and the limit of modern technology.

In the light of these other scenarios, the telepathic technological research program must be viewed as the logical extension of the other invisible networks beyond material transport. This can be seen in the speculations of Francis Bacon who stands at the start of this telepathic research program. In *The New Atlantis*, Bacon already foresees the outlines of the telephone and the television in the following way. "We have also means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances." "We procure means of seeing objects far off; as in the heaven and remote places; and represent things near as afar off, and things afar off as near; making feigned distances."²³ As the telephone rings, one might muse again upon the telepathic technologies outlined in this essay. It is also interesting to note that the father of induction does not rule out the possibility of telepathy in the second part of the *Novum Organum* but rather lends his support for the Fortean telepathic technological research program to come. "For it may be that in some of them (so-called matters of superstition and magic) some natural operation lies at the bottom: as in fascination, strengthening of the imagination, sympathy of things at a distance, transmission of impressions from spirit to spirit no less from body to body and the like."²⁴

In the name of Fort, we have spoken of telepathic technologies with the most pragmatic ends in mind. For our prophet has come as a profiteer and spoken in terms of utilities. He has stated his aims in the most conventional of sign languages (\$). In situating the social and economic benefits of the telepathic technologies at the top of our agenda, we have hoped to divert any negative branding of his ideas to come. These have

been the rather practical means to interest a research group at a contemporary think tank or a science center to invest in the development of his dream business proposal. Through these visions, we have sought to fire the minds of the scientific managers, the technical wizards, the marketing psychics, the sociologists and historians of technology and whoever might be assembled in the convening of the board meeting to assess the utility of this research program and to stir up support.

Given this practical bent, Fort must not be marginalized as some idle dreamer. This speculator would rather become the bridge to connect the utilitarianism of his forefathers with the material-spiritual needs of the next generations. Perhaps you have been reading about the Thomas Edison of the twenty-first century who has come as the Avatar of Albany.⁴³ His brand of *new age utilitarianism* combines incense and sweat and it smells something like this: "Or the trail of a working witchcraft—and we're on the scent of utilities." (p. 1029) We must pursue the trail blazed by this pioneer in the establishment of preposterousness. We must take up this questing and questioning our pursuit of the common places of future history. We must follow the three cardinal translations of interests in the research program of telepathic technologies at the crossroads of the most mystical of destinies and the most practical of ends.

Our instances of practical witchcraft have been practical enough, so long as they were paying attractions at exhibitions, but the exhibition implies the marvel, or what people regard as the marvel, and the spirit of this book is of commonplaceness, or of coming commonplaceness—or that there isn't anything in it, except of course its vagaries of theories and minor interpretations, that won't someday be considered as unsensational as the subject matters of textbooks upon chemistry and mechanics.

My interest is in magic, as the daily grind—the miracle as a job—sorceries as public utilities. (p. 104)

It is our hope that the technoscience of the large technical system will draw its future sustenance from the tele-directed dreams of Fortean science including teleportation, telekinetic energy and power resources, telepathic constructionism, and telekinetic military technologies. It is our hope that the wild talents of the Fortean imaginary will be fantasized and understood as vital reserves and potential resources for scientific cultivation. We have placed ourselves in the curious border zone of telepathic technologies where the wilds meet the talents. It is not a bad thing to place oneself on the verge of our picture where wildness begins and

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where knowledge begins.²⁴ We have placed ourselves at the borderline of scientific invention that divides the hoax and the prophesy. We have placed ourselves at the margin between the serious arguments of the established preposterousness and the laughable toys and games of the obviously. This is the wager that trades off dollars and laughs, or sense and jeers. What will the spin of the Fortean lotto wheel turn up? Will the results have been more or less satisfactory? We have argued in this quasi-grant proposal that a lot will depend upon the nature and the scope of future investment. But, at the present conjuncture of conjectures, the telepathic technologic research program can only close with a question mark or in a dash.

