

# ANOTHER CLOSE CONTACT ON RÉUNION-Part 1

*Lieut - Colonel Lobet*

Traumatic after-effects experienced by witness after encounter with UFO and occupants.  
Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton

THE percipient in this case was Antoine Séverin, a 21-year-old resident of this French-speaking island, long a French colony and today one of the Territories of overseas France.

## I— Statement by Antoine Séverin of February 19, 1975

“During the night of February 11–12, 1975, I had a dream about *grapes*. Also, that same night, I dreamed (although I did not ‘see’ anything) that I was hearing a sort of *beep-beeping* noise, which seemed at times to be coming from very near, and at other times from very far away. It went on all that night.

“On the morning of February 12, while I was brushing my teeth, I could still hear the same sound, but now seemingly coming from very far away. Before I went off to work, I spoke about my ‘grape’ dream to my girl friend, Mauricette Leperlier. Then, during the course of that morning, I also talked about it to two of my work-mates, Marc Lauret and Guy Pothin. They said they had never had dreams about grapes. I wanted to talk to them about the other dream too — about the *beeping* noise — but I couldn’t do it. I don’t know why I was in such a nervy state. I was able to do my work, but there was this interference, because all the time I could still hear that same sound. I thought of going to see a doctor about it, but something stopped me. So this state of affairs lasted till Friday, February 14.

“On that day, Friday, February 14, at 12.05 p.m., I told the lady for whom I worked that I simply had to go. She was astonished, because it was just on closing time at the shop. But it might have happened at any time during that morning. The *beep-beep* noise was deafening. I dashed out, and ran along past the stadium, and then past the cemetery — my usual route. Meanwhile the sound was getting louder and louder. At times I slowed down to a walk, and then started running again. There was nobody else about. Then suddenly I felt myself stopped, as though held back by some supernatural force.

“By then I was close to the path leading off to my own cottage, and to my parents’ cottage, but I was still on the main road. I felt as though my eardrums were about to burst. I turned round slowly and got off the road, and went a distance of a few metres into the maize field. Then I felt a strange sort of heat, accompanied by a burning blast of air. I stood there,

This extraordinary case occurred on the slopes of Le Calvaire, a hill some 300 metres outside the township of Petite-Ile near the southern coast of the island of Réunion, lying between Madagascar and Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. Lt. Col Lobet’s excellent and very detailed account was published by *Lumières dans la Nuit* No. 147 (August-September 1975). We are indebted to LDLN’s Editorial Committee for permission to reproduce it now in full in *Flying Saucer Review*.  
— EDITOR

just rooted to the spot, as though paralyzed. I couldn’t move a finger. It was then that I caught sight of a machine shaped like a large hat, or like a cup set on top of a saucer upside down.

“The object was intensely bright. It was of aluminium colour, and it was at a height of about 1m.50 from the ground. That is to say, it was stationary, and it was emitting the sound. Then I saw a ladder with three steps, which appeared from the under-part of the saucer. The ladder was inclined at an angle of about 45°, but did not touch the ground. Then a weird little man came out of the machine, in close-fitting clothes like the “Michelin man” and he too was all shining, just like the saucer. In his right hand he held something, also shining, about 30 cm long. On the ladder, he seemed to be quite free and easy in his movements, but as soon as he was on the ground his gait became different, clumsy. He walked with his feet together. A second little man came and joined him, and then a third. The first one was scratching the ground. The second one was holding a small bag, also brightly shining, but I did not see the first one put any earth into it. All three of the little fellows had antennae on their heads, one on each side. I had a profile view of them.

“At one point, I saw his antennae moving. At that same instant it really dawned on me what I was seeing. Then suddenly my gaze moved up to the top of the saucer, to the turret. And there, through one of the portholes, I saw the head of a fourth ‘robot.’ I think the third little man must meanwhile have given the alarm when he caught sight of me. Then I felt myself hurled on to my back by a powerful flash of light. I was able to see how the little men went up the ladder<sup>2</sup> again, faster than they had come down it. The ladder was drawn up, making a ‘hydraulic’ sort of sound. Then, immediately, the machine rose up

into the air, emitting a very loud whistle. I wasn't able to see in which direction it went off. And I don't know how long I lay there on the ground. Then I got up and rolled up my trousers and ran straight back here to my parents' cottage."

