

THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC PHENOMENA AT SANTA ISABEL-PART I

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AT the close of my last report¹ I referred to the curious phenomena at Santa Isabel, which I consider one of the best episodic sequences ever recorded of anthropomorphic manifestations that may well prove to be related to the UFO Problem.

The very scale of the events, the number of witnesses, and the reputation of the observations, have served, taken together, to nullify any rapid evaluation of the incidents. Scientific objectivity demanded a meticulous analysis such as would enable us to establish the degree of veracity to be attributed to them, even if this meant the risk of a considerable delay in publication of the affair.

After more than a year of personal work on the case and on interviews, we are now of the opinion that we have gathered together a surprising accumulation of previous data which serve as remarkable corroboration that, during the last week of September of 1972, occurrences of a nature that are outside the realm of common human understanding did indeed take place in the Ika-Renault Motor Plant at Santa Isabel, seven kilometres to the southeast of the city of Córdoba, in the Republic of Argentina.

A: The first anthropomorphic phenomenon

When the happenings at Santa Isabel first became known publicly through the testimony of two of the parties involved (Sr. Moreno and Sr. Rodriguez),² we set about contacting certain people in the management of the firm in question, with a view to getting them interested in the idea of a possible reconstruction of the events in situ.

In the course of our dealings with the firm, we learnt of an earlier incident, known only to the security personnel of the plant, owing to the confidential nature of the matter in view of the identity of the individual who happened to be involved in it.

In the home of Sr. Mario Bidosa (a senior employee of the firm, residing in the town of Alta Gracia, Córdoba) we arranged on October 12, 1972, a personal interview with the eyewitness in question, who lives on the outskirts of that town.

1. Personal details about the witness

This chance eyewitness of the first phenomenon was Sr. Teodoro Merlo, aged 56, an employee at the Santa Isabel Ika-Renault Plant, where he is in charge of the washrooms. He has not even had any primary

education, though he does paintings and sculpture which show that he has a self-taught talent. He is very introvert. In the course of our interview with him, we were quite particularly struck by his extreme humility and his insistence that his experience should not be divulged. He also refused to let us take his photograph. His story contains no contradictions. At all times he spoke with complete confidence. He seems to us to be a sincere and honest person, indeed so much so that he does not consider his experience to be worth discussing.

2. The conditions in which the observation occurred

The phenomenon took place in a section of the plant. (See aerial photograph of same, and also see Fig. 1, which shows the lay-out.)

The date was September 21, 1972. At 5.40 a.m. Sr. Merlo set out for the washrooms of the pressing-shop (see location shown in Fig.1). The internal lay-out of the washrooms is shown in Fig.2.

He had personally locked both access-doors to the washrooms at 1.40 a.m. Although the works technical staff only come in at 7.30 a.m., the maintenance personnel (boilermen, cleaners, etc.) come in at 6.00 a.m., for which reason it is necessary to get the washrooms ready early.

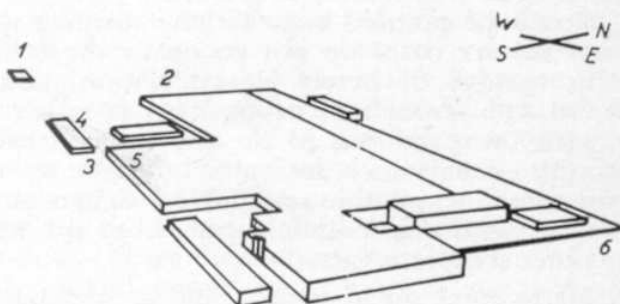


Figure 1: Plan of the Plant

1. Pressing shop washrooms (Merlo incident)
2. Moreno incident
3. Security guards
4. Engineering Department
5. Teletyping Department
6. Rodriguez incident