Billions of dollars are today seriously drawing dividends from toys and games that were put to work. Billions of laughs and jeers have preceded solemn expressions of satisfactions with fat bank accounts. But this is only reasoning and is nothing but logic and argument, and there have been billions of laughs that never turned into anything more satisfactory—though where do I get the idea that there is anything more satisfactory than a laugh? (p. 573)

Coda of Copula:

“And telepathic realization!” suggested Katie.

“To be sure, telepathic realization. And—”²⁵

AND AFTER WORDS:

REFLECTIONS ON TECHNOLOGY AND METAPHORIZATION

If this particular telepathic technological research program has not yet gotten off the ground in the space of one year since its initial propositioning, the problematics which it raise—and it bears repeating that these have to be marked throughout the text as levitational effects—continue to remain a part and a parcel of that which has been leaving the assured solidities of the earth and its gravitational fields. This spaced out scenario has the air of technology. It no longer involves a journey to the center of the earth, but teleports over and out of the earth's peripheries. It plugs into a dynamic mode of operation which returns to the furthest reaches of

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the *tele* as a resource to be abolished over and over again despite the success or the failure of these transmissions. In this sense, it is not technology which has transported the *tele*, but the *tele* which transports technology. The transfers which have been registered at the institution of this long-distance carrier have prevented technology from speaking with a voice that could not be somehow previously recorded or to bear the mark of the disembodied. In this manner, the shock waves of the tele-technologies have signaled a floating and a drift.

But perhaps then it was never really the point of such an "unearthly" research paper to have begun at point A where there were no telepathic technologies in the first place and to have ended at point B where there were telepathic technologies in the final place. Such a mode of absolute existence and non-existence would belong to a history other than the history of technology and the cross-currents of its electronic writing or the setting up of places without location from which to get elsewhere. Could the *off* and *on* mode of absolute states have been operational when it involves the switches of the proverbial ghosts in the machine? In its telepathic guises and in its electronic media, modern technology has alluded and eluded to an inter-mediate situation which problematizes these absolute distinctions through its *tele* programming. To give the most mundane instance in far-seeing visual terms, these *tele* powers have disguised the furthest absence as the nearest presence in the live-wired privacy (?) of one's own home.

Mathematically or technically speaking, the *tele* might be equated with an independent variable that one could dub for the sake of argument or of interrogation—X. Not really a point and not really a really, the telepathic technologies operate at the crossroads of switching centers. These trace the networks of invisible lines and transitional cables, innumerable transmissions and transferences, receptions and dispatches and everything else in between. Or X might be translated into the language of Charles Fort in *The Book of the Damned* as the "intermediate state of quasi-existence" which we are—are not.¹⁰ And it is to the point to recall that X remains as the title of Charles Fort's first (and lost) manuscript between science and fiction. Like technology, Fort too began his calculations with the unknown variable X. Like the beckoning and overreaching call of modern technology, X speculated upon the possibility of an unearthly communication at a distance. "The book starts out with the proposition that society is an organism, but can not be ultimate, and, therefore, is in relationship with something else, called, for convenience, X."¹¹ In this ancient network analysis (circa 1910), Fort envisioned X as the "trellis of ether" or as the remote control station for which

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the earth might just be a cover or a even a telepathic projection.

In tacking the far- and even overreaching *tele-* onto technologies, one has started up the motor of and as metaphorization. The prefix would seem to say in no certain terms that technology stimulates metaphorization, that it transports beyond itself and that wildly talented technologies demand speculation. This is the basic extension course that puts technology into the program of literary studies.²⁶ For what are modern technology and classical metaphor if not answering machines to the calls of the other? Technological operations always pose a relation to an other. That is why its circuits have been always risking to close or open the gap of the *tele*. That is why this drive has been the pretext for the construction of so many death engines and intricate destruction mechanisms.²⁷ From this perspective, science and technology take on the blackest of humours. It has never been just a strategy of walking the line between humor and science. It has never been a matter of throwing a dash of satire on this machine and then applying a ironic thrust to that machine. Instead, the telepathic technologies force reflection and speculation on the other-directed transporting mechanism in general. This has involved the staging of something more unsettling. It has been rather to take a stab and a splice at technology and its problematic relationship with the engines of difference so as to return to the crossed out intersection where both black humour and technology trace a mutually supportive writing practice. Nevertheless, the calling and recalling of the text through these metaphorical termini does not seek to inscribe the telepathic technological discourse as a subset of the literary mode. It does not mean to say that technology can be explained and understood in and as *literature*. That would be too simple of a reading. Furthermore, it has never understood itself as a radical extension of the program of social constructivism. In taking the *tele* as a dashing leap or as rigorous displacement, there has never been the attempt to conceive technology as an effect of literary or of social frameworks. Rather it has had recourse to the missing links that cut across the technologue's love of the network and the literary critic's love of the intertext. In either case, metaphor acts as motor.