When questioned about his having lost his voice and lost his sight for some days after the occurrence, Antoine Séverin continued:-

"I don't remember now having lost my voice or having lost my sight. What I prefer to do this evening is to tell you my story, which is a true one, because I fear I may lose my voice and my sight again. Tomorrow, when it is light, I think I'll be able to take you to the spot where I saw the thing."

Six days later, on February 25, I interrogated him again. His replies were as follows:-

"I have, in actual fact, nothing to add to my previous statement, or to change in it. The object seen by me was like a woman's hat, or like half an egg placed on top of a saucer. It was the size of an ordinary car. Everything was shining, glittering...the machine, the people who came down out of it, and the instruments they were carrying. I greatly regret that I have been unable to show you the precise spot."

(In fact, on February 20, Séverin, firmly determined to show the spot where he had seen the UFO, had got into the Gendarmerie detachment's jeep,

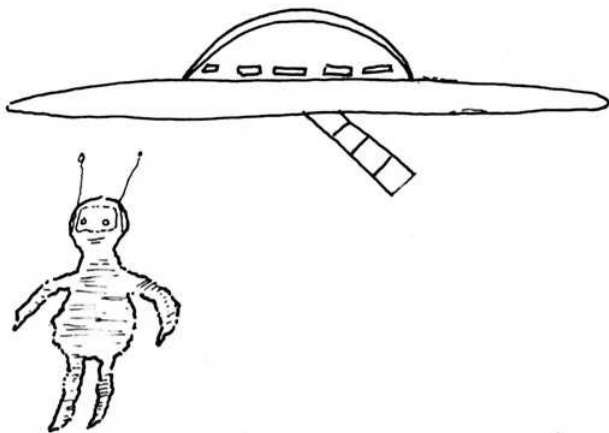


Figure 1: UFO and occupant, as sketched by Antoine Séverin.

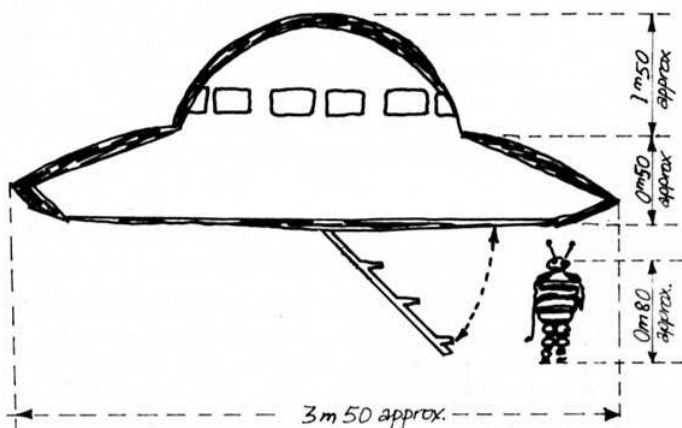
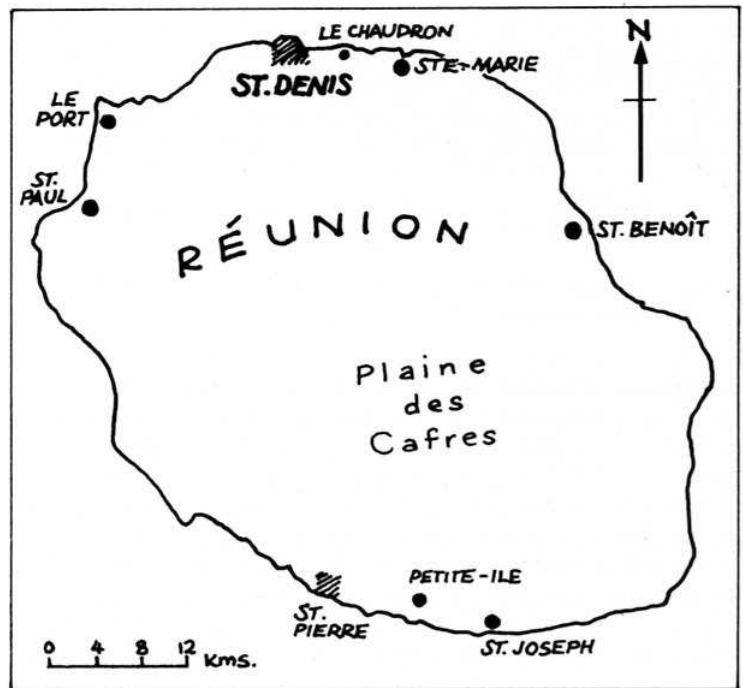


