

# THE "CAT-FLAP" EFFECT

*Aimé Michel*

Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton

*"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be;  
and that which is done is that which shall be done."  
— Ecclesiastes, Ch. 1, v. 9*

WHEN French people are about to get married, they quote a saying that sums up two thousand years of conjugal wisdom: they say: "The time comes when you just have to draw a line and put an end to the situation." And some even go on to add: "one way or the other."

Well now, the time has come for me too to draw the line and make an end of it: and so this will probably be my last contribution to Ufology.

The reason for this is not, of course, that I am about to get married. (My children are the ones who are now at the marrying age!) No. It is simply that, when I was making a detailed examination of the UFO wave of the autumn of 1954, I had a particular purpose in mind: namely to introduce the scientific method into the study of UFOs, even though this would mean that others and not I myself would have to do the actual work.

Well now, this has already come about, and it is being done well — in France at any rate — since GEPAN began to produce their first findings. Their first report (Spring 1978) master-minded by Claude Poher, has convinced those of France's scientists who have been willing to study it, that the UFOs are indeed a real and important problem, and one well deserving of their interest.<sup>1</sup>

Poher is at this moment on sabbatical leave somewhere on the high seas in a boat that he built with his own hands. His place in Toulouse has been taken by Alain Esterle, another engineer at the French National Centre for Space Studies (C.N.E.S.). Esterle is a competent, painstaking, thorough type of man. He and his team have spent their first year of research in drawing up the shape of the programme that their penetrating investigation into the UFOs will take. Those who have read through this study programme<sup>2</sup> realize that never before has any group of investigators compiled so exhaustive a method for looking at all conceivable aspects — whether known or possible or merely suspected — of the UFO phenomenon, not excluding those aspects of the phenomenon which still lie outside the field with which our scientific method is able to cope. In France, at any rate (quite apart from such questions as the maintenance of a state of permanent alert, and the surveillance of the national territory) the era of the private UFO investigator is over, for only the professional scientists are possessed of those

large-scale means — laboratories and computers and so on — that will be required if any new progress in UFO research is to be made. Thanks to the resources available to the C.N.E.S., backed up by the Army, Navy, and Gendarmerie, one can now be sure that, henceforth, nothing further will happen anywhere in France without being investigated thoroughly — with, of course, the obvious exception of anything that might possibly take place *without attracting human attention and so without our knowledge.*

\* \* \* \*

It is towards this last-mentioned possible aspect of our problem that I should now like to direct my final reflections.

For this purpose, I shall base myself not on Ufology itself, but on the speculations now going on among astrophysicists regarding the subject of extraterrestrial life. The impatient reader may perhaps think that I am going to try once again to prove the E.T. Hypothesis to him. Let him be patient! Having followed with close attention the discussions and discoveries of the astronomers over the course of recent years, I propose — on the contrary — to prove that a throughgoing study of the E.T. Hypothesis solely from the astronomical standpoint will inevitably end in our envisaging the existence of an *Ultra-E.T.H.* comprising all realities of psychism and of the history of our planet, including also all that we still regard as pertaining to the realm of parapsychology, and even of religion.

\* \* \* \*

At the end of last June (1979) there was held in Las Vegas the first world congress of engineers to discuss the problem of interstellar galactic propulsion.

Convened by the most eminent American engineering association, this congress had as its objective the examination of all the possible means for converting into reality something that, only fifteen or twenty years ago, still seemed to pertain to the realms of science fiction: namely travel from star to star (ie. from sun to sun) across the Galaxy. I have no knowledge as yet of the papers that were read there, but there were expected to be several hundreds of them. It may well be that at that conference there was far more talk of the difficulties than of the means for achieving so formidable an enterprise. Nevertheless, it remains a fact that, if we date the birth of modern science from the discovery of the quanta (Max Planck, 1900), then it has taken only 79 years from that date for engineers to be considering that the time has come to examine the means available for

effecting this Great Voyage — the prelude to the *Diaspora* of mankind (terrestrial) throughout the Galaxy.

\* \* \* \*

On the other hand a number of astronomers and physicists (Stephen Dole and G.K. O'Neill for example) have calculated — and have done so quite separately — that, within the framework of only those means that are available to present-day science, a minimum of one million years, and a maximum of ten million years, would elapse between the first interstellar voyage and the total occupation of the Galaxy.

In other words, (a) we are, at this moment, already studying the means for leaving our solar system and, (b) even if we admit that this Great Departure can only become possible in a few centuries from now, the entire Galaxy will be occupied by mankind (terrestrial) — or, rather, by its descendants — in from one million to ten million years from now.

\* \* \* \*

It is from this point onwards that I now request the reader's close attention, for I am about to introduce the *Cat Flap Effect* which, I think, will alter radically all our previous speculations about "extraterrestrial" life.