Left: Photograph 1
Ariel view of the
Ika-Renault works

Below right: Fig. 2
Plan of the wash-
room

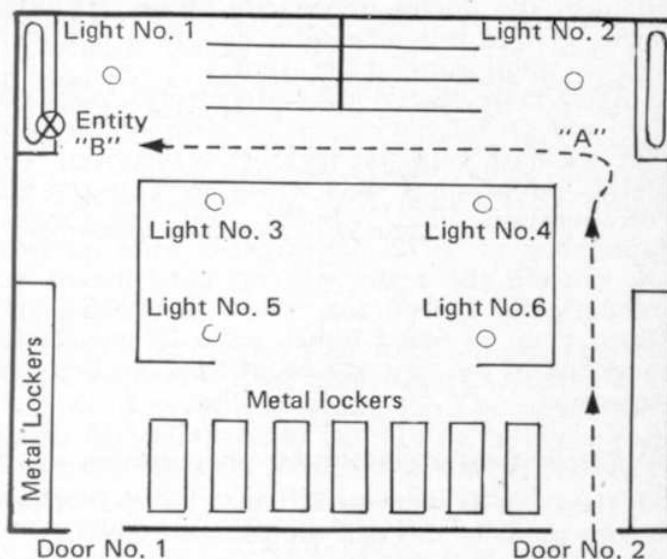
Before reaching the washrooms, Sr. Merlo switched on the inside lights of the building. (This is done by switches beside door No. 2.) The lights for the six showerbaths (lights 1 and 2 in Fig.2) are mercury gas lamps. Lights 3,4,5 and 6 are fluorescent tubes.

Having done that, he unlocked door No.2 with his key and walked quickly towards sector "A", to put some towels and soap there. (At that end of the building there are some long wash-basins or troughs.) As he did so, he noticed that light No.1 on his left was out, and that there was somebody sitting on one of the basins (sector "B"). He set down the soap and towels in sector "A" and then went to do the same in sector "B" (at a distance of some seven metres or so), at the same time thinking to himself that the presence of this intruder was rather strange, inasmuch as when he had shut the washrooms at 1.40 a.m. there was nobody in there.

It should be pointed out that the dividing walls between the six baths do not go up to the ceiling, but, for reasons of better air circulation, end at about 50 cm. from it. The position is much the same with the partitions of the shower-bath room. Due to this circumstance, sector "B" (despite the fact that for some inexplicable reason No.1 light was not on) was lit with a soft illumination from the lights of the other compartments.

Sr. Merlo went on in silence, and as he passed a mirror on the outer wall of the bath-section, on the passage along which he was walking (see Fig.2) he instinctively glanced into the mirror while transferring the soap and towels to his left hand. Simultaneously with this, the following phenomenon occurred: light No.2 went out with a sharp noise like the sound of a metal object striking on glass. And light No.1 came on by itself, illuminating sector "B", which enabled him to see that the entity had now disappeared.

Surprised by this curious manifestation, Sr. Merlo



went back quickly to sector "A" (where light no.2 had gone out), but found no trace of the intruder there. From there he had a full view of the passage leading to entrance no.2, but there was nothing strange to be seen there either. He ran back to sector "B" again, to see if the individual was trying to escape through entrance no.1. But that was locked. And so, too, as he checked for himself, was door no. 2. These are the only entrances to the washrooms. While it is true that these rooms have vents for air circulation, wide enough to permit the passage of a human body, these vents can only be opened or shut from inside the premises by means of a complicated mechanism that has to be turned. These vents were of course also closed. He carefully checked each of the sections of the washrooms, including the insides of the metal lockers. He found absolutely nothing.

3. Descriptions of the entity

Despite the lack of light in sector "B," Sr. Merlo

managed to see — at a distance of a mere three metres, and thanks to the illumination coming from the other lights nearby — several features of the entity. At the outset, the position of the phenomenon was as shown in Figure 3; with the right arm almost forming a right-angle to the dorsal region, the hand was applied to what would be the nasal appendage of the entity. The left arm was braced against the rim of the long wash-basin, and upon this rim the entity was seated. His right leg was extended and the left one drawn in, with the left foot planted firmly on the floor. (If one bears in mind the fact that the height of the washbasin from the floor is 90 cms., the intruder must have been very tall to be able to sit like that and rest the sole of the foot fully on the ground. As a result of our reconstruction of the scene we established that the height of the phenomenon must have been about 2m. 40 to 2m. 50.)

The clothing seemed to be in one piece, of a dull dark blue colour, very close-fitting to the body and tight at the wrists. The being gave an impression of solid robustness. The witness saw no boots or belt. The face and hands were bare. The fingers long and slender. The skin — as observed on both occasions — was very white, like plaster.