Figure 2: Sketch based on LDLN artist's reconstruction of the UFO and occupant



driven by the gendarme Cravero. Monsieur Maxime Séverin, the father, went along with his son. When they were on the dirt road which leads to the maize field, Antoine tapped the driver on the shoulder and indicated this field, which was the same one that we had seen on February 18. Antoine got out and, with his gaze fixed on the other end of the field, near a copse of trees, he began to take a few steps forward. Then he stopped suddenly, put his hands up to his ears, pressing them in very hard, and finally he began to sway, and fell to the ground. His pulse was faint, his hands were cold, and his eyes were turned upwards. We took him home at once and he only recovered partial consciousness about half an hour later. Séverin then explained to us that some inexplicable force had prevented him from approaching the precise spot where he had seen the unidentified craft.)

Séverin's statement continues:

"I am indeed still determined to go to the place, but every time I arrive there, I lose consciousness. Instantly, as soon as I enter the field, I hear far-off *beeping* sounds and am obliged to plug my ears. I assure you I don't do this on purpose. And then, every time, I am surprised when I come round and find myself stretched out on a bed as I never have any recollection of fainting.

I still feel weak. One day, though, I think I shall regain my lucidity completely and my physical strength, and that this will enable me to remain on an even keel. Then I'll be able to pinpoint the exact spot where I saw the UFO."

In reply to further questioning:-

"No, I've never, in my whole life, opened any magazine or science fiction book showing such things as flying saucers or rockets. And I have never heard anybody mention a flying saucer that landed on the Plaine des Cafres.<sup>3</sup>

"Tomorrow, or the day after, I am due to go to Saint Pierre to see a doctor who is to come from the Saint Paul Psychiatric Hospital. In any event, I don't

consider myself to be mentally ill. I have had a shock and an upset, and this has weakened me. Sometimes my head swims and I fall asleep on my feet. Then I realize that somebody is wiping my face with a handkerchief, and then everything is normal once more."

## II – Declaration of the Mother, Mme. Marie-Rita Séverin

This is a précis of statement made on February 22 to the Gendarmerie:

"On February 14, 1975, when I got home at about 4.30 p.m., I found my 21-year-old son Antoine sitting on a bench in the kitchen. He had his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, and was weeping. I asked him if he had a headache, and he replied that he had. I asked him if somebody had been hitting him, or if he had had an accident, or fallen down. His reply was negative, and then he went on to add that if he were to tell what he had seen, nobody would believe him. I then perceived that he was frightened. He began to cry out and to weep. I managed to get him to talk. Then he told me the story which he has repeated several times since then.

"So then he talked about the 'big shining globe' shaped like a woman's bonnet (like this hat of mine, that is to say, round) and then about the three little portly men, the first one with an object in his hand and the second with a sort of bag, and the third one who seemed to be carrying nothing. Antoine lay stretched out on his back... (etc.)."

"It took a very long time for Antoine to explain to us what it was that he had seen. He made lots of gestures, as though outlining what he had seen. And he was trembling. His gaze became fixed, and then gradually his voice faded away. The neighbours came in and they carried him to my bedroom. We gave him some rosemary tea to drink. A bit later we sent for the doctor from Petite Ile. The doctor told me my son had received a "bad shock", but went on to say that before long Antoine would have his voice and his sight again.

"Antoine understood quite well however what was said to him. He even drew a sketch of the machine, on a page in the dictionary (see Figure 1).

He was still unable to speak, and the slightest noise made him start. I was dreadfully worried. However, another doctor told us not to let ourselves be discouraged..

"On Wednesday, February 19 (five days after the encounter), at about 8.00 p.m., Antoine raised his arms and gave a shout. And then he exclaimed: 'Mum!' Then he rubbed his hands over his eyes and said that he could see again. That was the night when the Gendarmes, whom we had notified about the affair, came again and took his statement.

"My son is still in a weak state, He has been examined by a psychiatrist doctor at Saint-Paul, who is due to see him again on Wednesday or Thursday at Saint-Pierre. He has never been considered to be mentally ill. I have never considered my son to be mad. Antoine is a boy who is sound in body and mind. He has never had any sort of treatment for his head.