Up till now, the big preoccupation of the astronomers dedicated to the *Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligences (S.E.T.I.)* has been to find the most plausible solution for *Drake's Equation*, as set out, for example, in 1973 by Sagan in his article "On the Detectivity of Advanced Galactic Civilizations" in *Icarus* No.19, p.350:-

N being the number of galactic "civilizations" capable of communicating with us, this equation is written as  $N = RL$

where L is the presumed *lifetime* of a civilization, and R is the product of six highly speculative factors of probability, such as the "probable" number of stars having a planetary system; the "probable" number of planets "suitable for life"; the "probable" number of those planets where life has appeared; the "probable" number of those planets that have given birth to an intelligent species, etc., etc.

All these "probabilities," about which we know nothing whatsoever, are highly uncertain and so naturally they are — like every probability — inferior to 1. The product of them can therefore naturally only tend towards zero.

We see thus that, despite our immense desire to know, S.E.T.I. is a well-nigh desperate piece of research. In fact, all the conferences and all the publications on this theme have only ended in a mass of contradictory and unverifiable suppositions, and you can see convincing proof of this merely by reading through the bibliography<sup>3</sup>.

But the two facts noted above, namely that (a) we men, after less than a hundred years of advanced science, are already studying the means of setting out for the stars, and that (b) a few millions of years will suffice for us to occupy the whole Galaxy, these two

facts render Drake's Equation totally useless and totally obsolete.

For it is in fact useless for us to know (even very vaguely) how many stars have "suitable" planets, how many of them have produced life, etc. (see what we have said above), *inasmuch as, if only one single planet in the whole of our Galaxy were more advanced than ours is, this would suffice for some portion of the Galaxy, or indeed for the whole of it, to be occupied already.*

*The Cat-Flap* is the technology of the first interstellar voyage: the first civilization to cross the *Cat-Flap* point explodes, literally, into Galactic Space, and occupies it totally, *within a negligible period of time (i.e. between one and ten million years) compared to the cosmological durations of time which are registered not in millions of years, but in billions.*

\* \* \* \*

The numerous and uncertain questions raised by Drake's Equation are thus replaced by one single, solitary question, to wit: has anyone else yet crossed the *Cat-Flap*?

This question, which at first sight looks as uncertain as the R factors in Drake's Equation, can (and should) be put in a far more striking fashion, namely as follows: **What is the Probability that we are the most evolved beings in the Galaxy?**

For, once the question has been put in these terms, the reply given by astrophysics is inclined towards the view that the probability of such a situation is virtually *nil*.

In fact there are tens of billions of stars of the same type as the Sun, and the majority of them are older than the Sun — *older than the Sun by billions (not millions) of years.*

Consequently it is virtually infinitely improbable that we could be the first species to reach the *Cat-Flap* threshold. Indeed, on the contrary, it is infinitely probable that the *Cat-Flap* was passed by somebody else billions of years ago and that, during the whole of the vast period of time that has elapsed since then, the Galaxy in its entirety has been occupied.<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

If we accept this (and let us remember that the only alternative is that we are the most evolved of all beings in Space) then we must at once face up to certain consequences which totally alter the whole of our perspectives, historical, philosophical, and indeed religious too.

We would, for example, have to face up to the fact that "somebody" (or "something") was already around when the Earth came into existence; that this "somebody" was present (but, indeed, were "they" merely *present*?) throughout the whole evolution of life on Earth, the appearance of man, and the whole of his history.

And furthermore we must face up to yet another consequence: how are we going to be able to imagine for ourselves what that "somebody" or "something" is like, when 90% of all that we know at this very

moment in 1979 was unknown to our own grandparents less than one century ago?

It is not surprising that the astrophysicists have detected nothing in Space resembling any sort of human activity such as we would define as "intelligent." What *would* indeed be surprising would be for the contrary to be the case. What, pray, is our own "intelligence" likely to be in a few billions of years from now, if men of my own generation now no longer recognise the world that they knew in the days of their own childhood? 5

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, here I am now, talking about my age. Let us just leave the matter there, then. I have nothing more to say on our subject — that is to say, if the reader agrees with me that, in fact, while we have only been discussing astrophysics in this article, that is, nonetheless, *our subject* — this subject which we — my cat Grisonne and I — have so often discussed in our beloved *FSR*. Since her mention of this *Cat-Flap* — for it was Grisonne herself who suggested it to me in the first place — she too has had nothing more to say on our subject, and I must in truth confess to you that she has aged quite a bit, and she is sick and somewhat senile.

Let this then be the expression of our final thanks and of our adieux to our readers, to all of whom I wish a long life.