He gave the impression of being a living being and not just a puppet. The skull was large and rounded on the top. The witness saw no hair. The neck was thin and short. The ears, long and terminating in points, did not extend beyond the top of the head. The eyes were split, disposed horizontally, and were much bigger than the eyes of the Chinese. At the level of the cheeks the witness observed some vague marks or shadows. He could not see the nose and mouth very well.

4. Accompanying features of the sighting

- The temperature in the area where the phenomenon occurred was considerably higher than in the other sectors of the premises.
- The witness's eyes suffered irritation and began to weep frequently. (Duration of this feature: three days.)
- A reddish spot occurred on the central part of the nasal pyramid, with persistent pain. (He still had this at the time of our interview with him.)
- Repeated headaches. (Still occurring at the time of our interview.)
- Pains in the lumbar area. (This effect lasted some seven or eight days.)

5. Other changes which came after the sighting

i) Phenomenon of the Reflected Image

Sr. Merlo told nobody of his experience. He was much preoccupied with the problem of how the individual could have entered and left the washroom. Fearing that he might be blamed for some supposed negligence in this attention to his duties, he decided to keep quiet about it. He simply made an "identikit" drawing of the entity and then put it away carefully.

He went back to his home in Villa Oviedo (Alta Gracia) at 6.30 a.m. A few hours later, at 9.10 p.m.



Figure 3. The entity as seen by Merlo on September 21, 1972

on the evening of the same day, September 21, he got on the bus which would once more take him to the Santa Isabel plant. He sat down on the third seat on the left, beside the window. There was a total of about 25 passengers.

Above the windscreen, in the centre of the bus and slightly inclined, was the rear mirror for observing the aisle. It was oblong in shape, 46 cm by 26 cm (We checked these figures when we were doing a reconstruction of the affair.) The inside lights on the bus were off, except for the conductor's light over the platform. Suddenly, when the bus was passing Los Olivares, Sr. Merlo noticed that, clearly reflected in the mirror, there was a face similar to the face of the entity he had seen in the washroom; however this time he could see the features very clearly.

He looked round to see if there was anybody in the seat behind him who had features like those. There was merely a passenger there, slouched against the window. He was wearing a beret and was dozing with his arms crossed. In no way did he resemble the figure reflected in the mirror.

The features of the face in the mirror were identical with those of the phenomenon seen at 5.40 a.m., but in addition there were other details that he could now see more clearly. For example the mouth looked like a dog's mouth, with the upper lip protruding beyond the lower one. On both cheeks there were