"He is normally perfectly well balanced. He

doesn't drink, and he doesn't smoke. He doesn't go to the cinemas, he doesn't read much, and he didn't know about the flying saucer they said was seen on the Plaine des Cafres. He doesn't tell lies. I instantly believed what he said. We have talked about it a lot in the family, but we are all quite convinced that my son really did see the machine, which he always describes in exactly the same fashion.

"Twice,<sup>4</sup> since he recovered his sight, he has been back to the place to show the precise spot where he saw the thing. Each time he has fainted when he came near the place. No member of my family has ever been under treatment for mental trouble."

## III – Statement made by Antoine's Girl Friend

The following statement was made by Marie-Mauricette Leperlier, born November 11, 1959:

"I am living with Antoine Severin, my future husband. We are to be married soon. He is a steady sober boy, he does not drink or smoke, and never gives any trouble to anybody.

"On February 14, 1975, I thought it strange that Antoine had not come home at 1.00 p.m. My fiancé always goes in to see his parents before having lunch, so I went over to their cottage, and found him there, stretched out on the bed. He was pale, sweating heavily, and would not say a single word. I thought that maybe he had a touch of fever, so I left him to sleep. Then, at about 3.00 p.m. I saw that he was crying. I asked him why he was depressed. He explained to me that he had seen a machine...etc., and three little men, one carrying an instrument that he was sticking into the ground, and the third one still on a little ladder with three steps. etc., etc."

The declarant confirms the statement of the Mother to the effect that Antoine reads little. Adds that he does not take drugs, and that he is not a boy of bad reputation. States that he lost the ability to speak from about 7.00 p.m. on February 14 until 9.00 p.m. on February 19. She continues:

"Antoine always wears a hat. I don't think he can have been the victim of sunstroke [ *it was summer at that time on Réunion* – ED] He has never had any illness. Just a bit of sinusitis occasionally. I truly and sincerely believe that he received a shock, and I think that he genuinely saw an object. I must point out that on February 12 he had had a dream, when he saw grapes, which he understood meant *misfortune*. He talked to me about it on the 13th, and asked me whether I had ever had a dream like that."

## IV – Statement by Mme. Marie-Madeleine Leveneur, Aged 49, Neighbour

"I know Antoine Séverin very well indeed. I have watched him grow up. We are neighbours. I believe what he says. He is a sober, serious, well-balanced lad, hard-working. He doesn't drink or smoke. I have never seen him reading any book showing pictures of strange objects or things like that. He is not illiterate, but he scarcely ever reads.

"Even when he was temporarily blind, he was

able to draw not only the machine he had seen, but also a plan of the spot. This was how I was, I think, the first person to go out there, at about 10.00 a.m. the next morning, Saturday, February 15, 1975. However the place looked to me as though it had been badly trampled. We followed some footprints leading towards the end of a small uncultivated field where there were still a few stubs of maize. The footprints ended and, about 20 metres further on, we found three holes, irregular in shape because of the weak consistency of the soil there. These holes were of the size of basins. They formed a triangle measuring one metre on each side."

Guided by this witness, the investigators were in fact taken to the field, where their main investigation was carried on. In the north-western corner of the field, Mme Laveneur, accompanied by her two daughters, managed after some difficulty to locate the three holes which she had seen. Forming an isocles triangle measuring one metre to the side, the holes are not very clearly defined owing to the friable nature of the soil, and they can easily be confused with other holes the same size (like a bowl or basin some two or three centimetres deep, very wide-mouthed). These other hollows, of which there are a great many scattered over a large area, look as though they have been caused by birds in search of food. The attempt to find any other marks in the field was furthermore made all the harder because the site had been greatly trampled by human feet, especially on February 15 and 16. (Tests made for radioactivity at the site were negative.)

"I don't think we are mistaken about the spot. So far, Antoine hasn't been able to get right to the place. First with you, then with me today, he has tried, with lots of will and courage, to get there and

to walk about in the field, and each time he has been knocked out by an inexplicable sort of collapse. I have had to take him, unconscious, to my place, where he has remained, both times, stretched out for a couple of hours, breathing feebly. In my opinion this lad is still in a state of shock. We neighbours take a serious view of this business. I must admit that we are all scared, and that we avoid going near the field."

