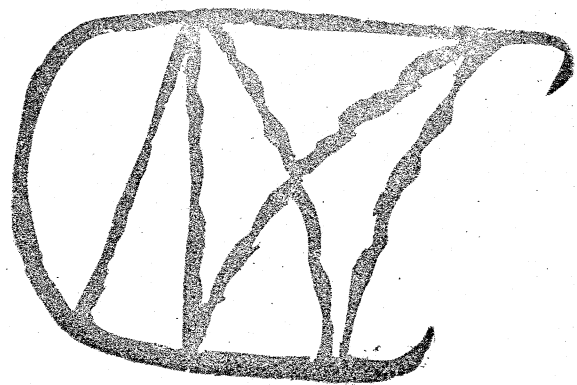


"The revolutionary forces of any movement are those
capable of shifting the present foundation of things,
of changing the *angle* of reality."

-Antonin Artaud

Crimes of Perception

Enemy Combatant Publications



Flat, Alaska



*Individualism and
Consensus Reality*

Crimes of Perception



*Individualism and
Consensus Reality*

The Relativity of “Reality”

“So, you see, the whole key to liberation is magic. Anarchism remains tied to politics, and remains a form of death like all other politics, until it breaks free from the defined “reality” of capitalist society and creates its own reality. A pig for President. Acid in the water supply. Fucking in the streets. Making the totally impossible become the eternally possible. Reality is thermoplastic, not thermosetting: I mean you can reprogram it much more than people realize. The hex hoax—original sin, logical positivism, those restriction and constriction myths—all that’s based on a thermosetting reality. There are limits, of course—nobody is nutty enough to deny *that*—but the limits are nowhere near as rigid as we’ve been taught to believe. It’s much closer to the truth to say there are no practical limits at all and reality is whatever people decide to make it. But we’ve been on one restriction kick after another for a couple of thousand years now, the world’s longest head-trip, and it takes real negative entropy to shake up the foundations.

The land belongs to the landlords, right now, because of magic. People worship the deeds in the government offices, and they won’t dare move onto a square of ground if one of the deeds says somebody else owns it. It’s a head-trip, a kind of magic, and you need the opposite magic to lift the curse. You need shock elements to break up and disorganize the chains of command in the brain, the “mind-forg’d manacles” that Blake wrote about. That’s the unpredictable elements: the erratic, the erotic, the Eristic. If you don’t want to call it magic, call it counter-conditioning, but the principle is the same. Breaking up the trip society laid on us and starting our own trip. Bringing back old realities that are supposed to be dead. Creating new realities. Astrology, demons, lifting poetry off of the written page into the acts of your daily life. Surrealism, dig? Antonin Artaud and Andre Breton put it in a nutshell in the First Surrealist Manifesto: *total transformation of mind, and all that resembles it*. We gotta get into witchcraft ourselves to undo the hex they’ve cast on everybody’s mind. All hail Discordia!”

—Simon Moon, *The Illuminatus Trilogy*

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Poets and seers carry the pattern of infinity in their souls. Science drags along thousands of years behind. Fort has taken the old cow of Reason, touched it to a mighty Pegasus and, hurtling beyond the three-dimensional sluiceways, shown the old cud-chewer a Kingdom Come—literally, not mythically. For there is something tremendously real, annoyingly solid about Fort. His is the first attempt in the history of human thought to bring mysticism and trans-material phenomena down to (or, maybe, lift it up to) something concrete.

Every once in a while a strange mind, an unattached mind, a trans-sensory mind comes into the world to make us laugh, wonder or unhinge us. Such a mind is Fort's.

To each one his illusion! To each one his private yarn! I have studied many such illusions and yarns—including my own—in the course of my life; but Charles Fort's is the most overwhelming, the most destabilizing and the most plausible that I know.

There is no moral or ethical end discernible in all this chaos. Fort here puts the purely aesthetic concept of existence such as Nietzsche and Jules de Gaultier have inferred, upon a basis supported by a study of phenomena, normal and supernormal. He resurrects the ancient myth that this earth, that all the stars, are controlled by a Demiurge.

Fantastic? Yes; but strip yourself of custom, habit, education, and the conventionalized mental clothes of millions of years, and presto! You are a candidate for wonders. The “unshatterable laws” of science, the “inexorable fatalities” of cause and effect may be the results of ages of suggestion which have no more absoluteness than the suggestions a hypnotist gives to a subject.

The laws of nature—those so-called “eternal laws”—may themselves be subject to the dynamics of growth and decay, to that fertilization, exfoliation and final evanescence that we call evolution. They may disappear in some unimaginably distant aeon, absorbed or integrated in another series. Rip up the flooring and tear out the wall-panels of our utilitarian and earth-clamped modes of thinking in our House of Certainties, and ghosts will walk out. “We live in an age of wonders,” says the man in the street, glibly and mechanically. *We always have.* One has but to read Fort, with his Samson-like slaughter of scientific dogmatism, to realize that we are living in a world of erupting magic, in which we humans are only a proximate approach to some form of reality.

Fort believes that all our theories (and there are nothing **but** theories about anything) regarding light, velocities and space are the product of professorial and economic Gradgrinds. The moon may be only a day’s travel away. There are “lands” a comparatively few miles beyond the earth. But our conventionalized sight and brain prevent us from seeing them.

It takes a great poet like Charles Fort to straddle the possibilities involved in the theory of relativity. The most fascinating guess about relativity is that, if everything in the universe should shrivel simultaneously to the size of a peanut, none of us would notice any change in anything. As there is no absolute of space or time, let us imagine anything. To an ant, a mile is a great distance. A flea thinks my leg is a tower of Babel. It is so with all things. Our war is with dogmatic absolutes. Our liberty, our “progress,” our evolution are nothing but the breaking down of absolutes, ineluctables, making the inconceivable the conceivable, a hop-skip-and-a-jump over the stars.

Here Fort, as everywhere in his marvelously beautiful and brain-stimulating books, puts on the seven-league boots of intuitive apprehension. He is done with the clumsy apparatus of thought, the wires, the pulleys, the cranks and winches of reason and standardized experience.

The Politics of “Reality”

For me, it is self-evident that each of us experiences our own world through a unique perspective which is also irreducibly our own—which by its nature is never **directly** shared with anyone else. In itself, this fact is neither good nor bad, desirable or undesirable, something to embrace, to escape, or to condemn. Rather it is the very condition under which our lives as unique individuals find their possibility.