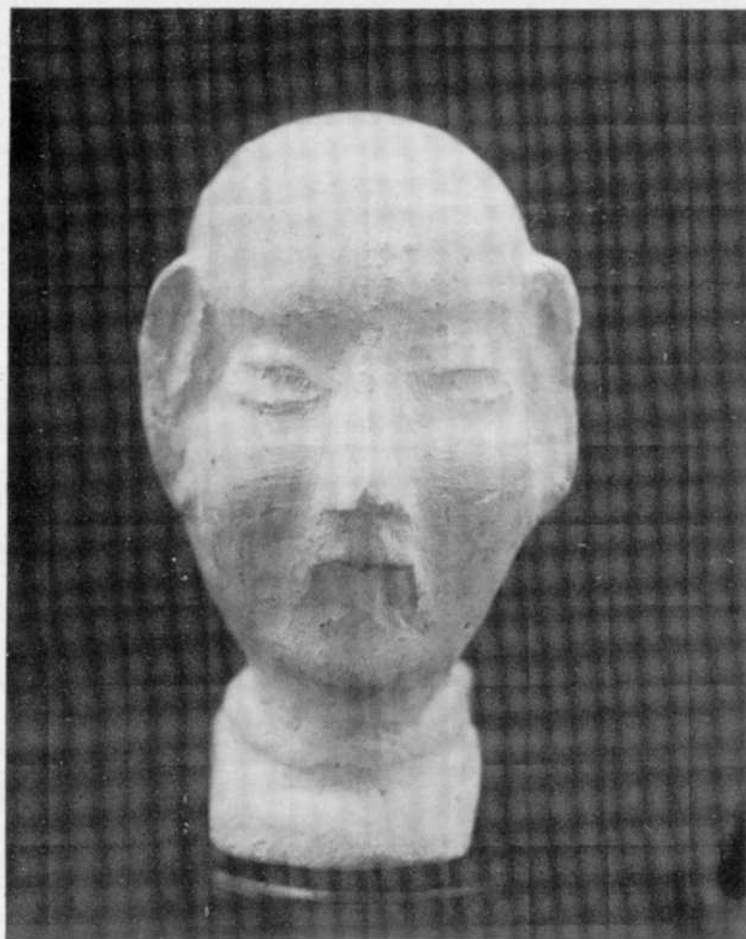


Photo 2. Head of the entity, modelled by Merlo the witness

reddish-brown patches, and he could also see movements of the surface of the face and of the eyes. Beneath each eye there were two small dark converging lines, with the angles pointing up towards the eye sockets. The eyebrows were arched and thin, as though painted on. The eyes did not blink. The nose, triangular in appearance, had no fleshy areas and was straight.

After he had been observing it for some three minutes or so, the face vanished, hidden by a series of concentric circles. Once more, the mirror reflected the scene inside the bus, and he could now see in it the right ear of the driver and part of his neck, as well as the shoulder, arm, and part of the face of the first passenger in front. None of the other passengers seemed to have been aware of the phenomenon.

As soon as the bus arrived at the Santa Isabel plant (10.30 p.m.), Sr. Merlo immersed himself completely in his usual tasks. But, obsessed now by the phenomena he had experienced in such a brief period of a few hours, he decided, at 5.00 a.m. on September 22, to lodge a report about it with Sr. Romero, head of the plant's security section. He also gave him the "identikit" sketch, to which he had added, where appropriate, the further details gleaned from the mirror. (See photographs 2 and 3, which are of a head modelled by Merlo himself, and showing the features of the entity.)

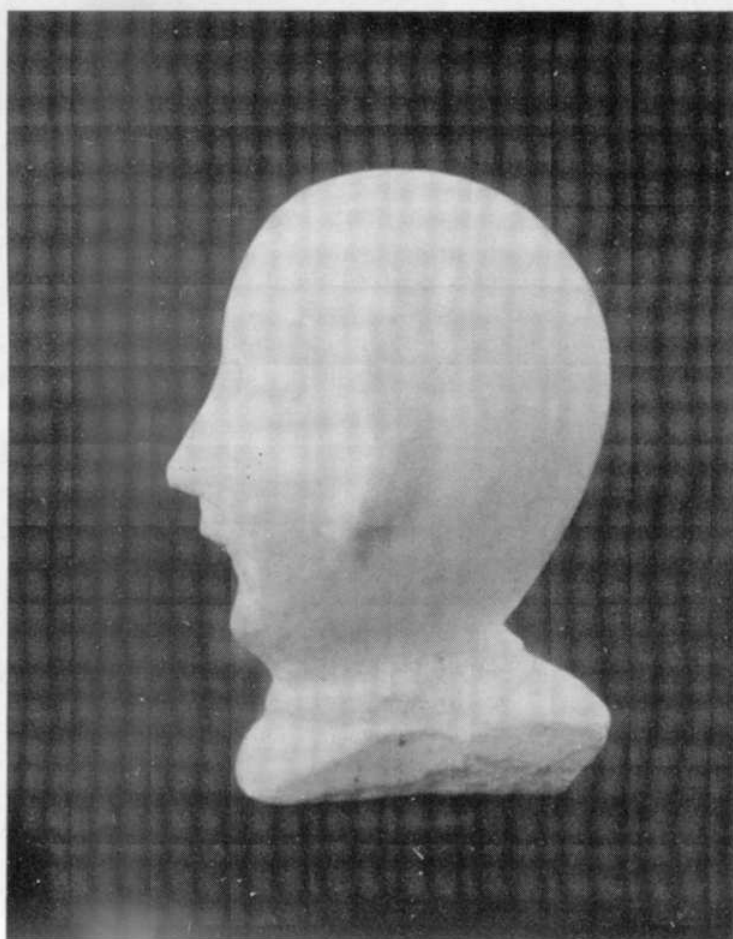


Photo 3. The head, as seen in profile

The affair was kept secret and was known only to the security personnel. However, the witness himself does not believe that any importance was attached to it, since nobody troubled him for any further details regarding his report. The only person who spoke to him was Dr. Ignacio Castro Igarzabal, head of the Labour Relations Department. This was on October 10, and the purpose was merely to ask about certain aspects of the matter. But Dr. Igarzabal expressed no opinion about it.