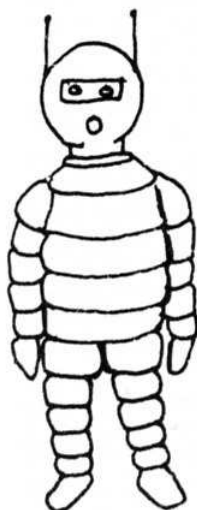
**V – Statement by Mme. Ah-Kouen, shopkeeper, employer of Antoine Séverin**

"Antoine Séverin has been employed by me in my shop for the last six months, and he also does deliveries by van. This lad is very steady, he does not drink or smoke, and gives no trouble to anybody. His work is totally satisfactory. Knowing this young man, I do not think he would invent a story to draw attention to himself. It is difficult to express an opinion, but personally I think that his statements ought to be taken seriously."

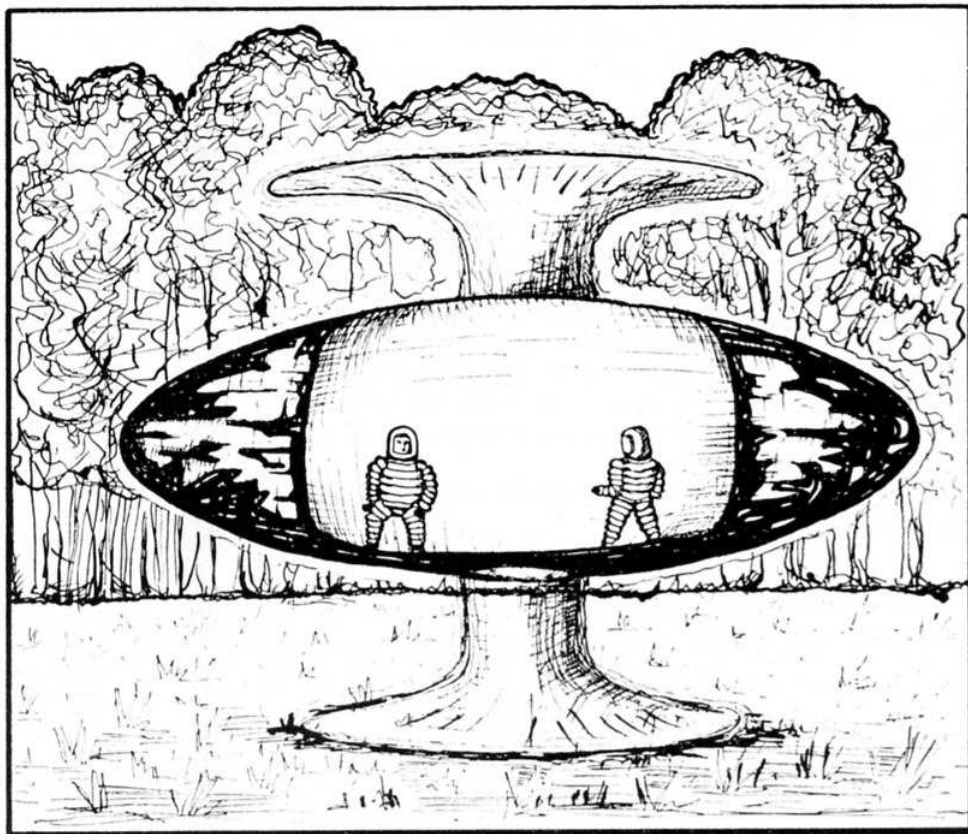
**VI – Statement by Marc-Joseph Lauret, aged 56, work-mate of Severin**

He gave the same sort of report as the employer.

"This lad Antoine Séverin has a good name everywhere in the Petite Ile community, and there has never been the slightest talk about him. I know he wants to get married soon to the girl with whom he is living, and he has told me he plans to work hard and save up for the marriage. On February 17, I went to see him. He was lying down, and did not even look at me. His eyes were closed, but he was not asleep. I was just about to leave, when his mother asked him whether he recognized me, his old friend.



**LEFT:** Humanoid as drawn by LDLN investigators based on witness's description of the 1975 encounter. Compare with the entities in the 1968 Plaine des Cafres encounter shown on the right.



**RIGHT:** Sketch of the UFO and "Force fields" with occupants, reported in July 1968 in Réunion by Luce Fontaine who estimated the height of the entities at "perhaps a little less than one metre." Reproduced from *Flying Saucer Review* Vol. 15, No. 1.

and then signalled to me with his right hand to indicate *yes*. He still didn't speak. His eyes were big and round, staring fixedly, not moving. Still making signs with his right hand, he touched his forehead several times, then showed me three fingers. I felt that he was indicating that he had seen three beings.

