

THE GRISONNE PARADOX

Aimé Michel

YESTERDAY was one of those edifying occasions when my cat, Grisonne, condescended to favour me with her opinion.

"Till now" she said, "you ufologists have behaved like nuts when dealing with astronomers and other scientists. For a quarter of a century you have tried to make them acknowledge impossible statements such as: 'There are flying things from elsewhere in our atmosphere,' or: 'There are flying things which produce huge and impossible phenomena.' Why in heaven's name should sensible folk want to admit to such foolish ideas?"

"Then would you propose an alternative strategy?" I asked.

"Yes," she said. "I propose that you ask scientists why there are no flying saucers, *granted that according to their own teaching there might in fact be plenty of flying saucers everywhere in the skies.*"

"Please explain yourself," I asked.

"To be sure," she said. "First, let us look at the *General and Logical Theory of Automata* by John von Neumann* in which the author demonstrates the following proposition: 'Every automaton that can produce other automata will only be able to produce less complicated ones. There is, however, a certain minimum level where these degenerative characteristics cease to be universal. At this point, automata which can reproduce themselves, or even construct higher entities, become possible.' Let us give the name 'von Neumann's threshold' to that point where automata begin to construct entities higher than themselves.

"Secondly," she continued, "It is asserted by specialists in computer science that its performance doubles every four or five years. Then I conclude that whatever von Neumann's threshold can be, as soon as it is crossed it will initiate a self-directed, exponentially augmenting evolution of intelligent automata."

"Perhaps so," I replied thoughtfully, and then continued: "But since that is all speculation on the future, I would call it science fiction, and scientists don't care much for science fiction."

"They don't care much for the future, I agree. But what if I show that their *present* statements are in contradiction with either von Neumann's theorem, or the data of computer science, or indeed, both? Let me continue," she said.

"A viewpoint of present-day scientists is that life and intelligence are natural, and not miraculous phenomena. But such a belief is impossible. In effect, if life and intelligence were natural phenomena, then von Neumann's threshold would have been crossed, and repeatedly, at an unknown number of points of space, and this may have been going on over an unknown span of time, and space might well be stuffed to bursting with ubiquitous and almighty artifacts and contraptions. It is not, and I ask, why not?"

"But perhaps it is," I muttered.

"Perhaps so, but if it is not, then, as I said, I ask myself, why not? Do you know *Olbers' Paradox*?"

"Of course," I said: "A century ago the German astronomer Olbers calculated that if the current laws of thermodynamics were true then the night sky might be white, and the temperature of space infinite. But they are not, and he asked: 'Why not?'"

"To supply an answer to that simple question physicists had to discover Relativity, and the Red Shift phenomenon."

"Well," purred Grisonne, "I too must put my question: 'Why are there no flying saucers, granted that according to the teaching of scientists there might in fact be plenty of them everywhere in the skies?' Let's call it the *Grisonne Paradox*. I want an answer."

A.M., February 22, 1976.

Note:

* von Neumann, John: *The General and Logical Theory of Automata* in: Newman, James R., Editor: *The World of Mathematics*, Vol. IV, pp 2070 to 2098 (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1956).

About von Neumann: born in Budapest in 1903; training at the University of Berlin, the Zurich Polytechnical Institute and the University of Budapest; Professor of Mathematics at Princeton in 1933, then in 1933, a professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies. His main works are on mathematical logic, theory of continuous groups, ergodic theory, quantum theory, high-speed computing devices. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, he won many awards for his mathematical discoveries.

THE ESSEX UFO STUDY GROUP

Based in Barking, this group has been expanding considerably since its formation in 1974. It covers the whole of Essex and East London and, in conjunction with the Dagenham Paranormal Research Group (D.P.R.G.), have investigated all the reports of the mini "wave" of sightings during 1975 in Essex. We publish our own monthly newsletter and hold regular monthly meetings where lectures and film and slide shows are given (they are open to members and non-members alike).

We have an impressive array of essential research equipment, including a mobile magnetometer. Sky-watches are held fortnightly in areas yielding higher than average sightings.

We aim to co-operate and liaise with serious minded research groups in the UK and welcome enquiries. We cover research into the paranormal as well as UFOs.

