

OF MEN, CATS AND MAGONIA

Aimé Michel

A letter to the Editor of *Flying Saucer Review* which in the author's own words, is really a "little article." Translated by Gordon Creighton.

SIR; I read Luis Schönher's article *Observations of a Sceptical Believer* (FSR Vol. XVI, No. 3, p. 16) to my cat. He liked it very much.

"Excellently reasoned," said the cat, "and the proof of this is that I myself reason in the same manner. I too have reflected and I too have found three possible reasons. I have reflected on the incomprehensible behaviour of mankind, and I have found three reasons to explain it."

"And what are those reasons?" I enquired, my interest aroused.

1) "Miew; 2) Miaw; 3) Miow."

We had a long discussion. I did my best to enlighten his poor cat brain. I asked him whether he accepted that cats are more intelligent than molluscs. He replied "Miew," which means "of course." Then I asked him whether he accepted that, around about the Precambrian Period, the ancestor of the cats was a sort of mollusc. "Miew", he agreed, "But man's ancestor too." Then I enquired whether he accepted that evolution had never ceased, from the time of the molluscs up to himself." "Of course," he agreed again. And then finally I asked whether he accepted that evolution had continued on beyond the cat to man.

"What nonsense!" he exclaimed. "What the devil do you mean by 'beyond the cat'?"

"What I mean," I replied, "is that for me, *miew*, *miaw* and *miow* are merely three stupid noises, and that I have hundreds of millions of ideas that I can express, and that I am as superior to you as you are superior to the slug—indeed even more so."

He gazed at me for a moment, then turned his back on me in noble fashion and went off to give the neighbour's cat a hiding. Then he returned and sat down in front of me and continued the discussion from where we had left it.

He next asked me whether I accepted that my ancestor in Pre-Cambrian times would have been a sort of mollusc. I replied: "Miew." Then he asked whether I accepted that evolution had continued on from the mollusc as far as me without a break. I replied: "Of course." Then he enquired whether I could give him a convincing reason to prove that universal evolution had halted suddenly at the birth of Aimé Michel (there was a sly look in his eyes as he watched me). I replied: "Of course not." Then he yawned, and went on:

"Is the world of the flying saucers (let us call it Magonia) present here, on earth?"

"Obviously it is," I said. "People are seeing them every day."

"Are men present on Magonia?" he asked.

"Of course not," I replied. "How could they be? Apparently, in order to come here from Magonia and get back there again, it is necessary to transcend time and space. Not only do we not know how to do it, but our minds are even incapable of conceiving of it."

"What!" cried my cat. "You can't conceive of what Magonia is doing before your eyes, and you have the nerve to say that you can understand why Magonia is doing it? If you can understand Magonia, then I can understand you, and understand

what you do: your mathematical formulae, your philosophical speculations, the theory of numbers, Maupertuis' principle, and the principle of transmogrification. And if you refuse to grant me the intelligence to know all this, then admit that your speculations on the why and the how of Magonia are *miew*, *miaw*, and *miow*. It's just a lot of yapping and braying. It's as if I explained the behaviour of Anderson and Borman, of Einstein, of Joan of Arc, and of Socrates, by the desire to eat goldfish. How do you know that the concepts of "motive", and "wish" and "aim" mean any more to Magonia than *Miaw* means to you? How do you know even that Magonia thinks in concepts? How can you talk about *hostility* or *friendliness* in relation to Magonia? The lamb that you protect against the wolf and that you feed and care for, he imagines, in his lamb concepts (if concepts they be) that you love him. He will go on thinking it right up to when he gets to the butcher. The little child that you abandon to the surgeon, it thinks that you want to cause it suffering. The lamb will never understand what a butcher is. The little child will only learn what a surgeon is by becoming a man, that is to say, by passing in a few years from the beginning of the Tertiary Period (in which the most evolved of the animals were thinking already like our fifteen-month-old children) to the Quaternary Period. You, without knowing it, are perhaps in the slaughterhouse. Or in the hospital. If you are led there by ways that are not the ways of your human reason, you will never know it."

For a moment I was pensive. "Would that mean," I then asked my philosophical cat, "that we must renounce once and for all the study of the UFOs? Is your real name not by any chance *Condon*?"