"In my opinion we can rule right out any idea that his imagination could have been triggered off by some book he had read. Séverin never reads. It was hot at 1.00 o'clock in the afternoon, but he was wearing a hat and I don't think he got sunstroke. In my opinion, his statements can be taken seriously, although I must say that I myself find it very difficult indeed to believe in such a thing."

#### VII – Statement by Guy Pothin, aged 20, another work-mate

This confirms the depositions of the two previous Declarants:

"I went to see Séverin on February 17. He was lying with his eyes wide open, staring, his eyelids motionless. His mother asked him if he knew me. He nodded, and tried to pronounce my name, Guy, but no sound came from his mouth. I found him to be in a state of great shock, his eyes were red, and he just lay there staring into the void. I remember that, on February 14, when he left the self-service store, he was wearing a hat, so I don't think he can have caught a sunstroke. In my opinion, this affair has got to be taken seriously. I don't think he is doing it just to get attention. He hasn't made all this up. He definitely saw something, but what we still don't know is – *what?*"

#### VIII – Statement by Dr. Michel Tschupp, of the Faculty of Lyons University

"I, the undersigned, certify that on February 14, 1975, I examined Monsieur Antoine Séverin, domiciled at Petite Ile, Réunion, who declared to me that he had been the victim of a "weird" phenomenon.

"In the course of my examination of him, I found him to be in a state of extreme exhaustion and prostration, with anxiety, partial loss of the faculty of speech, and staring eyes. The condition seems to me to involve a crisis of a pithiatic nature, produced in the course of some intense emotional shock. What the latter may have been it is difficult to say, but it was real, for the patient had previously shown no symptoms whether of a neurological or a psychiatric nature.

"The present certificate is issued to the Gendarmerie at their request."

#### IX – Biographical details of Antoine Séverin

Aged 21 (in 1975). Employed as a driver and shop assistant. Unmarried, residing at 26, Rue François-Hoareau, Petite Ile, Island of Réunion.

Of robust constitution. Has never suffered from any serious illness. Well balanced mentally. Quiet nature, and makes an impression of openness and honesty. Neatly dressed. Still at home, and spends

much of his leisure time at home with his parents. Anxious to get on. Recently acquired a cottage, which he is preparing with a view to his marriage. Has no car. No inclinations towards reading or cinema. Generally well liked by those around him. Friendly and obliging, loyal. Religion: is a believer, but infrequent church-goer. Sexual life: normal. Can read and write, intermediate school level. Attended Saint-Joseph agricultural school. Affectionate relations with his parents and brothers and sisters. The family: father, aged 55, farm worker; mother, aged 49, no profession; sisters, Anesie, 26, married, two children; Lisiane, 16, school-girl; brothers, Guilaine, 17, Joseph, 11, schoolboy.

All these people are well-known locally. No member of this family is known to be simple-minded or to have shown signs of mental instability.

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*[In part 2 of this article, which will be published in FSR Volume 25, No. 3, Colonel Lobet presents the gist of the detailed Gendarmerie reports on the Le Calvaire case together with summaries of what could be corroborating UFO reports, and his conclusions. It is also proposed to published comments by Fernand Lagarde of the LDLN team, plus additional information which he has received from Reunion – ED.]*

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#### References (By translator)

1. This feature of the *beep-beep* has been reported in a number of cases, the best known being perhaps that of Betty and Barney Hill. (See John G. Fuller: *The Interrupted Journey*, Dial Press, N. Y., 1966.)
2. This seems to me reminiscent of the Brush Creek Visitations reported by Coral Lorenzen. (See *The Humanoids*, p. 146, "UFO Occupants in the United States.")
3. See *Contact Casualty on Réunion*, in FSR Vol. 15, No. 1 (Jan./Feb. 1969). The event took place at 9.00 a.m. on July 31, 1968, when Luce Fontaine, a 31-year-old farmer, found himself 25 metres or so from a hovering craft containing two little "Michelin" types whom he described as perhaps a little less than 1 metre in height. Compare Antoine Séverin's description of the UFO's departure with the account given 6½ years before by Luce Fontaine:-  
"...There was a flash, as strong as the electric arc of a welding machine. Everything went white around me. A powerful head was given off and then as it were a sort of blast of wind, and a few seconds later there was nothing there anymore."
4. Although the French text does not seem very clear on this point. Lt. Col. Lobet states in his Conclusions [*these will appear in Part 2 – ED*] that Séverin was taken to the spot *three* times and collapsed there *three* times.