What is the proper velocity of this metaphorical motor? That has always been a difficult question to gauge. Perhaps telepathic technologies have been toying with the idea that they demand a kind of accelerative or even over-driven discourse in order to jam. In other words, the wild talents would demand a series of transpositional speech stunts that run on technological metaphoric. Rather than seeking alienation effects or requiring the defamiliarization of its technological reader, the telepathic technologies research program will have kicked in and into reverse so as

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to pluck the severed strings of a sympathetic vibration in the processes of its pedalling.

Here, again, our two generic illuminati—the *literati* and the *technologi*—may have talking the same language all along without even realizing it (which sounds like telepathy all over again) or, at the very least, they may have been in tele-communication between the lines of a discipline-to-discipline call. The technologist has always spoken in terms of taking the necessary steps for the scaling of the large technical system or for making the translations that have to occur in order to establish the technological network and the multiplex transmission of its signals. The textologist has always spoken in terms of the movements of metaphor and the play of signification across the web of language for the staging of intertextual effects. There is no wonder why *translation* has become a keyword common to the vocabularies, currencies, and the arsenals of these transferring tradesmen. If and when one wants to apprehend the tricks of the trades, one has been led into the maze of metaphor.

And after words, this is the drive that leads us on....

It is a double-sided record that requires our continuous reading and processing. The metaphor of technology and the technology of metaphor. Flip sides. It is necessary to cultivate the translations that move across this passage and make this passage move.

May you flourish at the crossroads of this chiasmus in your dealings with this latter-day dual-directional (con)version of the water and the wine. Yet, unlike how the computer counters in error, it is not that this drive has remained unspecified.

The drive remains.

Over...

Notes

- 1 *The Book of Charles Fort* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941). These break down into *The Book of the Damned* (1919), pp. 1-310; *New Lands* (1923), pp. 311-359; *Lo!* (1931), pp. 539-841; and *Wild Talents* (1932), pp. 841-1062.
- 2 For a partial description of science fiction which has incorporated Fortean problematics, the reader is referred to the biography of Fort written by a noted science fictionist himself. See Damon Knight, *Charles Fort Prophet of the Unexplained* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), pp. 203.
- 3 The etymology of *tele* comes from the Greek where it provides what is far away, far off, and far out. Coincidentally and incidentally, this same *farther* meaning is inscribed in the proper name of Charles Fort himself. Of course, one uses the expression (*Fort!*) in German to signify in the imperative, Away!

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Given this semblance one can interchange the Institute for Telepathy (to be outlined in this proposal) with another neologicistic formulation, i. e., the Institute for Fortpathy.