ii) The Failure of Lights

At 2.00 a.m. on Monday, September 25, Sr. Merlo and a companion named Moyano were getting ready to take a look at the Pressing Shop washrooms, when they discovered that the lights in the washrooms were not working. Scared by this brush with the unknown, they shut the door and were afraid to go in again. However, some hours later, they tried the lights again and found that they came on without difficulty.

iii) The Stopping of Watches

On Monday, October 9, Sr. Merlo noticed, to his great surprise, that both his wristwatch and his alarm clock standing on the bedside table in his house at Villa Oviedo read 4.00 a.m., while a wall clock in an adjoining room showed 5.00 a.m., which in fact was

the correct time. Both his alarm clock and his wrist-watch had been set by him to the time shown on the wall clock. The witness is unable to say whether or not these happenings have any connexion with the anthropomorphic phenomena he had already experienced.

6. Comparative analysis

When we showed Teodoro Merlo a number of illustrations of humanoids, he insisted particularly upon the following details:—

a) Villa Santina Case³: the noses and mouths of these creatures tallied, he said, surprisingly closely with the noses and mouths of the phenomenon he had seen at Santa Isabel.

b) Kelly-Hopkinsville Case⁴: he said the ears bore no similarity whatever to what he had seen.

7. A tentative parapsychological interpretation of the reflection in the mirror

We are tempted to advance the hypothesis that the reflection in the mirror of the Santa Isabel entity was a phenomenon having parapsychological connotations.

We are thinking here of the possibility of verifying what is known technically as "retrocognitive telepathic suggestion." We will explain: telepathic suggestion consists of the paranormal induction of ideas or sensations from one person to another, and this is facilitated when the consciousness, be it of the agent or of the percipient, or of both simultaneously, is under the influence of some emotivity or is clouded. (Such as cases of the supposed apparition of "dead people," which can be scientifically explained by the telepathic projection of the image of the agent, such projection being favoured by the heightened emotivity and the agony and near-death condition of the latter.)⁵

In some episodes (retrocognitive telepathic suggestion), this suggestion occurs *with a time-lag*, though, as Richet points out, the length of the time-lapse between the occurrence itself and the warning (i.e. the perception) varies. Frederick Myers supposed that the telepathic impression is immediate (in these cases of apparent retrocognition) *but that the impression remains latent in the mind of the percipient, and only emerges into his consciousness after a certain interval of time.*

In the Merlo case, we think that this subconscious had registered the features of the phenomenon seen by him at Santa Isabel. The permanent state, of obsession with the affair, and of emotivity produced in him by the phenomenon, would then cause him to see it again with a delayed effect, but this time projected with the features that had engraved themselves upon his subconscious. (Telepathic suggestion is known to be facilitated by reflective surfaces, such as mirrors.)

* * * * *

Six days later another strange phenomenon occurred, and it was only after this that the details

of the Merlo case were made public. The new incident will be the subject of the second part of this article.

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STRANGE PHENOMENON AT PORTHCOTHAN BAY

Timothy Good

AN extraordinary aerial phenomenon was observed by my mother and another witness from her home at Porthcothan Bay, North Cornwall. It occurred at about 10.05 p.m. on the night of Saturday, July 7, 1973, and the following day my mother reported the sighting to me by telephone. This is her account of the observation, based on further correspondence and discussions:

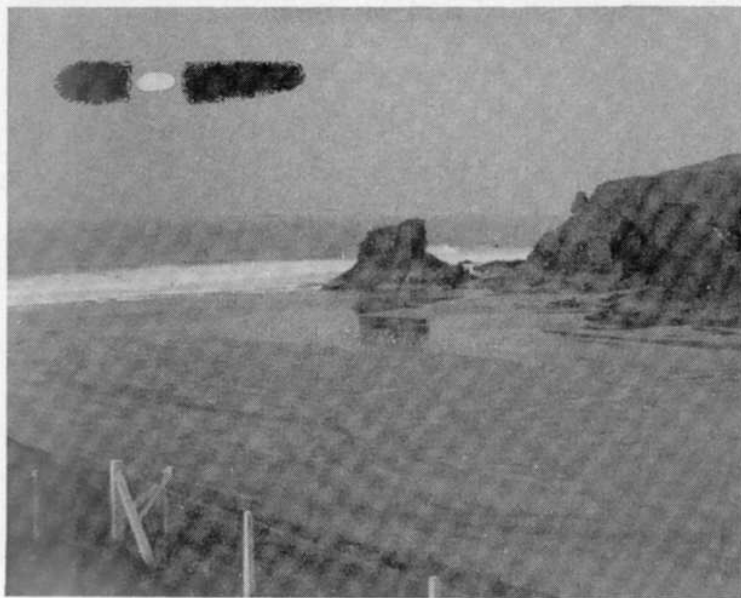
"I went to draw the curtains. There was a lovely sky of banded colours and some clouds. To my utter amazement I saw three stationary objects over the sea. One was a perfectly symmetrical disc, apparently reflecting the last of the evening sky, on each side of which was an extremely black object, roughly like a cigar in shape, but of indefinite outline (like a black furry caterpillar), that on the right being larger than the one on the left.

"While watching this phenomenon — too transfixed to alert my friends in the room — one of them joined me to see why I was still at the window. After a few minutes the disc was seen to enter or go behind the object on the left, and the two sped away out to sea at a fantastic speed. I had my eyes on it as one follows the path of a golf ball, until I could see it no longer. After a few more moments the object on the right also shot away, at the same speed, in the same horizontal position, and on the same trajectory, leaving absolutely no trace of smoke."

On behalf of my mother I wrote to the Officer Commanding, Royal Air Force, St. Mawgan, giving him details of the sighting as related to me by her. I commented that the only rational explanation I could think of was that of a rare type of temperature inversion, adding that I would be grateful if their Met. Office could ascertain whether the necessary atmospheric conditions prevailed at the time in question. I also enquired if any anomalous ground or airborne radar returns had been noted. The letter in reply, signed by the Flight Lieutenant for the Officer Commanding, had this to say:

"...Our check of the various operational and radar records revealed nothing out of the ordinary during the period in question. However, our Senior Meteorological Officer states that the Duty Officer on the evening of Saturday, July 7, did observe bright mock suns, and halo phenomena, which as you will know are produced by refraction of light through ice crystals which are present in cirrus clouds. The alert observer noted in the daily register the following technical remarks:

"Two bright mock suns, partial 22° halo, part parhelic circle from both mock suns, upper circumzenithal arc of contact to 22° halo. Further mock sun to left of primary and 120° from it on parhelic circle."



Daytime photograph by Mrs. Good, showing view from window with a drawing of the object superimposed in the position it was seen

"The Senior Meteorological Officer was unable to comment on the 'flight path comments' or the alleged disappearance into the distance at a phenomenal speed. It is, however, in little doubt that what your mother saw was the vivid mock suns.

"It is hoped that this information will be of some assistance to you in dispelling your mother's apprehension."

My mother was highly dissatisfied with the above explanation — and she hadn't been at all apprehensive. However, I subsequently managed to establish by further communication with the RAF at St. Mawgan that the Duty Officer had actually observed the mock suns *one to two hours prior* to my mother's sighting. I also ascertained that the relevant information in this report was forwarded to the appropriate authorities at the Ministry of Defence.

My mother is certain that the phenomenon must have been seen by many over a considerable stretch of coast. Unfortunately, a letter she wrote to the *Western Morning News* was not published and it would be difficult to track down other witnesses to the event. I checked with the local Coastguards, but their log book contained no record of anything unusual that night.

As a postscript, I should like to add that my mother had a further sighting about ten days later, at 3.30 a.m. A stationary reddish-orange sphere, two-thirds the diameter of the moon, was seen; it had disappeared when she returned from fetching binoculars.