From within these inalienable and irreducible perspectives we each experience a **world** which is similarly unique. In fact, for each of us the unique character of our **perspective** on our world is ultimately inseparable from the unique world our perspective opens out onto. In other words, both our perspective and our **world** are mutually implied parts of the single unique whole of our **lived experience**.

Although, then again, it would probably be more accurate to say that we “live through” our unique, unmediated and indivisible experience **before** we ever make such distinctions between our perspectives and the worlds they open out onto, since these distinctions are largely conceptual and linguistic in nature. They are largely created after the fact to help us conceptually account for an experience which is ultimately beyond conceptual accounting. After all, concepts can make nice sign-posts and boundary markers. And they are indispensable to our communication through language. But when it comes to the experience we actually live, our realities are always between the lines of linguistic description and beyond conceptual categorizations.

In a real sense we live in an ambiguous and hazy zone of an unchartable landscape whose features are of necessity (i.e. by their nature) always in semi-obscure. The much-abused eastern notion of “enlightenment” is in its best sense only a poor metaphor for this realization (both as it is conceptualized and as it is lived) for just this reason. In western terms the word “enlightenment” often instead suggests the pure illumination of an absolute Reality seen from an omniscient and absolute perspective (an illusory conceptualization shared by Christianity and the ideologies of science). And it is thus misconstrued for this. The metaphor of “awakening” can create similar confusions. In fact, there are probably no straightforward and unambiguous metaphors for the experience I’m trying to point out, just because of its ineffable nature.

However, despite the ultimate incommensurability of each of our unique and individual experiences, perspectives and worlds, we obviously **do** in another sense live in the **same** world. This is possible precisely because our perspectives and our worlds always constitute two sides or poles that lie embedded in our experience. These poles can also be conceptualized as the

subject-pole and object-pole of experience. And it is precisely because we are both subjects **and** objects that we can show a side of ourselves to others at the same time that our perspective can open out to illuminate the faces of other people.

It is the dialectical interaction which ensues from this situation—in which we both influence and are influenced by other people—that gives birth to the idea of an objective or absolute Reality, beyond the individual lived realities we experience directly. The dialectic of human relationships tends to find a systematic expression in enduring **social forms and interpretive conceptual categories**—cultural patterns, institutions, social habits and expectations—which in turn influence our perspectives through the power of the collective force behind them. They come to be seen as objective, not only in the sense of being collective conventions, but in the “objective Reality” they tend to be invested with.

Especially in the more alienated industrial societies a certain type of consensual social reality tends to be singled out and invested with the authority of a **paramount objective Reality** according to which all individual lived realities are appraised, devalued and found wanting. Despite the fact that this paramount Reality remains only a collective convention, it commands such universal allegiance that the pressures it exerts on us usually seem impossible to resist or circumvent. Even the simplest attempt to communicate with another person usually requires at least a compromise with the terms of discourse required by this illusory Reality, if not complete surrender to its logic and limits.

On the one hand it really isn't any wonder to me that most people continually flounder around—unable to make heads or tails of why our social reality is so perversely skewed—trying to adjust themselves to an alienated idea of an objective Reality with which they can find no solid or organic relation. They have long lost their **own** unique sense of their lived reality, or at least they cannot see it as having any significant validity in comparison with our more and more universally-imposed paramount Reality. After all, every officially approved and socially legitimated indicator seems to tell us that we are each essentially worthless. They tell us that our own unique perspectives are only replaceable parts of a larger social machine, if not entirely illusory and outdated features of something even newer, a social leviathan whose dimensions we cannot even grasp.

On the other hand though, we all probably still retain at least a hint of insight into what we have each and all lost, and of what we might again regain—the ability and power to both individually **and** collectively, personally and socially, redefine and expand our lived realities beyond the artificial limits and conceptual categories of this seemingly ubiquitous and omnipotent

our mind's eye, until we are at last conscious of being translated into another world which surrounds this world like a starry shell. This, precisely, is what does exist in the Fortean guess (and *guess*, mark you, is all we mean or *can mean* by any belief or system or knowledge on this planet: all is provisional, all is slippery/sliding/fluxing; all is *guess*, as there is no criterion or ultimate or absolute or finality or premise for anything). The Fortean philosophy is not relativity. It is ultimately something far more startling—*irrelativity*.

The “explanations” of the scientific mind of all the super-normal phenomena on this earth—including almost all of the “normal” phenomena, whether it is biology, meteorology, or you and me—are analyzed unmercifully by Fort and torn to pieces. The scientific mind is as much a victim of collective hallucination and logical, excluding bias as are the minds that would swear they saw a sea-serpent set sail from the moon.

Whatever **is**, is incredible. Life itself is an incredible thing. Today, science itself is going Fortward. Its dogmas are crumbling to bits. Its hard-and-fast universe of fact is giving way to a universe of fantasy, myth, incredible possibilities and unknown modes of life.

The poets and the mystics, who never evolve, or devolve, because they stand centralized and stabilized in the incredible and the super-normal, hold the Ark of the Covenant (which may be empty) today, as they always have, against all assaults. Ignored, flouted, ridiculed, we move not nor turn by a hair's breadth from our watch before the Towers of the Imagination. And I say this after forty years of mature consideration: *science is one of the greatest of human superstitions*. Its value is purely utilitarian. When it leaves the ground, it is of value, historically and personally, only in so far as it creates yarns and new fairy stories. If it has no entertainment value—in the manner of Munchausen or Poe—it is of **no** value except to fossilized and technical minds. Without imagination, intuition, insight, vision and willful credulity, it is merely a scavenger of facts without the ability to transmute facts into gorgeous fictions.

The cosmic mysticism of Fort is based on his belief in automatic design and that we on the earth are merely parts of a larger organism, in whose life we participate as a cell does in our own body, and with about as much free will.

This earth is “only part of a wider organization from which it is receiving maintenance in the form of bequests, donations and funds of various kinds”. We are surrounded by countries, seas, mountains, cities, commercial trans-etheric airships and beings who own us, have fought for us among themselves, who are often the authors of supernormal and even everyday phenomena.