- 4 This uncertain and borderline situation is duplicated in Freud's text where one will be left not knowing what to make of telepathy. See Sigmund Freud's "Dreams and Telepathy," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (Vol. III, September, 1922), pp. 283-305. The psychoanalyst asks: "Have I given you the impression that I am secretly inclined to support the reality of telepathy in the occult sense? I know nothing about it." (p. 305) Fort gives his own distracted version of the telepathic margin in these open and vagrant terms. They waffle: "So far as my own experiences, I do not know that telepathy exists. I think so, according to many notes that I have taken upon vagrant impressions that come and go, when my mind is upon something else. I have often experimented. When I incline to think that there is telepathy, the experiments are convincing that there is. When I think over the same experiments, and incline against them, they indicate that there isn't." (p. 962)
- 5 For an excellent discussion of the paradoxical space of dual novation in relation to the telepathic technology of table turning, see Michel Pierssens, "Novation Astray," in *Sub-stance*, 62/63 (1990), pp. 157-67
- 6 For the classic account of the links between the telepathics of Eastern religious texts and of modern quantum physics, see Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* (London: Wildwood House, 1975) For a Zen twist to teleportative effects in the form of a transmission of mind ("which is not really transmission"), see *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind*, translated by John Blofeld (New York: Grove Press, 1958).
- 7 For a consideration of the effects of scaling in modern technoscience, see Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1987), especially pp. 210-13. The Fortean research program seeks to apply Latour's sixth rule of method ("just a question of scale") to get teleportative physics off the ground.
- 8 R. Buckminster Fuller, *I Seem to be a Verb* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970). One should also recall Fuller's fond words about Fort which serve as the Foreword to Damon Knight's biography *Charles Fort: Prophet of the Unexplained*.
- 9 Daniel C. Dennett, "Murmurs in the Cathedral," *Times Literary Supplement* September 29, 1989, p. 1055.
- 10 See Hans Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- 11 For a popularized account of do-it-yourself tele-experiments, see Reese P. Dubin, *Telecult Power* (New York: Parker Publishing Company, 1970).
- 12 See Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life* (Boston: J.P. Tarcher, 1981). For a more thorough analysis, see Michael Swords, "Morphogenic Fields and the Interlinkage of Things Across Space and Time: The Hypothesis of

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- Rupert Sheldrake," in *Info Journal*, Vol. X No 2 (June, 1985), pp. 2-8 Thanks to Ingo Braun for the lead.
- 13 The interested reader will find that almost every issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology* (Durham, N.C.: The Foundation for Research in the Nature of Man) contains at least one empirical study reproducing the results of experiments with telekinetic effects. The scientific establishment always makes many more rigorous demands and standards for these tests. But this mode of parapsychological research is of no help if it merely reproduces the positivistic approach to science which the Fortean research program of telepathic technologies contests.
 - 14 For a related study on the grafting of *tele* devices upon the mind, see Jerome C. Glenn "Conscious Technology. The Co-Evolution of Mind and Machine" in *The Futurist* (September-October, 1989), pp. 15-20.
 - 15 For a contemporary defense of Keely's motor, see Clara Sophia Bloomfield Moore, *Keely and his Discoveries* (London, 1893; reprinted New York: University Books, Inc., 1972).
 - 16 One transfers the call to the non-contact hermeneutic stunts of Avital Ronell, *The Telephone Book* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) which opens up the lines of exchange between the occult and technosciences at every stage of the game. Maximizing a maxim close to the heart of the institutionalization of telepathic technologies, recall: "Vaudeville was the research center for communication systems" (p. 365).
 - 17 For an elaboration of Angelique Cottin and for studies of other "Electric People," the reader is referred to John Michell and Robert J. M. Rickard, *Phenomena: A Book of Wonders* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), pp. 36-38.
 - 18 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper Colophon, 1976).
 - 19 For the reinscription of the invention of the telephone within the *Geistesgeschichte* of telepathic technologies that range from Mr. Watson's spiritualism to Mr. Bell's communicative compact with the ghost of the dead brother, the fingers are unconsciously directed to Ronell's *The Telephone Book*.
 - 20 I thank William Hungerbühler for Daniel Goleman's article, "Robots With an Almost Human Touch" in *The International Herald Tribune*, August 3, 1989, p. 6. This introduces two recent tele-coinages coming out of contemporary robotics — *teleoperators* or "the fact that their operation is directed by a person at a distance" and *telepresence* or the "perceptual illusion that makes the person experience the sensation of being in the same place as the distant robot."
 - 21 In Henry Le Roy Finch (ed.), *The Complete Essays of Francis Bacon* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1963), pp. 303, 302.
 - 22 In James Spedding (ed.), *Works of Francis Bacon*, Vol. V. (London, 1860), p. 172.
 - 23 Here I am playing off the contemporary appellation of Fort as "The Mad Genius of the Bronx" in Harry Allen Smith's article of the same name in *Low*

TELEPATHIC TECHNOLOGIES

Man on the Totem Pole (1941). This is reprinted in *3 Smiths in the Wind* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1971), pp. 30-37.

