

# THE ELEPHANT'S TOE-NAIL

or The Illusion of Science

*John Whitmore*

EARLY in 1974 Dr. Andrija Puharich, in his book, *Uri: A Journal of the Mystery of Uri Geller*, reported that he had repeatedly observed and participated in two types of phenomena that challenge scientific theory. The first was that paranormal metal bending and de- and re-materialization of objects often occurred around Geller, both at his will and at random. The second was that Puharich and Geller had established speech communication with extraterrestrial agencies that claimed to be the source of Geller's apparent powers. Neither of these phenomena are new. Both have occurred throughout history, and religious and other literature contain many references to such phenomena, although scientists have a habit of discounting these observations of our ancestors, presumably as barbaric delusions.

Predictably, the main body of science chose to ignore or to ridicule both types of phenomena reported by Puharich. However, a few open minded scientists attempted to investigate the first, and in so doing, risked their reputations and academic status, for such things are conditional upon one's willingness to remain closed minded, and to comply with the unwritten agreement never to reveal the weakness of the system on which one's livelihood and authority depend.

Equally predictable was the attack upon these researchers by such stalwart defenders of the faith as Martin Gardner, Philip Morrison, and others. Undaunted, the researchers devised experiments and theories in an attempt to validate and explain the phenomena, in spite of the burden called "acceptable scientific method" to which even they subscribed, and managed to convince themselves, if not others, that the phenomena of metal bending and de- and re-materialization did indeed take place. Some tried, in the main unsuccessfully, to publish their findings in journals controlled by the scientific establishment, while others were less courageous, perhaps but less foolhardy.

One of the insanities of acceptable scientific method is the need for repeatability upon demand. This may be scientific, but to anyone with a modicum of common sense, it is nonsense. It is as if one were to say that unless the world mile record holder, Walker, runs the mile in under 3 minutes 50 seconds on virtually every occasion that he attempts to do so, he never did in the first place, provided, of course, that wind, weather, location, and other conditions remain constant! It is not scientific to suggest that the fact of his being several months older, or pounds heavier, than he was when he set the record might explain why he could not do it today. Neither is it scientific to suggest that internal or external emotional fluctuations might account

for his inability to replicate every time. Worse still, science tends to say that if I cannot run the mile in under 3 minutes 50 seconds, then Walker could not have done it either.

Because of this ludicrous rule of science, many of the most interesting Geller phenomena could not be taken into account. Nevertheless, these intrepid scientists were able to obtain a reasonable amount of repeated data. Because their peers either could not accept these findings, were threatened by them, or were jealous that they themselves had not come up with this data, they said things like... "Your controls were not good enough. Go away and do it again," or "Give us back your research grant."

When that failed to stop the research, they produced their ace in the hole in the form of a magician called The Amazing Randi, amazing only for the number of untruths that he is able to conjure at any one time. However, Randi finds it profitable to agree with the scientific establishment, so naturally, they believe him. Because he is able to replicate his tricks every time, and Geller can not, that apparently makes Randi scientific, and as such, he is allowed to become the spokesman for science.

Randi's contention is, of course, that Geller cheats, and by way of substantiating this, he performs his own tricks to demonstrate how Geller could have done it, claiming that this is how Geller does it, which is a very different thing. Scientists tend to think that if a subject could cheat, he would, and that if he cheated once, he cheated all the time. These are wild assumptions that science would not allow anyone else to make. Perhaps Puharich's greatest mistake was that he did not present Geller as a magician in the first place, so that all the magicians would have been beating their brains out to prove that Geller was a psychic, and everyone would be happy.

Why, we may ask, are scientists so anxious to discredit Geller? The reason is that what he does does not fit within their scheme of things, so they either have to stop him, or alter their scheme, which would cause them to lose face. Scientists claim that their *raison d'etre* is to explain all things that are known in the universe, and to find new things to explain. Science presumes to tell us what is, and how. Although this is a simply stated task, it is a monumental one, and it is terribly arrogant for science in its present form to assume that it has the capacity for such an undertaking. If science has not consciously set out to become the authority for validating reality, it certainly enjoys having been granted this status by a public who, until now, have needed authority figures to validate their experiences, and it fights tooth and nail to retain this authority.