Ah, Heer Professor, if you do that too often you'll be excommunicated from the fold. If I am a good reader of faces, I see in Einstein's magnificent head a mystical Puck, a playboy of mathematics, a colossal joker and juggler restrained by inhibitions and university shackles; while Charles Fort, a far greater and more daring mind than Einstein, contains nothing of this showiness in his make-up. He is a man worn down with thirty years of slaving in the libraries of the world for data to fit into a theory which begins where all the Einstein's end. For theory always precedes facts. All facts *must* fit into theories or they are rejected. Man has become an abstract animal; his every movement and motive is based, consciously or unconsciously, on a theory. "Facts" exist because *a priori* theories invent them, not vice versa. A specific theory is the premise of all our "search for truth." And every premise—metaphysical, religious, economic—is based on a personal yarn, our private theory of the Universe, life and destiny, which, again, flows from our special and unique sensibility, which is pre-natal, fatal.

The greatness of Fort lies in this: he says, his astounding cosmology and universe(s)—built out of his data, or vice versa—is *only his personal yarn*. On the threshold of every room of his House of Affirmation stands Doubt. ***He is the enemy of all dogma.***

This universe, I say, is a sailor's yarn. That's all we can affirm—a Yarn-Spinner and an infinite number of yarns. This universe we live in is so completely unknown to us in its smallest and most familiar detail that the whole evolution of man from Thales and the Hindu metaphysicians to Fort and Einstein is the evolution of romantic lies. Of all of them, Fort's sounds the most probable to me, for here is wide-awake occultism, scientific clairvoyance, a shot in the dark—and a far-away scream as though Truth had at least been hit!

To the mental epicurean, there is no greater joy than to run across a new thinker, a new kind of brain, a novel dissociator of ancient and fish-like mental and emotional associations. It is the joy that comes to an astronomer when he discovers a new planet. This mental ecstasy came upon me when, in 1919, I came across "The Book of the Damned," by Charles Fort. As I read it I became more and more conscious of the fact that I was in the presence of a genius who, if he has hit a bull's-eye in his overwhelming deductions, will easily jostle Euclid, Copernicus and Darwin off of their pedestals.

The data that Fort has collected, of which only a small fraction is spread out in his three books, makes this planet look like the dumping ground of the universe. Rains of blood, manna and fish; strange lights in the heavens; fourth and fifth dimensional phenomena of all kinds—in fact, the whole category, or categories, of possessions, and lawless, weird, uncanny, "damned," scientifically-excluded facts, appears here in a long parade that marches and countermarches with thumping and clinching iteration and reiteration before

paramount Reality. Despite the obstacles to such a far-reaching project, it remains within our powers to collectively and personally recover our freedom to live in a social world of our own making, rather than settling for life in an alienating Reality that is intrinsically uninteresting at best and deadly oppressive at worst—precisely because it is not our own.

When we finally begin to realize that each of us in our thousands of daily acts, thoughts and relations weave together the social fabric that makes up the System, then maybe we will be able to take the next step and begin to **live** our actual desires for a change instead of the counterfeit lives we currently settle for.

Talking To Ourselves

By Ben G. Price

Voices in our heads: are they the echoes of our thoughts? Are they the gift of inspiration from a personal muse or god? Or are they the neurological chatter between two hemispheres of a brain that has been traumatized by the pressures of a human population epidemic?

Each of us experiences, almost constantly, one form or another of verbal hallucination. It may be manifested as a song that we “can’t get out of our head,” or as a remembered argument that we keep replaying on a tide of adrenaline, subtly changing the script each time and inserting the witticisms we wish had come to mind, until we are satisfied with the versions we choose to commit to memory. The “voices” may be experienced as the words of a fervent prayer, or as the sound of our own name that makes our heads turn, only to find that no one has called to us and we have constructed the experience from the garbled bits of auditory information that fill a crowded room.

So simple a thing as “thinking” or “remembering” will conjure voices inside of us. Usually, we take them for granted, believing them to be a natural and indivisible part of us. It is only when our attention is forcibly focused on these “voices” that we begin to feel queasy and self-conscious that the innermost company we keep has been exposed to scrutiny. Our thoughts, ruminations, dreams, and fantasies are “personal”. We don’t like being held publically accountable for them.

Popular wisdom has it that the first sign of mental distress occurs when you start talking to yourself. If that’s the case, we are all certainly in trouble. Whether vocalized audibly or not, verbal communication with the self is a commonplace phenomenon. Even when we are not talking to somebody else, we continually “talk to ourselves”. Prelaryngeal verbalizations, in which we short-circuit the actual speaking of words yet subjectively experience serial vocalizations, comprise what most of us mean when we say we are “thinking”. We tend to do this “thinking” using the phonetic representations of “words” that are available in the symbolic coinage of a language generated by a culture.

Subjectively, there seems something valuable and precious about this practice of thinking. Thinking, we are told, validates our very existence. Descartes is credited with dismantling philosophical inquiries prior to his lifetime and replacing what came to be considered metaphysical babble with the simple profundity: “I think, therefore I am.” By accepting this opinion of our subjective ruminations, giving them existential eminence, subsequent generations of thinkers have re-conceptualized our ability to experience our

But there is another kind of mind in the world—rarer today than at any time in the history of the world, therefore all the more precious—which, instead of being covered with fly-paper to catch and kill facts, is composed of millions of cocoon-cells. The facts that fly into them are incubated and nurtured, and out of them come giant butterflies, dragons, and even spiders that catch and eat little scientific (f)lies.

Undeniably, Charles Fort has the Apocalyptic mind. No fact is alive *until* it gets into his brain. And of them and with them he has seen, or nearly seen, the strangest things that any human has observed since William Blake.

The scientific spirit is sublime, one of the glories of man. But the mind of the official scientist—and no other is ever admitted to the councils of these New Rosicrucians—is a one-way street. It takes no chances of colliding with a mystic, an Apocalyptic, a poet, or that curious person who believes that reasoning, mathematics and data are not only not the whole of what we call thought but *the least of it*. Sir James Jeans’ Mathematical God is for tabloid brains. It is a good subway business-man’s yarn, but this universe is irrational, non-mathematical, a stage of daily recurrent miracles. The Universe is, rather, a whimsical Rembrandt-Aeschylus, a Lewis Carroll, or what you will—so long as you conceive of the It as lawless, contradictory, magical. Read Fort’s astounding data and you will see you are living in a Trick-Box.

The case of Fort versus the airless, locked-in scientific mind is that the scientist works with only part of the tool called the mind, the blunt end of the tool: reason. Fort has this to say about Einstein in one of his reality-warping books: “Professor 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.”