New members are welcome. For full information on the group, please contact the Chairman, Mr. Roy Lake 252, Parsloes Avenue, Dagenham, Essex.

BENACAZÓN LANDING AND TWO HUMANOIDS

J. J. Benitez

THE UFO "Wave" continues. The start of 1976 has seen no diminution in the volume of the UFO cases registered in hundreds over our country during the past year. And here is the latest of them — one of the most impressive, indeed.

At about half an hour after midnight on the night of last Wednesday, January 28, [1976] a young unmarried farmer named Miguel Fernández Carrasco, aged 26, domiciled in the town of Benacazón in the Province of Sevilla, was returning home from Sanlúcar le Mayor, a place distant some four kilometres from Benacazón. His fiancée lives at Sanlúcar, and, as had been his wont on other occasions, he had been over to see her this evening and was now returning home on foot along the narrow road that links these two places. It is a road that I myself have driven along several times, and there have been many UFO sightings, and landings by these craft in the vicinity.

Well now, when Miguel Fernández Carrasco was at a point a little over one kilometre from the entry to Benacazón (population 5,000) he heard a strange noise which he described to the Guardia Civil as being "like the sound of jet aircraft."

(At this point we must emphasise that this testimony was very kindly supplied to us by the Guardia Civil in the town of San Juan de Aznalfarache, who investigated the case when the young farmer was put into the Hospital de San Lazaro in Sevilla. But let us relate the events as they occurred, and not anticipate.)

Landing

According to the Guardia Civil lieutenant and the enlisted man who compiled the report, the young farmer turned round when he heard the strange noise, and beheld an extremely powerful

light. "It was not very high," said Carrasco, "and it began to approach. I took fright and started to run. The light came close and then moved away again, and this happened several times."

As the young man of Benacazón, alarmed as we may well believe, was running along the deserted road towards the town he suddenly realised that "the star" (as he called it) had landed beside the road, and at a spot not much more than six metres from where he was at that moment.

"The thing was rectangular," the Guardia Civil explained to us, "and taller than a telephone booth, and with a very bright light."

At that moment, to the astonishment of Carrasco, there emerged from the craft two beings whom he described as follows:—

"I think they looked like men. I can't guarantee it absolutely, but at any rate that is how it seemed to me they looked. They were tall — very tall. Maybe two metres or more."

"Did they come very close to you?" he was asked.

"Yes", he said, "as close as four or five metres from me."

These two beings of human aspect, were clad, as he described them, in dark clothing like rubber or plastic, and fitting the body very tightly. They wore wide belts or girdles with a sort of buckle at the centre which emitted extremely powerful beams of red and white light that blinded him.

As the members of the Guardia Civil related it to us, Carrasco at once instinctively covered his face with his hands to ward off the effects of the dazzling lights. The beings came right up to him. He tried to flee, to escape, but the light, plus the panic that had seized him, paralyzed him.

We are indebted to FSR reader Pedro Cuartango of Zarauz, Guipúzcoa, Northern Spain, for sending us the Bilbao newspaper *La Gaceta del Norte* of January 30, 1976, which contains this remarkable report by the newspaper's correspondent in Sevilla. I have translated it in full. The report was headlined: "Young farmer in Sevilla province sees two extraterrestrials," and "returning at night to Benacazón he sees a UFO land."

GORDON CREIGHTON

They talked to each other

"Did he see their faces?" we asked.

"Apparently no. The light from the belts prevented it. But, so he told us, he heard them talking to each other. They were talking in a language that he could not understand. And, it seems, they talked without turning to face each other."

"How did they move about? Were their movements slow, or were they normal?"

"According to what the witness said, they were normal. The beings just emerged from the craft very quietly."

"Did they come near enough to touch him?"

"He doesn't remember. The situation must have been so tense for the young fellow that he simply fainted. And lost all consciousness. And from that moment onwards, he remembers nothing more."

All that he remembers is that he found himself standing in front of the door of his house, which is inside Benacazón."

(The distance from the scene of the landing to Benacazón is one kilometre, according to measurements taken by the Guardia Civil, who also went to the spot.)

"So the young fellow did not run away?"