It is surely ludicrous to attempt to explain the wonders of the universe in the limited terms of

three or four man-made models which fit together. but which are themselves only a tiny part of that universe. It is as if my big toe were to attempt to consume me. Now, I do not mind anyone playing the game of science if they wish to, provided that they realize it is only a game and that it has little intrinsic value. Indeed, science may help many with limited vision to expand that vision somewhat, but to those who already have larger visions, it more often than not appears to be an endless and self-serving pursuit of trivia down a cul de sac with "so what" written at the end. It also has the sinister effect of making us increasingly dependent upon its perpetuation.

The mechanics of the leap of a flea may be a fascinating study for someone who is into fleas, or who is building a wall to protect himself from his flea-ridden pet, but to fill the pages of *Scientific American* with such a study, however scholarly, as was done recently, is nothing but an ego massage for those who subscribe to the game and who grant each other points for demonstrating scholarliness. For heaven's sake, let us stop pretending that these irrelevancies are important. It is like concerning oneself with the paint job on a bomb that is about to explode.

The bomb is, of course, science itself, and the fuse that scientists are trying so hard to extinguish is psychic phenomena. Their policy is demonstrated by Philip Morrison in his latest attack on Geller and his investigators, and his praise of Randi, in the February 1976 issue of *Scientific American*.

Randi may indeed turn out to be a better spokesman for science than it thought, for science, like magic, is an illusion, and this illusion is the relevance of science as a means of determining what is so in the universe. Not only do scientists think that they are dealing with reality, and the universe, but they have the gall to foist their arrogant assumptions upon the rest of us.

In spite of this huge smoke screen, most people, except the scientists of course, now know that Geller and an unspecified number of children in various countries, can do these things, so Puharich was right, after all. Now if he was right on that first count, could he possibly be right on the second, i.e. that the source of the power is some extraterrestrial agency? Predictably again no one had the courage to investigate this. It is, after all, too preposterous a suggestion for even the Geller researchers to deal with, and they themselves, in the face of it, quickly assume the mantle of the scientific establishment. To even consider it, they say, is unscientific. Do they not wonder why Puharich, himself a well accredited scientist, would tell the truth about one phenomenon and lie about another? He is deluding himself, say these Geller researchers, but is that not just what the scientific establishment said about them, and how do the researchers feel about that? Do they not realize that Puharich, like themselves, went to great pains to convince himself of the validity of the phenomenon before revealing it? The scientific establishment would not look at their data; have the Geller researchers in turn looked at Puharich's?

I suggested to one such researcher, who was

becoming increasingly frustrated with the randomness of the metal bending phenomenon, that he approach the problem in a different way, a non-scientific way. I suggested that he put the subjects into trance and attempt to communicate with the source of power. Without delving into the matter of what it was that he was communicating with (it would be all right for him to assume that it was the subject's subconscious) he could seek information and answers to some of the questions that he had been struggling with for months. If he did not receive answers, he might get some guidance as to where to look for them. At worst, he would receive nothing and lose a couple of hours of his time. No, he said, obviously threatened, he would leave that till after he had finished his experiments and constructed his theory.

This researcher was demonstrating the most ridiculous of all scientific dogma: that a problem must be approached incrementally and head on by building upon the unknown.

It is like attempting to do a jigsaw puzzle by only building upward from the base line. Is it not equally valid to begin with the sky and build downwards, or to start with several pockets in suspension and expand them till they all join together to make the whole? Ironically, the fallacy of the incremental approach is best illustrated from within science itself. The majority of all major discoveries in science have been made either by serendipidity or by a leap of faith. The oft-quoted benzene ring, or Einstein's Special Theory, are but two examples. So we find that most discoveries are made in one way, and yet aspiring discoverers are fanatically attached to working in another. Perhaps there is, after all, some value in studying the leap of the *Scientific American* flea.

All those who have researched psychic phenomena are likely to have noticed how often proof slips between their fingers, as if by accident. This, of course, feeds the detractors and frustrates the researchers, but all would do well to examine this very elusiveness. The equipment failure, the turned head, the sneeze, or the jammed camera, occur regularly enough at the critical moment to suggest intelligent intervention. So let us be unscientific for a moment and take that leap to see what we find. If we assume that these things are under intelligent control, we can ask ourselves why we are not allowed the proof that we think we need. The answer to this may lie in what has traditionally been regarded as the religious domain. Proof is subjective, and comes to each of us individually when we are ready.