"Condon," replied the cat, "fell into the same error as Luis Schönherr: he has tried to fit the UFOs into a rational framework (or perhaps he made a pretence of doing so). Not succeeding, he concluded that UFOs do not exist, which is perfectly logical: if you accept at the outset that nothing irrational can exist, all that is needed to show that a thing does not exist is to prove it to be absurd. Now here, quite on the contrary, it's the absurdity of the UFOs that shows that they *are* UFOs. If they were not absurd, they would be IFOs."

"As regards the impossibility of studying the UFOs," he went on, "I shall take my reply from two wise men. The first is Konrad Lorenz, who said: 'All the animal is in man, but not all of the man is in the animal.' We can therefore hope that *all of man is in the extraterrestrial, even if all of the extraterrestrial is not in man*. And, consequently, nothing prohibits our investigating what there may be of the rational in UFOs, at the same time being prepared to recognize the irrational in them when we encounter it.

"My other quotation will refer specifically to these words: 'when we encounter it.' I take the quotation from Rémy Chauvin,¹ the leader of French Ethology, and professor at the Sorbonne: 'Flatworms and dogs may well present very similar conditioned reflexes: there is nothing in this to upset us. *It is merely that, when you are dealing with the dog, it's the flatworm in him that you are studying.*'

"Applied to the relations of men with extraterrestrials, this means that men and extraterrestrials may very well present very similar behaviour: there is nothing in this to upset us: it is merely that when one is dealing with the extraterrestrial, it is

the man in him that one is studying. What there is of extraterrestrial in the extraterrestrial is bound to be non-human and will for ever remain incomprehensible. Your job is to investigate what there may be of the human in the extraterrestrial, and to study *that*."

"But, rather than reasoning," my cat continued, "Permit me, like Socrates, to question you once more. Tell me: in your opinion, what is it that is most important in the dog? What there is of the flatworm in him, or what there is of the dog in him?"

"Naturally, what there is of the *dog*," I replied.

"Why?"

"Because," I answered, "the dog is more evolved than the flatworm. What is dog in the dog thus corresponds to a higher level of complexity than that in him which is flatworm. The *global* behaviour of the dog is thus never the behaviour of the flatworm. He only acts like a flatworm very rarely, and in his most elementary activities."

"And what," continued my cat, "is it that is most important in man? Is it that in him which is man, or that which is animal?"

"That in him which is man," I replied "surely, and for the same reason. That in him which is animal never acts alone, except perhaps for the few gross functions in which his human thought cannot intervene. Even when he eats, even when he makes love, and when he fights, his human thought intervenes and elaborates everything."

"Bravo," said my cat. "*And if there is something of the human in the extraterrestrial, tell me, which is it that is the more important? The human, or the non-human, by virtue of which latter he surpasses you in being able to arrive in your world?*"

I did not reply. I was thinking. I was thinking of all the witless folk who obstinately go on objecting that if "They" were here, "They" would contact us, whereas the correct reasoning is that if "They" acted like us "They" would be *men*, and therefore *could not be here, because our*

minds cannot understand how they arrive here.

Such, Mr. Editor, is the teaching given me by my cat. It seems to me to be all the more excellently reasoned out inasmuch as I myself reason in the same fashion.²

Yours sincerely,

Aimé Michel.

P.S. From Aimé Michel's cat:

My Master is a confounded liar. I never said anything of the sort. It is all invented by him, and if this amuses you, it's because you believe in fairy tales, as it is only in fairy tales that cats talk and reason. And, if you tell me that this is of no importance, or you remind me of the line by that good writer of fables, Lafontaine:

Tout parle dans mon livre, et même les poissons . . .

then I advise you to ask yourself whether there are not, in Magonia, fables that make everybody smile because in those fables even the men talk! Finally, if this latter feature amuses you, it is because *you have only half understood it. For it means that there could not be contact without domestication*. This advise is worth bearing in mind. That is why I am adding this P.S. (apocryphal).

Signed,

GRISONNE
("Tabby-Grey")

NOTES

1. Rémy Chauvin: "Psychophysiologie" Vol. II of *Précis de Sciences Biologiques* (Masson et Cie, Paris 1969). The flatworm (French *planaire*, Latin *Dugesia dorotocephala*) is a worm on which numerous conditioning experiments have been carried out, particularly in the U.S.A. (McConnel, Jacobs, Kimbell, Pirok, Best, Rubinstein, Hartry, Morton, Keith-Lee, etc.). See Bibliography in more recent editions of W. H. Thorpe: *Learning and Instincts in Animals* (Methuen and Co., London).
2. Aimé Michel: *The Problem of Non-Contact* in "The Humanoids" by Charles Bowen and collaborators, (Neville Spearman Ltd., London, 1969).