Now, in my opinion, the wobbliness of Einstein is to his credit. He really is a mystic à la Fort, but has been imprisoned so long in mathematical jargon that he dare not say so. He’s cowed by reason, figures and the cant of the schools. But sometimes Einstein climbs to a window of his official cell, looks out into the infinite, into the free spaces of the mind, the intuitions, the imagination and apperception, and throws a missive to the Forteans. Here is one of Einstein’s mental jail-deliveries:

“I believe in intuition and inspiration. At times I feel certain I am right without knowing the reason...For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world.”

Fort, pursuing a method of science itself—the collection of data—has made the most colossal attempt that I know of to unhorse the astronomers in his three books, “The Book of the Damned,” “New Lands” and “Lo!” These books reveal him to us as a kind of Montaigne of science. Everything is flung open to doubt, including—for Fort is of the higher and superior breed of auto-mockers—his own conclusions and guesses. Fort knows that everything is subjective and personal. “Smooth little ponds,” he says, “reflect judiciously, but torrents flash their own images.”

In the torrent of Fort’s ideas, epigrams, satiric explosions and his data of curious happenings on the earth and in the heavens above there flashes back to me the mind of a forerunner, more gifted than any man of his time, as profoundly and authentically an unaccountable variation from the American writing and thinking herd as Poe, Robinson Jeffers and Clark Ashton Smith, or as James Joyce in Europe. He is, again, closely related to Blake and Whitman. Like the former, he conveys to me the sense of sublime demonic possession, and, like the latter, he has no soil-past but himself: his prenatal psyche cut the thongs of historical continuity.

Fort is not only a great imaginative and revolutionary thinker but he is also a literary artist and vitriolic satirist of the first water. He stands solidly on his data and then levitates like a rocket toward the infinite, taking a route no man has ever taken before in the scientific world, always holding his return tickets—his data—firmly in his fist. And while he flies, he writes—he writes precisely in the rhythm of his thought, which is always the authentic touch and hallmark of the original, the individual, the genius. This style, this rhythm, is cometary, like a rain of celestial bulletins heralding news such as you or I never heard of before, more marvelous than any romance you ever read—and, most marvelous of all, not only plausible but carrying the ring of a certainty to come!

And this man Fort is two-fisted, make no mistake about that! He has challenged “bullies of science,” “the established witchcraft,” the cock-and-bull astronomers, the slow-moving caution that gets nowhere, and those delightful yarn-spinners, Einstein, Eddington, and so-and-so, to battle. But these master yarn-spinners will never admit the existence of Charles Fort, for he fights with a weapon, among his many weapons, against which official science has no armor: *ridicule*. Besides, he, too, has his yarn—a yarn spun on the looms of Apocalyptic vision. Of this spinning come not Euclids and Einsteins but Revelations and Shakespeares.

We laugh at the Apocalyptic Vision today. That is because the scientific mind is a perfect treasure-house of cosmological ignorance. We have our eyes so widely open that we can see only the visible. Facts, like a lot of flies, blow into our minds, get stuck on the flypaper of our recording apparatus, and, after a few hopelessly feeble efforts, die.

own existence and survival as entities as inextricably dependent upon the prelaryngeal manipulation of verbal symbols. This change-of-mind, which really amounts to a revolution in human consciousness, has mesmerized us by attributing deific powers to humanity’s most intimate confidant: his own brain.

In a sense, this mental revolution is only a restatement of a primitive mindset that had gods talking directly to men, but in a new dialectic all the same. In accepting the existential opinion formalized by Descartes, we continue to omit any recognition of the cultural malleability of our mentality. By internalizing the existential identity of thought, we institutionalize our subjective perceptions as being true representatives of “**what is.**” This has been the practical outcome and, in part, may account for the rise in the popular sense of “Individualism”, as well as the ease with which a growing number of individuals question “official” pronouncements of what is true. That other minds in the past have and presently continue to perceive things much differently does not seem to breach the certainty we espouse for our own opinions. When we are confronted by others who do not share our thoughts but espouse “weird views” that contradict them, we react as though those variant thoughts are frontal assaults not merely on our convictions, but also on our existence and survival. Heresy is, to us, as much a biological threat as an ideological one. It is the logical outcome of our trust in Descartes, and hence ourselves.

How devastating to the ego, to the sense of certainty and security, would be the notion that we are not identical with our own thoughts! Such would be the blasphemy against our fundamental beliefs and against the self-coronation of our deified individuality that we would seek to evade the concept at all costs, disprove it through emotional rationalizations, and finally, deny that the subject had ever been broached. Any hint that the chatter going on between our ears might be inaccurate, ungentle, or even delusional is met with hostility, understandably. Given our dogmatic linkage between what we think and what we are, our instinctual reaction is adrenal and defensive. Every ego flies the banner: “Don’t tread on my opinions,” and defends those opinions with everything from blissful ignorance to violence against non-identical opinions. It is as though our brains have developed an organic defense mechanism to reject transplantation of ideas.

Another thing that does not seem to occur to us regularly is that our thoughts, the very ones we defend so vigorously, are not our own in large measure. They are bestowed on us, defined first in their form by the grammar and rules of expression. Secondly, our thoughts are defined (given finite bounds) by the limited variety of symbols in our language. The third and most hideous way that our thoughts are defined and formed by something other than “ourselves” is through social intervention into the individual psyche.

The mandatory admission of certain "truths" and the strict adherence to certain "taboos" effectively box-in any longing for creative and individualized mentation. Fourthly, the constant blurring of distinctions between what symbols we are left to reason with is a familiar rhetorical tool used by the influential in order to manipulate the thoughts we do manage to put together in our heads. A quick reference to George Orwell's appendix to his novel *1984* will be quite instructive.

Each "healthy" individual, as defined by society's sycophants, acts as a resonator of socially acceptable thought. Mental health is recognized by the A.M.A. and syndicated psychological columnists as the ability of the individual mind to vibrate sympathetically, like a tuning fork, to society's "keynote" speakers and authorities.

That the music of our cranial spheres does not emanate from the gods, nor leap heroically into existence out of our very being, is a disconcerting thought to some. If we are conditioned to think certain thoughts on cue, as was Pavlov's dog conditioned to the dinner bell, are we any better than trained dogs?