# THE TOURIST THEORY

OR . . . WHY THEY ARE HERE

*R. DeLillo & R. H. Marx*

## I – THE MYTH OF SUPER-RATIONALITY

ONE of the greatest puzzles confronting ufologists who support the ETI (Extraterrestrial Intelligence) hypothesis is UFO motivation. Why are they here? Why do they so often act so trivially, so meaninglessly? What kind of superior rational being repeatedly buzzes cars, examines trees, lands in remote fields, takes samples of the most common flora, fauna and minerals over and over again, and performs all the rest of their absurd actions. What can they mean?

So frustrating – so meaningless – does their behaviour appear to be that a giant swing has developed against the ETI hypothesis. In its place, theories proposing UFOs as Psychic projections, hoaxing interdimensional or time-travelling entities, even Satanic forces of evil have been offered.

We think it is time to sweep aside these uncertain theories and propose a better foundation and a more reasonable approach to the study of the UFO phenomena.

However, in order to do this we must first examine and consider a much more flexible approach in dealing with UFO motivation.

Hynek has said that the problem with the UFO question is that even Science Fiction has not suggested a truly sound rationale for their behaviour.

This was true.

For two main reasons.

First, like the present UFO theories, SF has always developed elaborate plots which revolve around one premise. **They are here because...** UFO theorists claim a single motivation which they then have to twist and turn to ensure it fits the facts. Why just one reason? Why not fifty?

Secondly, and most crucially, SF has held on to a literary cliché: ufonauts must be super-rational, that is, infinitely wiser and more rational than we are. (Perhaps this is the reason theorists assume they must do things for just one reason, lacking our complexity.) It is what we shall call the “Mr. Spock” syndrome.

To begin, let us define, or at last describe *super-rationality*. It is a concept which assumes that aliens rarely, if ever, think irrationally or emotionally. Rather than feel and react (as we do), they coolly respond, deduce and conclude. While an exaggeration for clarity, it gives the basic idea.

At the outset we must face the primary problem which created the “Mr. Spock” myth; we are so afraid of giving the ufonauts human motives and attri-

An engaging look at the Extraterrestrial Intelligence theory, and an optimistic attempt to answer the question of UFO motivation. The authors are Australian researchers who are associated with the excellent Sydney group headed by W. C. Chalker, who himself has contributed to FSR on a number of occasions. Mr. DeLillo is a physicist and Mr. Marx is a professional writer.

This is the other side of the coin from that seen by Professor P. Guérin (see the last issue of *Flying Saucer Review*); a clever exposition of what we once saw fit to label the “Nuts and Bolts” idea, or wish – an appellation that has stuck.

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butes that we go to the opposite extreme. “They can’t be like us, so they must be super-intelligent and super -logical” is the reaction. But attributing super-rationality to aliens is absurd; we do not even know if it exists except in machines.

After all, this refusal to admit to similarities prevented ufologists accepting the humanoid form of alien. The attitude was that since they looked so much like us, they had to be illusions or distortions of reality by witnesses who wanted the aliens to look like us – if only subconsciously. This is the same tired thinking which expects aliens to behave and think differently from us and be morally wiser. It is ironic that critics of ETI should argue this way. On the one hand they say that the ufonauts are acting irrationally, so much so that we cannot understand them. Then the same critics contend that this irrationality means that UFOs must be a product of our own minds, or at least represent our own race returning as time travellers.

The authors want to reverse this reasoning. We know the phenomenon is real – we have photos, radar returns and magnetic readings to prove it. Perhaps we can understand the puzzle by comparing it with human motivation and see if it tallies.

Biologists have shown how useful the humanoid form is. It may turn out to be one of the best body structures for technological beings, and Nature may have used it as a model throughout the universe. Perhaps the human mind, with variations, may prove to be an equally good model. As much as we rightly mistrust emotions, which are at the heart of irrational thought, they serve many useful and essential purposes. Emotions trigger a whole series of feelings from love to hate, from fear for fight to sex for reproduction, and arise out of basic primaeval