

THE MOUSE IN THE MAZE

Or my amendment to Guérin's Law

Aimé Michel

Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton

AROUND about 1957 or 1958, when we had both been seeking for years for some sort of Ariadne's thread that could guide us through the maze of the UFO Wave of 1954, Pierre Guérin formulated, as a first step, the only law known to Ufology that has proved resistant to Time. This law has, I think, theoretical implications which provide an insight into the nature of the UFO phenomenon.

Let us begin by stating Guérin's Law. It is:

"In Ufology, any law is immediately falsified by subsequent sightings just as soon as it is formulated."

The word "falsified" is taken here in the Popperian sense: in Popper's terminology a theory is falsified when one can set over against it a fact which is not authorized by that theory. "Every good theory is a prohibition: it forbids certain things to happen. The more a theory forbids, the better it is."¹

I shall not examine any of these "laws that are immediately falsified as soon as they are formulated," for I should be taken to task for telling the story of my life — and on that score the critics would be wrong, for my life has been a very interesting one. I shall confine myself however to proposing a few thoughts on the subject of ascertaining whether Guérin's Law applies to itself — in other words whether it is legitimate to complete it by the following amendment (which we might call "Michael's amendment"):

"...including Guérin's Law."

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Let us note straight away that Guérin's Law does not forbid us to continue to seek confirmations of a law when we have formulated it: one may perfectly well go on finding facts that are consistent with that previously discovered illusory law. But these "consistent" facts can no longer confirm anything; they have no value as confirmations since — and this is what Guérin's Law states — other facts have been discovered in the meantime which show that the law is false.

Let us suppose for example that a Ufologist discovers a relationship between a UFO's acceleration and the energy of the luminous colour emitted by that UFO. Overjoyed with his discovery, he will announce to the world a law which says that the more rapid the acceleration of a UFO the more will the light it emits tend towards the blue. From this

he will deduce that a hovering UFO will be dark red².

What will happen then?

Two things will happen:

(A) People will go on finding UFOs that turn bluer the more rapidly they accelerate.

(B) But they will also find stationary blue UFOs; and red UFOs accelerating abruptly, thus totally destroying the theory.

All this is in conformity with the first of Popper's seven principles, which says: "It is easy to obtain confirmations, or verifications, for nearly every new theory, if we look for confirmations."³

When Popper says "nearly every theory," this is because, even so, there exist theories for which one encounters real difficulties in finding confirmations, as, for example, the theory that the Moon is a Camembert cheese or indeed the theory that Nero burned the Papists because he was an Orangeman⁴.

But a theory for which some confirmations have been found will assuredly find some more, even if it is false, and yet, just as soon as we have established the truth of a fact that was forbidden by the law, this law is falsified, however numerous its "confirmations" may be. *If the law were true no fact in contradiction to it could exist.*

In the ordinary sciences (all the sciences with the exception of Ufology) the laws we discover have a certain life-expectation. Sir John Eccles reckons for example that in biology a law can hold for fifteen years before being refuted (falsified): it is, he says, in that case a very good scientific law.

Guérin's Law serves notice on us that the laws of Ufology have *no* life-expectation whatsoever. Those features that have been the best proven in past observation never take very long to be falsified. As soon as it had been noticed that UFOs were round, square ones began to be seen. As soon as a correlation had been shown between Mars and the dates of the UFO Waves, there were uncorrelated Waves, etc.

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Contrary to what one might think, Guérin's Law expresses an optimistic view of Ufology, and it is for this reason that I propose my amendment. For if it were truly proven that every law is refuted as soon as it is formulated, then at least something, in Ufology, would be proven. Which I don't believe. I believe that absolutely nothing is proven, *with the exception of precisely that which is required in order to prevent us from placing the problem in the bottom of a*

drawer and never thinking about it again (but more than that).

What would be needed for us to be able to do this, to close down FSR, send Hynek and Guérin back to their Astronomy, Creighton back to meditating on his Chinese ideograms, and Michel back to the study of the influence of the IRA and the Orangemen on Roman politics of the First Century?

What would be needed — and it would suffice — would be that we should know that there is nothing in it all or that, if there is anything in it, it is of no importance anyway.

This is why "they," or "somebody," or "something," is showing us just enough for us to have no possible doubt that A) there is something, and B) that it is very important.

This is precisely what the mouse in the maze knows. The mouse cannot stop looking for the entrance to the maze. He cannot stop because all his motivations are activated by the constructor of the maze, and because the constructor of the maze knows the mouse's motivations better than the mouse himself knows them.

The rule is clearly that, when the mouse has found the door of the maze, *he is forthwith put into another maze*. This is what Guérin has noticed.

And there is another rule: you never put all the mice into the maze. Only a few. At any rate, so long as it is a maze.

There weren't very many of us in the maze until this last Wave. That was reassuring.

Since the start of this year, millions of other mice have entered the maze. Is it still a maze? Or is it something more disturbing than that?⁵

Notes

- 1 Sir Karl R. Popper: *Conjectures and Refutations*. (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969 edition, p.36.)
- 2 Aimé Michel: *The Truth about Flying Saucers*. (Sic. But the original title in French is: *Lueurs sur les Soucoupes Volantes: (Glimmers of Light on the Flying*

Saucers—A.M.). British edition: Pyramid Books, 1967, p.143.

- 3 Cf. note (1).
- 4 The difficulty about this theory is that in actual fact we do not know whether the Christians of Rome were Papists or Orangemen.
- 5 See Jean-Claude Bourret's very important new French book on the UFOs: *La Nouvelle Vague des Soucoupes Volantes (The New Flying Saucer Wave)*, Editions France-Empire, 68, rue Jean-Jacques-Rousseau, 75001 Paris. Pub. June 1974, price 28 Francs.

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P.S. I imagine that the readers of FSR are familiar with the writings of Sir Karl Popper? I think he is the greatest English philosopher of the century — more important than Bertrand Russell — but of course this is just one opinion.

Translator's Note

I often feel it is a great pity that the readers of FSR cannot see the texts of Aimé Michel in the form in which they reach me. Monsieur Michel is an intensely busy man, whether away up there on his hill-top eyrie in the Basses Alpes, or in the French ORTF television studios in Paris. His articles are written at immense speed, and the unravelling of the handwritten text is often every bit as hard a nut to crack as any of my Chinese documents. Moreover, to liven things up a bit — and I feel sure that the bureaucrats of the Common Market in Brussels will be delighted to learn this — the Michelian texts come more and more frequently in an exquisite kind of *Français*.

Examples: *Le mouse in the maze...*

*Le mouse ne peut cesser de chercher la porte du maze...
Le constructeur connaît mieux les motivations du mouse que le mouse.*

And: *on ne met jamais toutes les mice dans le maze."*

After a while, this sort of thing becomes *ahurissant*, as the French say. For example, just as I type out this final line it dawns on me for the first time that, like mouse and mice, *maze* is not a French word either, the French term being of course *labyrinthe* or *dédale*.

G.C.

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