The authorities and experts don't want us to know it, but when we identify our true selves with the mental constructs into which we have been "educated" and conditioned, without being aware of the real source of those mental constructs, we sow the seeds of paradox and personal turmoil. Professional psychologists frustrate themselves trying to eradicate from popular consciousness the idea of a "split-personality" as the hallmark of severe mental illness. For as much as they try to impress upon us that this is an erroneous popular understanding of psychological disorders, there is strong popular identification with the notion that a mind can be at odds with "sane" society, and thus "split". What is at odds in such cases is the perceived self-interest of the "patient" and the attempted imposition of pre-fab perceptions by society. Psychosis may be the healthy reaction of a mind defending itself from forceful obliteration.

Are the thoughts we have the thoughts we are allowed to have? And if our thoughts are who we are, then are we merely who we are permitted to be? Have they, as Thomas Pynchon put it, busted the sod prairies of our brains, tilled and sown them, and subsidized us not to grow anything of our own?

The "talking heads" of television anchormen, as they interpret and critique for us the doings in the world out there, are but relay stations, transmitting the communal image to be subjectively experienced as the world "in here," that is, in the talking heads we carry around on our shoulders.

The voices that are allowed to reverberate in our heads are catechetical and instructive as to permissible attitudes, perceptions, and behavior. Society

Whatever is tends to standardization, or what Charles Fort calls "conventionalization". A supreme mental and physical laziness dominates all things. Whatever exists seems, dog-like, to be looking for a master, a law to govern it. This tendency of all things to dogmatize, herd, huddle, to become settled in grooves, to get set in their ways may be an expression of the immanent horror of loneliness. I do not know—it is an ultimate I cannot penetrate. But this I can assert as a universal principle: that all that lives tends at each minute in its life to fossilization. The Promethean, satanic, genius-dowered being is the perpetual protest against this body of eternal death.

Charles Fort is the incarnation of this protest against the popery of science.

Once theology and metaphysics attempted to standardize the mind of man. Brunos, Spinozas, Darwins, Nietzsches and Schopenhauers broke through. Now science, having licked theology and pseudo-metaphysics almost to a frazzle, is attempting in its turn to Fascize the human mind. Professional, professorial and official science is the new Moloch. Reason, experience, and hard-boiled facts are the new Trinity. Everything in the universe, including ourselves of course, is to be filed, carded, indexed, labelled and "explained". When science changes its mind, when it reverses itself, it merely re-letters the pigeonholes and juggles the contents. And it plays at this game as though the very existence of God, time, space and humanity was dependent on these juvenile pastimes! To question the divinity of science is now the new blasphemy.

We do not know how strange this world is in which we are living—how weird and unearthly we humans are—because familiarity, convention, routine and repetition have dulled the infantile emotions of surprise and wonder in us. The Kingdom of God (by which I mean the Kingdom of Eternal Amazement and Doubt) is still, as ever, the heritage of little children and poets.

Charles Fort, anathema among all professional scientists and the mere machine-brained mathematicians, is of this kingdom. He is the Momus, the Rabelais of astronomy and astrophysics. He is a celestial horse-laugh in the House of Rigmarole. In the closed corporation of professors he is Tyl Eulenspiegel perched on the windowsill hurling all sorts of whimsical questions at them and waving over seventy-five thousand "facts" at them, facts taken from everywhere—including their own publications—that do not "fit in" with their dead reckonings.

Among these monstrosities of reason—men who mistake the technique of thinking for thought and who have not an ounce of creative imagination—Fort must appear to be a tremendous throw-back to the species-categories of wonder, ignorance, imagination and clairvoyant penetration. Which, indeed, he is. For the road to truth is always backwards to the poet and the child.

Charles Fort: The Puck of Mysticism

by Benjamin De Casseres

*Charles Fort (1874-1932) is best known today as the first prolific systematic collector of anomalous and paranormal data. Fort referred to such anomalies as "damned data" – facts rejected or suppressed by mainstream scientists because they don't fit into their logical theories and rational categories. His main interest in scientific hypotheses was to criticize and ridicule the **very process** of theorizing and the static, regulated, and humorless plight of science professionals who are locked in a prison-house of perceptions, ruled by the highly enforced dictates and well policed precepts of a few science hierarchs.*

*Fort understood that scientific theories are models, not pictures, of reality, but he considered most of the existing ones to be little more than superstitions and myths and set out to embarrass the scientific orthodoxy by collecting stories on "the borderland between fact and fantasy" which science could not explain or **explain away** (Examples include thousands of frogs raining from the sky, tornado storms of swirling fish, inscriptions on meteorites, circular markings on the mountains of different continents, and black snow—all culled from credible scientific journals). What Fort's data reveals is the folly of linear thought in a world of wild mystery and untamable chaos—a free, ecstatic, singing chaos that relentlessly storms the fortress of rigid belief and sends our "certainties" reeling against the doors that open onto 'something other'. The liberating aspect of Fort's four-volume collection of anomalies is its beguiling and destabilizing influence on the solidity of stifling mechanistic paradigms (and ultimately, "paradigm-warfare" is what anarchism is all about). Fort's anomalies reveal life as it really is: complex, chaotic, and most likely unplumbable by the human mind. Eroding fast are the philosophical foundation stones of the clockwork universe; the idea that nature is "in balance", that geological processes are uniformitarian, that life evolved in small, incremental steps, and that the cosmos is deterministic.*

*But to equate Charles Fort with anomalies only is a complete misrepresentation. Fort himself considered the ultimate scope of his work to be "experiments with the structure of knowledge" and fancied himself a **true** skeptic, one who opposes all forms of dogmatism, believes nothing, and does not take an ideological position on anything; he also claimed to be an "intermediatist," one who believes nothing is real and nothing is unreal, and that "all phenomena are approximations one way or the other between realness and unrealness." And it is in this role, as jovial critic of ideological thinking, that Fort is celebrated in the following essay by his close friend and fellow imp of the perverse, Benjamin De Casseres.*

is the brain's F.C.C., and it will take away our license to receive and transmit if we break its rules.

Most of us are true believers of one stripe or another, believing in any dogma, any expert, any cause as manifestly more legitimate than our own unfiltered perceptions. We are conditioned to live the catechetical rather than the gnostic life. We can't "hear ourselves think" over the constant chatter of internalized injunctions and propaganda. We are all talk. Subtly, we have been taught that life is not a participatory sport.

"Talking to ourselves," or "thinking," according to the hypocritical defenders of the consensus, is one of the healthiest things we can do. It actively reinforces, through repetition, our verbal social conditioning. "Reality-testing" among suspect clients sets off alarms in the suspicious minds of society's watch-dog "mental health professionals," who don't know that the "reality" they inquisitorially defend against close scrutiny by the "insane" (unsanitary thinkers) is a mere consensus, not an absolute.