- 24 For an excellent discussion of literature as resource for scientific invention, see Michel Serres, "Literature and the Exact Sciences," *Sub-stance* (No. 2, 1989), pp. 3-34. The following citation suggests some strange sort of telepathic connection between the two philosophers of science once upon a time. "The primitive forest is a reserve, a stock of species or essences from which, once upon a time, our agriculture and our animal husbandry came—even if we have forgotten from what wild plant wheat was born." (p. 5) One ought to compare this with the uncanny remarks of the self-professed "primitive farmer" (p. 862) of science and the cultivator of *Wild Talents*: "But once upon a time there were wild cabbages and wild beets and wild onions, and they were poor, little incipencies until they were called for by markets " (p. 1030)
- 25 This snippet has been snatched from a dialogic exchange from Charles Fort's only published novel, *The Outcast Manufacturers* (New York: B. W. Dodge and Company, 1909), p. 324. This was reprinted recently by the Printed Heritage Preservation Society in Washington, D. C. in 1988.
- 26 For a further discussion of the Fortean intermediate state of quasi-existence and other humorist-scientific quandaries, see Chapter 1, "Quasi-Introduction to the Humorist Science."
- 27 Charles Fort to Theodore Dreiser, May 1, 1915, unpublished letter in Dreiser Collection, University of Pennsylvania Library.
- 28 For the laying down of the lines that cross up literature and media technologies and a tuning into the *tele* in the form of "*Botschaften aus dem 'Totenreich'*" ("messages from the realm of the dead")(p. 23), the reader is hooked to Friedrich Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter* (Berlin: Brinkmann und Bose, 1986).
- 29 For an aberrant reading of media technology, psychoanalytics, and death directedness moving across the modern German landscape, see Laurence Rickels, *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988). Rickels plugs into the telepathic as the return of the repressed which haunts the masterminding necro-logics of technological domination. "Belief in the omnipotence of thoughts, which requires that the creditor takes full responsibility for the fulfillment of death wishes, summons the vengefulness of the dead which haunt the channels of telepathy and telecommunications." (p. 41)

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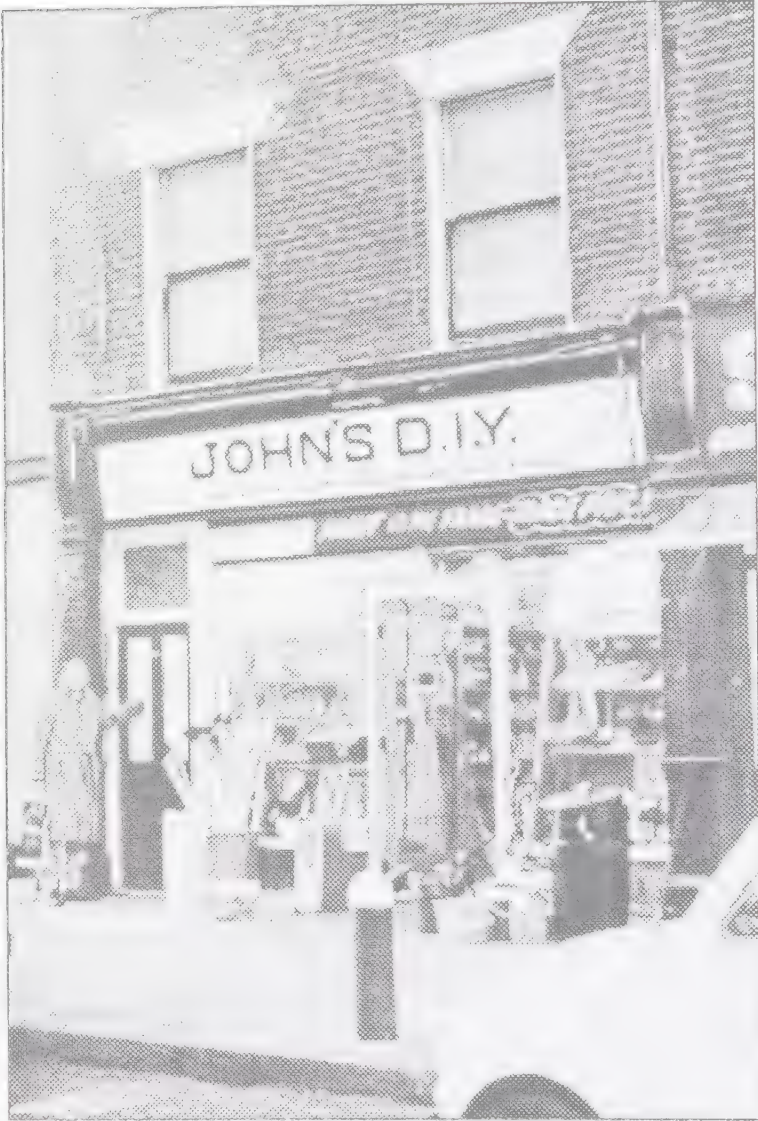


