

La pensée de Charles Fort à travers ses œuvres

A côté de la compilation d'anecdotes et de témoignages relatifs à des phénomènes inexplicables et des bizarreries en tout genre, Charles Fort a développé une vision du monde bien particulière, un discours qui porte sur le réel et sur la faiblesse congénitale de l'être humain à en rendre compte de manière objective, y compris via "la science moderne". Car il ne faut pas s'y tromper, Fort ne bataillait pas tant contre l'idée de science en général, contre la *méthode scientifique* en elle-même, que contre ce qu'il appelle toujours "la science moderne" ("modern science" dans le texte original), c'est-à-dire contre ce qu'était devenue la science à l'époque où il rédige ses livres (les années 1920 et 1930). Revenir sur ce contexte de la science américaine, institutionnalisée, industrialisée, et se croyant finalement triomphante (de la nature, mais pas seulement), sera d'ailleurs nécessaire pour bien comprendre la démarche de Charles Fort.

Mais Fort n'a pas jugé utile de rassembler ses réflexions en un volume particulier, sans doute n'avait-il pas lui-même conscience de développer cette sorte de philosophie sauvage, dans sa forme comme dans son fond. Dans son fond étant donnée la singulière perception de notre perception du monde qu'il y développe, et dans sa forme puisqu'il exprime les éléments de cette pensée à travers ses quatre livres publiés, comme de simples réflexions introductives ou qui font lien entre deux récits ou témoignages.

Cette page regroupe ces pièces du puzzle de la philosophie fortéenne, à partir des livres *Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931) et *Wild Talents* (1932). Les numéros de page font référence aux éditions originales.



Attention, cette page est un "work in progress", au gré de mes relectures de Fort.

Extraits de *The Book of the Damned*

I conceive of one inter-continuous nexus, in which and of which, all seeming things are only different expressions, but in which all things are localizations of one attempt to break away and become real things, or to establish entity or positive difference or final demarcation or unmodified independance - or personality or soul, as it is called in human phenomena. That anything that tries to establish itself as a real, or positive, or absolute system, government, organization, self, soul, entity, individuality, can so attempt only by drawing a line about itself, or about the inclusions that constitute itself, and damning or excluding, or breaking away from, all other "things": That, if it does not so act, it can not seem to be; That, if it does so act, just as would one who draws a circle in the sea, including a few waves, saying that the other waves, with which the included are continuous, are positively different, and stakes his life upon maintaining that the admitted and the damned are positively different. BotD 10

Our general expression: That the state that is commonly and absurdly called "existence" is a flow, or a current, or an attempt, from negativeness to positiveness, and is intermediate to both. By positiveness we mean:: Harmony, equilibrium, order, regularity, stability, consistency, unity, realness, system, government, organization, liberty, independance, soul, self, personality, entity, individuality, truth, beauty, justice, perfection, definiteness. That all that is called development, progress, or evolution is movement toward, or attempt toward, this state of which, or for aspects of which, there are so many names, all of which are summed up in the one word "positiveness". BotD, 11

I conceive of one inte-continuous nexus, which expresses itself in astronomic phenomena, and chemic, biologic, psychic, sociologic: that is is everywhere striving to localize positiveness: that to this attempt in various in various fields of phenomena - which are only quasi-different - we give different names. We speak of the "system" of the planets, and not of their "government": but in considering a store, for instance, and its management, we see that the words are interchangeable. It used to be customary to speak of chemic equilibrium, but not of social equilibrium: that false demarcation has been broken down. BotD 11

By "beauty", I mean that which seems complete. Obversely, that the incomplete, or the mutilated, is the ugly. Venus de Milo. To a child she is ugly. When a mind adjusts to thinking of her as a completeness, even though, by physiologic standards, incomplete, she is beautiful. A hand thought of only as a hand, may seem beautiful. Found on a battlefield - obviously a part - not beautiful. BotD 12

The religious and their idea or ideal of the soul. They mean distinct, stable entity, or a state that is independent, and note a mere flux of vibrations or complex of reactions to environment, continuous with environment, merging away with an infinitude of other interdependent complexes. But the only thing that would not merge away into something else would be that besides which there is nothing else. BotD 13

That Truth is only another name for the positive state, or that the quest for Truth, is the attempt to achieve positiveness. (...) But Truth is that besides which there is nothing: nothing to modify it, nothing to question it, nothing to form an exception: the all-inclusive, the complete. By Truth I mean the Universal. (...) All attempts to find Truth in the special are attempts to find the universal in the local. BotD 13

Equilibrium is the Universal, or that which has nothing external to derange it. But that all that we call "being" is motion: and that all motion is the expression, not of equilibrium, but of equilibrating, or of equilibrium unattained: that life-motions are expressions of equilibrium unattained: that all thought relates to the unattained: that to have what is called being in our quasi-state, is not to be in the positive sense, or is to be intermediate to Equilibrium and Inequilibrium. BotD 14

We conceive of all "things" as occupying gradations, or steps in series between positiveness and negativeness, or realness and unrealness: that some seeming things are more nearly consistent, just, beautiful, unified, individual, harmonious, stable - than others. 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. BofD 17

Extraits de Wild Talents

I do not think. I have never had a thought. Therefore something or another. I do not think, but thoughts occur in what is said to be « my » mind-thought, instead of being « in » it, they are it - just as inhabitants do not occur in a city, but are the city. There is a governing tendency among these thoughts, just as there is among people in any community, or as there is in the movements of the planets, or in the arrangements of cells constituting a plant, or an animal. So far as goes any awareness of « mine », « I » have no soul, no self, no entity, thought at times of something like a harmonization of « my » elements, « I » approximate to a state of unified being. WT 103

In recent years I have noted much that has impressed upon my mind the thought that religionists have taken over many phenomena, as exclusively their own - have colored and discredited with their emotional explanations - but that someday some of these occurrences will be rescued from theological interpretations and exploitations, and will be the subject-matter of: new enlightenments and new dogmas, new progresses, delusions, freedoms, and tyrannies. I incline to the acceptance of many stories of miracles, but think that these miracles would have occurred, if this earth had been inhabited by atheists. WT 126

But I am suspicious of all this wisdom, because it makes for humility and contentment. These thoughts are community-thoughts, and tend to suppress the individual. They are corollaries of mechanistic philosophy, and I represent revolt against mechanistic philosophy, not as applying to a great deal, but as absolute. (...) In our existence of law-lawness, I conceive of two magics: one as representing unknown law, and the other as expressing lawlessness. WT 136

If I give somebody 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 services - but automobiles and crime and a million exasperations. There are persons who think they see clear advantages in the use of a telephone - then the telephone rings. WT 141

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