The more intrepid among us may prefer to challenge the consensus, despite the dangers of openly doing so. There is good evidence that once a mind becomes convinced that the greater portion of its thoughts and opinions have not been self-generated, but in fact comprise a cultural artifact imprinted upon the organ of perception, this knowledge is sufficient to begin a process of self-discovery. The Socratic dictum to "know thyself" loses some of the tarnish of a cliché and takes on new life once there is a realization that thought is not necessarily "self". The process of "brainwashing," opinions of society to the contrary notwithstanding, can indeed have a larval effect. Becoming conscious of one's true self would seem to be a liberating, anti-establishment experience worth pursuing.

Realism

By Wolfi Landstreicher

“an extremely basic observation imposes itself nothing is as useless as the real”

- Georges Henein

Let's get one thing out of the way immediately: *realism is an ideology*. In every authoritarian society it has been one of the ideological tools of the rulers. In the present society, it is one of their most important tools for molding social consensus, on par with the democratic ideology. So it is never surprising when those who hold power or those who willingly accept their own servitude tell us to “be realistic”. After all, indomitable and challenging ideas, wild and creative desires, and intoxicating and playful dreams are a threat to the stability of their world, a threat that they don't care to face.

But what is the ideology of realism? It is the ideology that declares that reality as we know it is inevitable. And let's be clear right away, when the adherents of realism speak of the inevitable, they are not just talking about obvious material realities, such as the fact that human beings can't eat granite or hike from New York City to Lisbon across the bottom of the Atlantic. They wouldn't even waste their time telling anyone they encountered attempting such things to “be realistic”; they'd just send them off to some mind-quack or lock them up in a loony bin. No, the reality that they declare to be inevitable is the social, political and economic reality that surrounds us. Starting from this presumed inevitability (which in our times is usually considered as a contextual or historical inevitability), they dismiss any refusal to accept the impositions of the existing reality and to mold one's life and activities to its requirements as dogmatic purism or even mad delusion. For the realist, there is only one way to face reality, and that is to accept it.

The ideological power of realism stems from the fact that reality really cannot simply be ignored. Those who try to do so eventually find it slapping them hard in the face. But those who accept the one way of facing reality that realism allows will be obliged to conform to its demands and obey the dictates of the existing world. This is why the masters of this world love to promote realism, and their willing slaves embrace it. This is also why I am always a bit taken aback when certain anarchists start to tell me to “be realistic”.

I would like to think that the anarchists who say this mean something different from the masters and their willing slaves. After all, I am quite familiar with the slogan from May 1968 in France: “Be realistic, demand the impossible!” But nothing I have heard from present-day “realistic” anarchists has shown any evidence of an interest in the sort of explosive expansion of the real beyond all its social boundaries that this slogan implied. Quite the

Our aim is wakefulness. Our enemy is dreamless sleep. To become conscious of our participation in the creation of the phenomenal world is to pass from passive experience—perception as *impressions on a passive mind*—to conscious creation and creative freedom.

open-ended consciousness), but the first essential act towards tearing down the dark curtain and the cognitive walls is always the overthrow of **belief** and the establishment of personal dominion over ideas, rather than the other way around.

Belief is a vehicle by which ideas gain control over people's minds and therefore their lives, as the chief function of belief is to **shape** thought. Ideology (an ensemble of beliefs) keeps people at a level of mental mediocrity easily manipulated by the perceptual sorcerers who have mastered the mystifying elements and commonplace prejudices needed to exploit them. Ideologies alienate the mind from its own thoughts and preclude any unhampered spontaneous relationship with that which the ideology tries to explain. Ideologies are rigid blueprints that seek to reduce the complexity of life's landscape (which is always manifest in *events, activity* and *continuous creation/destruction*) to inflexible and sacred formulas.

Conscious egoism and *critical self-theory* are two (potent) methods to avoid lapsing into *ideology*, or the self-deluded security of dead thought in a universe of relentless flux. Every ideology is a mental murder, a reduction of dynamic living processes to static classifications. In a busy, buzzing universe where no two snowflakes are identical, and no two trees are identical, and no two people are identical—and, indeed, the smallest sub-atomic particle is not even identical with itself from one micro-second to the next—every card-index system is a delusion and a colonization of the psyche. Writers like Max Stirner, James L. Walker, Robert Anton Wilson, William S. Burroughs, and Austin Osman Spare all provide suggestive tools to neutralize and challenge the ideological essence of the accepted, socially-agreed upon Paramount Reality. Magick (or occult physics) is another door through which to invade and shape the perceptual structure of "society"—a way to apply a non-linear fragmenting process to every aspect of perception, behavior, ideology, belief and "reality" in order to confound and jar the System's manipulation of experience and violation of self-respect.

Society's most effective weapon against this sort of "reality engineering" is to simply keep people in the dark about how to use weapons they already possess (such as imagination, creativity, entheogens, subversion, and humor) and inhibit the ludic restructuring of perception. Experiential anarchy is a means to contest the learned complacency regarding our own existence and to **play against** society's "reality", thereby discovering its weaknesses and where it strikes back. These liberating experiments into unknown territory put the power and responsibility for re-inventing reality back into the hands of the individual and out of the reach of those who would limit us to a sterile, scripted life (comparable to fire encased in stone), fully incorporated into the general consensus.

opposite. The realism that these anarchists are calling for is a reining in of ideas and actions, dreams and desires in the face of imposed realities. So this realism is basically the same as the realism of the masters and willing slaves of this world.

To understand what might draw some anarchists to accept, even if only temporarily, this ruling ideology that is so contrary to any form of rebellion, it is necessary to recognize that far too many anarchists are soft-hearted, soft-headed humanitarians, animalists or environmentalists. They tend to mistake charity for solidarity. In other words, they are altruists. Their altruism is the key to how realism tames them.