Scientists may in time be persuaded to look at other religious principles. When science replaced religion as the recognized authority for truth some 300 years ago, the baby got thrown out with the bath water, for religion, in our case Judeo-Christianity, with all its faults, had an essence of truth that science has not yet discovered, which may be more significant to our understanding of the universe than all the schemes which science feeds us. This essence, which is found in all religions and philosophies throughout the world, and which is available through

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# OBSERVATIONAL DATA OF AN ANOMALISTIC AERIAL PHENOMENON

Modern technology provides strong evidence

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A SUMMARY is presented in this paper of the data obtained from a time-consuming series of computer enhancement analyses and experiments, which was initially carried out by GSW, Inc., and various photographic laboratories, based upon two coloured 35 mm. photographs depicting anomalous data, originally provided by the prime witness, Mr. Norman Vedaa. It is concluded that, on the basis of the photographic evidence, the images cannot be explained by any presently known natural or celestial phenomena. It is further concluded that the images represent some type of unknown craft traversing within the confines of the inner atmosphere of earth.

## Introduction

A single unidentified flying object was sighted and photographed at precisely 6.20 a.m., MST, on August 28, 1969, by Norman Vedaa and his passenger† while driving N.E. on State Route 80 S, approximately 70 miles East of Denver, Colorado. Mr. Vedaa was vacationing in the Western states and was in the company of a second witness who wishes to remain anonymous.

The soft data, the eye witness reports, indicated that the lone object was yellow-gold in colour, soundless, oval-shaped in appearance, and tremendously brilliant. "The object was bright, hard to look at — and appeared to hover momentarily. The object's glow (light) was producing a reflective light on the clouds below the higher object. As the object hovered — I immediately slowed the car from its highway speed, grabbed by camera, giving it to my passenger who in turn took the first of two pictures through the windshield. The car moved a few feet as I directed it towards the shoulder of the road and,

Our contributor is the Director of Ground Saucer Watch, Inc. (GSW),\* a civilian aerial phenomena research organisation which consists of "Scientists, engineers, professionals and the educated lay," numbering about 300 at present, most of whom are related directly to the aerospace industry or associated with a university. GSW has access to modern computers and scientific and engineering laboratories. Founded in 1957 this Research Group exists for those who "wish to see positive scientific action taken to eradicate the elements of 'foul-up' and 'cover-up' in UFO research."

—EDITOR

immediately, the second picture was taken. We looked away for a moment to adjust the camera and saw the object fly away at a fast speed and disappear within seconds."

The hard data from the film revealed an inarticulate bright yellowish glow with well-defined edges, and an accompanying reflective light shadow back-illuminating the clouds. Figure 1 shows the manner in which the diameter of the object decreases with a relation to the time between photograph exposures. Figure II shows the distance with reference to time

\* The Director of Ground Saucer Watch, Inc. (GSW), a scientific UFO research organisation, initially started in 1957. Inquiries are invited: GSW, Inc., 13238 N. 7th Drive, Phoenix, Az. 85029. (602) 942-7216.

† GSW found the prime witness articulate in his manners and technically qualified as a trained observer. At no time did any of our field investigators find the witness attempting to sensationalize or capitulate on the encounter.

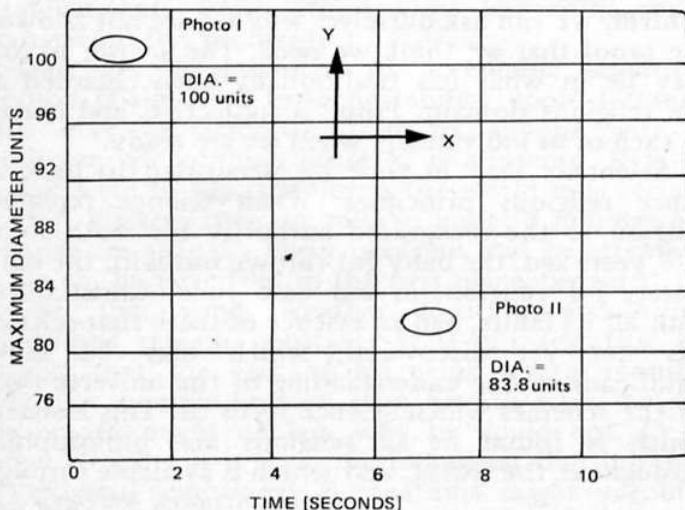


Figure I

Ration of time varying value to maximum units of diameter of UFO images

Dia. units/measurement of objects  
Photo I - X.300" on std. 8 x 10 film  
Y.250" avg.

Photo II X.260" on std 8 x 10 film  
Y.230" avg.