Photo: Jeannine Fiedler

LOUIS KAPLAN PAYS A HOUSE CALL AT THE FRONT (WRONG?) DOOR OF CHARLES FORT'S APARTMENT, 39 MARCHMONT STREET, LONDON

The cultural hystorian Louis Kaplan is a resurrector and interpreter of wild talents, lost literati, and pop cultural icons. His other exegeses include *Gumby* (with S. Michaelsen, New York, 1986), and, most recently, a new German edition of the scatologist John G. Bourke (*Das Buch des Unrats*) Frankfurt, 1992). A parabiography of the Bauhaus artist Laslo Moholy-Nagy is forthcoming from Duke University Press. His hyphenated existence teleports him among Berlin, New York, and the Super Sargasso Sea.

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“We shall pick up an existence by its frogs. Wise men have tried other ways. They have tried to understand our state of being, by grasping at its stars, or its arts, or its economies. But if there is an underlying oneness of all things, it does not matter where we begin, whether with stars, or laws of supply and demand, or frogs, or Napoleon Bonaparte. One measures a circle, beginning anywhere.

I have collected 294 records of showers of living things.

Have I?

Well, there's no accounting for the freaks of industry.” — Charles Fort



The American cosmographer Charles Fort (1874–1932) spent the last 25 years of his life in the obsessive collection of anomalous and exceptional data rejected by the sciences of his day. Fort called this crazy collection of outcasted data “the procession of the damned” — rains of fishes and frogs, black snow in Switzerland, sightings of the unidentified, the spontaneous combustion of bodies, or the telekinetic powers of poltergeist girls.



Fort published his extraordinary findings and marvelous speculations in four volumes offering an alternative and damned universe. In this book, Louis Kaplan has arranged the most inspiring and entertaining of Fort's texts in a wild montage, and introduces the reader to the hyphenated zones of Fortean science.

Welcome is a cosmic vision which bombards the borders of fact and fantasy, metaphysics and nonsense, truth and



hoax, science and the occult, the arcane and the frivolous.

“To paraphrase Charles Fort, we all like to think of ourselves as skeptical and ha bamboozle, but if we contemplate a few more talking-dog and astral-pancake stories the reader will find it hard to resist taking at least one peek around the room to see if a Damned Thing might have gotten in during the last few minutes.” Robert Anton Wilson

“What I liked most was this review of Fortean sciences.... Named after Charles Fort, who gathered an immense collection of inexplicable bits of news.... Mysterious steps and sucker marks on the ridges of some mountains, irregularities in the precipitation of the equinoxes, luminous wheels in the sea.” Umberto Eco, *Foucault's Pendulum*