When anarchists call for realism, it is almost always in the face of a perceived situation of urgency—sometimes of "moral urgency" like experimentation on animals, sometimes ongoing emergencies like environmental devastation, sometimes more immediate emergencies like the current economic catastrophe or specific incidences of state repression. Combined with the altruism of so many anarchists, this sense of urgency leads to the feeling that one has to do "whatever is necessary" to alleviate the immediate situation. The basic argument is that since there isn't going to be a revolution any time soon, we have to deal with these urgent situations within the context of the current social reality. How far specific anarchist realists are willing to go in this conformity to the present social and political reality varies. I have heard self-proclaimed anarchists use it to justify petitioning the government, writing letters to various authorities to affect their decisions, litigating, promoting legislation, voting and so on. One anarchist I knew even tried to justify Paul Watson's (the captain of the Sea Shepherd) work with certain police forces in South American against marine poachers in the name of the urgent need to protect endangered marine animals. So this sense of urgency combines with altruism to make these "realistic" anarchists willing to sacrifice themselves to... *the existing social order*. Any fierce and challenging ideas, any wild, utopian desires, any intoxicating, playful dreams are suppressed in the name of being realistic. A stark and unimaginative morality of altruistic pragmatism replaces the resolute, egoistic amorality of anarchic revolt.

So the basic premise of realism doesn't change when anarchists embrace it. Anarchist realists also make their choices based on the assumption that there is only one way to face reality and that is to accept it. But to the extent that one accepts a reality based on domination, exploitation, authority, hierarchy, representation... *one is not an anarchist*. The anarchist realist is caught in an inescapable contradiction.

But, contrary to the claims of the ideologues of realism, there is another way to face reality: *as its implacable enemy*. I have my ideas, my dreams, my desires. They are certainly not realistic, but they are *my own*. To give them

up would be to give myself up, and I am not going to do that. This opposition is precisely what puts me at odds with the existing world. And this conflict is inevitable, because I choose to make it so by my refusal to surrender. Thus, I grasp my ideas, my dreams, my desires as weapons to use against this world, and the only urgency I recognize is that of my own desire to be the free creator of my life. So I will face reality with weapons in hand, aiming to destroy it... to destroy the unconscious social consensus, the endless conformity and obedience that create the present reality. Because I want to begin *immediately* to shape my life and my world on my own terms, in relation, interaction and sometimes conflict with other lives and other worlds that refuse to bow to the demand to be realistic. And this can only be done in unrelenting conflict with the reality that rules now.

is the tacit accord of most participants in a given society to accept multiple limits and reductions to their senses, awareness, memories, imaginations and passions in order to maintain the existing regime's daily functioning (never for a second imagining that they might be perceiving only a fraction of the percentage of input available to their natural and extended sensory equipment). "Normalcy", "conformity", "orthodoxy", etc., are terms that serve **false unity** well by inculcating a fear of our own human fluidity...and the flux of existence in general.

The first rule of every law-and-order system is to trivialize/demonize/outlaw the dangerous concepts of Self, Individual Aims, Lawless Subjectivity and Personal Knowledge. Thinking for Yourself is heretical, treasonous, blasphemous (in fact, thinking at all is discouraged or manipulated into the passive function of *holding thoughts*). For a monotonous culture and society to maintain one preeminent worldview, a set of sublimated myths that recalculates every individual experience into a pattern of conclusions about "reality" identical to our neighbors (reality as a social construction and constriction), it becomes imperative to constantly reinforce the onward progression toward uniformity, the suppression of individuality, the pressure of peer groups, the need to belong, and the dread of loneliness through the symbolic codes and mimetic techniques of mass media.

Yet the tools exist (and have *long* existed) to break down and short-circuit the expected, inherited values and assumptions of Control and begin to exert more manipulative pressure than we are led to believe is possible on Society's "reality". The centuries-old psychedelic underground (as one prescient example) has developed techniques to suspend/erase the imprinted and conditioned brain circuits that normally control perception/thoughts/emotion and disintegrate "reality" as a set of definitions (dead matter consolidated in simple location) by reducing it to a fluctuating chaos—transient and perpetually renewed (though this experience will seem either frightening or exhilarating, depending on how rigidly you believed your previous map of **reality** contained "all" of the multiverse). The techniques and processes alluded to (when constantly reanalyzed to check against laziness and habit for its own sake) have the potential to optimize the evolution and expansion of the individual—enabling them to fight back against subservience and adherence to any and all of the preconceptions and inherited constraints that directly or indirectly bolster the status quo. Even anarchists with the narrow, obsessive focus of "smashing capitalism" would do well to utilize some of these techniques to strengthen their subjective dimensions in order to win their objective goals; what is required to actually do this is freedom from prior conditioning and a willingness to take charge of our ontological emancipation and self-empowerment. There are quite a few points of departure from consensus reality (jumping-off points that make the leap from conformity to

But "reality" is always plural and mutable. The only "realities" that we actually experience and can talk meaningfully about are perceived realities, experienced realities, existential realities – realities involving ourselves as editors – and they are all relative to the observer, fluctuating, evolving, capable of being magnified and enriched, moving from low resolution to hi-fi, and do not fit together like the pieces of a jig-saw into one single Reality with a capital R. Rather, they cast illumination upon one another by contrast, like the paintings in a large museum, or the different symphonic styles of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler.

What my experiments demonstrate – what all such experiments throughout history have demonstrated – is simply that while our models of "reality" are very small and tidy, the universe of experience is huge and untidy, and no model can ever include all the huge untidiness perceived by uncensored consciousness.

Once the fiction of one 'reality' dies as a concept, and the operational fact of 'realities' (plural) becomes generally recognized, we might all discover that human beings can actually live together without constantly making war over who has the 'real reality'.

-Robert Anton Wilson

A dominant version of "reality" is relatively easy to manufacture and maintain because most domesticated humans in their waking consciousness are the equivalent of machines or sheep, reacting mechanically to external influences and stimuli, which accumulatively induces an even deeper state of clouded semi-awareness or sleep. Very few examine their vulnerability to herd-suggestions (of various kinds) or the collective hypnosis in which they are enmeshed. Their every perception is influenced, formed, and structured by the habitual coding habits—the numero-semantic game habits—of the fixed social configuration governing them. Cultural stability is maintained far less by force than by antagonistically preventing people from seeing that the Roles, Rules, Goals, Language and Values of society are merely *game structures* (armies and police are usually only secondary tactics of Control). Cultural and political institutions encourage the delusion that social-hive games have inescapable givens—involving unchangeable laws—and thereby monopolize the construction of "reality".

All authority is a function of coding, of game rules. The mechanism by which authority and submission are implanted in the human mind is the coding of perception. The mesh of language (or of any system of human abstracting) gives to our mental constructs the structure of the symbol system into which it is coded, just as a mapmaker colors a nation purple not because it "is" purple, but because his code demands it. Consensus reality

Absolute Divergence From The Order of Consensus

by Ludo

"The man who cannot visualize a horse galloping on a tomato is an idiot."