A WEIRD ENCOUNTER IN UTAH

By Jerome Clark

WHAT follows is a story that until fairly recently even ufologists would have dismissed as "unbelievable". Had it occurred, say, five years ago and received publicity then, some of us would probably have attempted to apologise for it, pointing—as a certain late American UFO research organisation was prone to do—to much better-documented but certainly less interesting, less conclusive sightings as proof that "the truth" is not all that hard to swallow.

Fortunately, in the interim we all have had time to grow, and thanks in no small measure to the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW*, we have come to expect "the facts" (if such, of course, they are) to be fantastic. We are dealing, we know now, with forces infinitely more complex, infinitely less susceptible to easy earthbound theorising, than the interplanetary visitors once so beloved by us all.

The incident to be described, which took place in June of 1969, was related to me several months ago (from the time of writing) in the course of a lengthy interview with the two witnesses, both of them acquaintances whom I had known slightly during my days as college student in Minnesota. There is no doubt in my mind that the witnesses gave me a straightforward, honest account of what happened to them (at least as they understood it).

Wendel Meyer and Nancy Jensen are pleasant young people whose life style would cause some to label them as "hippies", whatever that much-abused expression means. Like others involved in the subculture, they harbour some little interest in the occult, but this interest does not necessarily extend to the topic of UFOs. I am establishing this point so that the similarities between their story and other ones (such as the Barney and Betty Hill case) may be appreciated in their proper context.

The witnesses, along with Aaron, Nancy's son from a former marriage, left Moorhead, Minnesota, in the middle of the month on a vacation trip to California. Leaving in the morning, they passed through the Dakota Badlands that night; early the next day they arrived in Yellowstone National Park. From then on Wendel remembers nothing until he saw the lights of Salt Lake City, Utah, about midnight.

Travelling southwest of Salt Lake City sometime between midnight and 1.00 a.m., Wendel "regained consciousness," as he put it. "All of a sudden it was like I woke up," he told me. "I saw a white post in front of me, and I couldn't turn the steering wheel. So I ploughed right into it and knocked four over in all. At 90 mph there should have been more damage."

Damage to the car included nothing more than a flat tyre, a broken shock absorber, mixed-up turn signals and a very slightly-dented bumper where the collision with the posts occurred.

After Wendel had changed the tyre, Nancy offered to drive. Before very long, however, she began to feel "very uncomfortable", suspecting that they were being followed. She glanced into the rear-view mirror to see yellow and white lights behind the car, but the sight did not especially strike her.

The lights were moving toward them from the wrong side of the divided highway. Nancy finally called Wendel's attention to them and they watched them for about five minutes before the lights made an abrupt turn to the left. "I don't remember seeing any turn-off there either," Wendel observed.

Wendel and Nancy were travelling through the salt flats and through fairly mountainous territory. Seeing something flying over the hills, Wendel said, "It's in the air now."

"That," Nancy remarked to me much later, "is when we started getting paranoid."

The object was travelling the same speed as they were, staying at an even distance behind them. Then, shifting tactics, it flew closer—to within a hundred feet of the car—and emitted a faint humming sound, "like an electronic wail in a flying saucer movie." The frightened couple were nearly blinded by the light, and they felt "funny vibrations" all through their bodies. In the backseat 2½-year-old Aaron started crying.

The back window opened one inch, apparently on its own, then closed. Aaron stopped crying.

At this point Wendel panicked and stepped down on the accelerator, but whereas before the car had been doing 70 mph, now it dropped down to 60. "Oh Christ," Wendel swore as he watched the light loom close behind them, "it's going to get us!" But then the UFO drifted back to where it had been before.

Wendel pulled the car into a rest area and turned it to face the divided highway. The object stopped in the air on the other side and hovered quietly.

It was then that they noticed a "camper" parked nearby. There were lights on inside, indicating that whoever was there might be awake. Nancy suggested that Wendel walk over and inform the inhabitants about the UFO, but he declined, feeling inexplicably uneasy. Shortly thereafter both of them saw what they could describe only as a "ghostly face" peering out at them from the camper. What happened next, however, made them forget *that* for the

For when Wendel looked across the divided highway, he gasped in astonishment and fear. Something