-Andre Breton

Reality, grown so thick with itself, became a fungus centuries ago with inbred spores and long reaching strands that have become the vampiric architecture of experience in the human realm. Thriving on dampened spirits in the totally human swamp, the fungus is the protective covering for the swamp, made to keep the animal from moving around in it as it slowly consumes its hosts, leaving lifeless automatons where biological entities once thrived.

The fungus was identified by Freud in the early 20th century and termed "the Reality Principle", though it was only an innocuous growth at one time. Freud despaired that its effects on human potentiality have grown increasingly negative as it has driven the animalistic aspect of humans—"the pleasure principle"—into a dead-end alley, and is slithering along now trying to finish the job, terminally.

The Reality Principle is a false boundary drawn between inside and outside; subject and object; actual and imaginary; physical and mental; internal and external. It is the keeper of the perceptual prison where theatrical appearance—something that is being superficially seen and heard by others as by ourselves—constitutes "reality". The Reality Principle requires that we reason out our existence by conforming our identities to the existing social system, while the Pleasure Principle is centered in spontaneity and represents what all creatures (indeed, the universe itself) have as their primal mode of activity: play. Pleasure is the world playing with itself and the lack or absence of play in "reality" is the frustrated tension which daily reproduces the hyper-rationalized, **de-passioned** world of domestication. Norman O. Brown, in his sublime *Life Against Death*, points out that the "reality" and pleasure principles were united once, but were split with the development of civilization and since then the unconscious goal of humanity is its return to the state enjoyed in childhood—"the polymorphously erotic".

In civilization this is expressed (more or less degradedly, it is true) in the *imaginative energy* every individual unleashes every night in the form of dreams. And it is this flagrant contradiction between dream-life and waking-life that serves as the pivot of the misery of the human condition. Everyone knows that there are always beasts larger than life breaking loose from their cages; that undiscovered continents continue to blossom forth at one's fingertips; that the Imagination, in short, is an imperishable and inexhaustible

well. Yet the ignominious farce of life in the “real world”, with its homilies on cradles and graves, the incessant stammering of the stock exchange and the intolerable omnipotence of the alarm clock, goes on day after agonizing day. Civilization is a well-organized conspiracy to enslave our consciousness. We have been robbed blind by its brutal sensory conditioning, which has forced us to accept a grim officious “reality” that dazes us into robot dullness and commands us to be fooled by theatrical stage sets. Civilized “reality” is a non-participating consciousness (consciousness as separation, as dualism, as definition and prison) that turns us into fraudulent actors in a fake show.

Currently only a very small minority manifests its total disdain for the paltry joys auctioned off by the racketeers in charge of “reality” and the fact remains that serious discussion regarding self-determination (unburdened by the usual morbid concessions) is impossible with anyone else. Little by little, however, this minority is growing and its self-confidence expanding. In the void-like ghettos, in the so-called schools, at the hated jobs and even in the military barracks, a few defiant individuals are raising insolent questions and ruthless challenges about the whole stinking parade of patriotism, the flag, materialism, God and everything having to do with religion, cops, the “moral value” of work, government, civilization, etc.. Furthermore, this insubordination to “reality” has existed for a long time and on occasion, ushers into the world movements dedicated to smashing the dismal, restrictive, monotonous and cowardly “dominant reality” that is so inimical to the development of free lives. Anarchism (without its leftist and political baggage) is one such outpost of resistance. Surrealism is another...

Surrealism's Attack on the Reality-Principle

When Andre Breton founded Surrealism in 1924 it was with the understanding that the pleasure principle has been repressed by the existing governing systems to such an extent that for the majority of people, happiness, freedom and passion were mostly dreams lurking only in a padlocked unconscious. Breton and the other early surrealists felt that they had discovered the key to unblocking repressed unconscious material and instincts and that **key** was the play impulse or **spontaneity**. They rediscovered what Taoists, lunatics and the looters of Rome already noted—that unbridled passion quite naturally transforms the mind, energizes the body and “magically” begins to alter external “reality”. They rediscovered Desire and its powers.

The surrealists realized that the reality principle, with the supremacy of intellect over feeling in the individual, had the upper hand in defining “reality” and sought to transform human society out of the *order of reason* and into the *order of sensuousness*, and invoke a world where desire and play are no

longer subservient to duty and work—a world of unrestricted play where no distinction is drawn between wish and deed. Breton called for the “great refusal” of what is taken for existence in order to evoke and cultivate the dream element within the experience of everyday life. With passionate extremism, the early surrealists embraced not only the basic orientation but also the entire **spirit** in the principle of *absolute divergence* originally elaborated by Charles Fourier. A profound and lyrical radicalization of Cartesian doubt, *absolute divergence* rejects every “eternal value” of civilization, along with every justification for human misery. At its optimum, surrealism was a radical refusal of the government of the reality-principle, a systematic illumination of the hidden places and a progressive darkening of the rest—a perpetual promenade right in the forbidden zone.

Sadly, many of the first generation surrealists disgracefully succumbed to the reality-principle themselves in 1926 when they aligned themselves with the Communist Party (it's hard to think of anything more antithetical to the larger surrealist project of *transforming reality itself* than state communism). This was far from a unanimous decision and there were many defections from the movement in response to this inanity. Antonin Artaud, one of the dissenting voices, had this to say about Breton's shift towards political pragmatism:

“I had always thought that such an independent movement as Surrealism was not susceptible to the ordinary processes of logic. Did Surrealism in order to survive have to involve itself in a factual revolt concerning the eight-hour day or the fight against inflation? What a joke and what baseness of soul!”

The Surrealist impulse eventually recovered from this ill-conceived detour into realpolitik and today continues to overstep the conventional boundaries of art and poetry and work its magic (in a modest way) against the dominant Reality. Yet Surrealism and Fourier's uncompromising principle of Absolute Divergence are only two approaches to the construction/dismantlement/manipulation of Reality and it might be interesting and instructive to examine others (which are as infinite and varied as “realities” themselves).

The Game of Reality Engineering

“Reality” is a word in the English language which happens to be (a) a noun and (b) singular. Thinking in the English language (and in cognate Indo-European languages) therefore subliminally programs us to conceptualize “reality” as one block-like entity, sort of like a huge New York skyscraper, in which every part is just another “room” within the same building. This linguistic program is so pervasive that most people cannot “think” outside it at all, and when one tries to offer a different perspective they imagine one is talking gibberish.