#### References

1. The *Pohar Report* (June 1978) has not been published because it is too bulky, but it isn't "secret."
2. July 1979. This likewise is not secret. It is simply a study programme.
3. For example, in the article by T.B.H. Kuiper and M. Morris, in *Science*, Vol. 196, p.616 (1977). There are many other articles too which are more recent, but less easily available, and there has scarcely been any advance since then on what Kuiper and Morris say. The only interesting bit of progress has come from David W. Schwartzman (Howard University) in *Icarus*, Vol. 32, pp. 473-475 (1977), wherein, discussing the extreme brevity of the period between the birth of advanced science and the beginnings of the Space Adventure, Schwartzman observes that this period in the history of a civilization is like a mere flash in the immensity of cosmic time, and that we Earthmen are consequently now living through a rare episode and one that is, maybe, *unique at this moment in our Galaxy*. As a consequence of which the Earth, as it is at this present moment, is perhaps a very interesting and precious "object" for "alien" intelligences — something comparable, say, to the birth of a child in a family.
4. The objection could obviously be made that "occupation" (i.e. settlement) might no longer be an interesting activity or no longer an ethically attractive activity for more evolved "minds." But let us point out precisely this: the Earth hasn't been "settled" by others. It belongs to man, who is free to perpetrate here all the follies and stupidities that he desires. The concept of "occupation" or "settlement" which we are here discussing is clearly something of a different nature. Of what nature? That is a profound and difficult philosophical question I leave to the reader for him to meditate upon it.
5. The repeated failure of the astronomers to detect the faintest trace of "intelligent" activity in Space can also

be explained by Schwartzman's *rarity factor*. This rarity, which is deduced from two quite certain facts, namely the enormous durations of cosmic time and the brevity of the *technological episode*, would not of course exclude absolutely the possibility of a chance contact with another "cosmic rarity" like ourselves. It would merely render such a chance contact *improbable*, something which would only occur at very great intervals.

There is also another hypothesis — and a *frightening* one — namely that, if we have detected nothing in Space, this is because there is nothing there, every burst of intelligent life being doomed to end in suicide through its own "technological episode." Such a state of affairs would be the final word in the vast mystery of all things. The whole Universe would then simply be nothing but one immense continuous catastrophe.

But such a hypothesis contradicts the laws of large numbers: it would mean that every evolution, without one single exception, commits suicide at the close of its "technological episode." But should just *one* civilization, amid the vast infinity of historical chances, not commit suicide, then, sooner or later, that civilization will find itself coming up to the *Cat Flap*, and, once across it, that civilization will be sowing its life throughout the entire Universe. And so we are brought back once more to the same prospect of a Universe that is already totally "occupied" (whatever the precise meaning that one gives to this word).

And so I, for my part, believe that the far-distant descendants of what we call "mind" — which is in fact none other than the human mind — have already developed, millions of centuries ago, new modes of being that are beyond the capacity of our present intellect to grasp. Let us always bear in mind the billions of years that still lie ahead of us in our future (if we don't commit suicide), whereas it has only taken a few hundreds of millions of years for life on our Earth to evolve from the mollusc to man.

A new book . . .

## UFO PHENOMENA AND THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST

Edited by Richard F. Haines

The first book by professional scientists devoted to a commentary on the wide variety of phenomena associated with UFOs, with contributions by psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, a psychiatrist and a parapsychologist.

Dr. Haines, a research scientist at the Life Sciences Directorate at Ames Research Center, obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. from Michigan State University. He is a member of the Center for UFO Studies founded by Dr. J.A. Hynek.

THE SCARECROW PRESS

PO Box 656

464 pages  
Price \$18.50

METUCHEN, N.J. 08840  
USA

UK Distributors: Bailey Bros & Swinfen,  
Warner House, Folkestone.

Price £12.95

# RETRIEVALS OF THE THIRD KIND – Part 2

A Case Study of Alleged UFOs and Occupants in Military Custody

*Leonard H. Stringfield*

This contribution to FSR is based on a paper delivered by the author at the MUFON Symposium on July 29, 1978. © Leonard H. Stringfield (address: 4412 Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227, USA).

THE first part of this paper concluded with Abstract VII in which for the first time the name of a witness had been given. The witness, an Air Force Major named Daly, claimed that in April 1953, he had conducted an analysis of the metal of a crashed UFO. Unfortunately, but understandably, we are obliged to return in the next few abstracts, to testimony from un-named witnesses, but from time-to-time, I am happy to say, a name emerges.

## **Abstract VIII: Features of dead humanoids described and one seemed to be female**

"I'm almost positive it happened in 1953" said my informant, a man with a long career as a pilot in the military, who held the rank of warrant officer in the army during the early 1950s. Now serving in the Air National Guard, he stood by me, facing a large wall map of the U.S.A. in a backroom of the Administration Building at Lunken Airport in Cincinnati. Earlier, in a large front room, before about 25 pilots, I had just spoken on the subject of UFOs. It was now the late summer of 1977, as the man tried to recall the exact time when he stood as a witness, at a distance of about 12 feet, peering at five crates on a fork lift inside a hangar at Wright-Patterson AFB.

In each of three crates, he said, were the recovered dead bodies of small humanoids; the contents of the other two crates were not discernible. As he related this astonishing information in a matter-of-fact manner, he pointed vaguely to an area in Arizona on the map. "Here's where it approximately happened," he said. "It was in a desert area but I don't have the name of the location."

There was no one else in the map room when he told me about the incident. He made certain of that. "It's still a secret, and at the time I had to swear to it," he said. "I was in the right place at the right time when the crates arrived at night by DC-7."

As we stood at the map, my informant described what appeared to be hastily prepared wooden crates. In these, little humanoids, appearing to be four feet tall, were lying unshrouded on a fabric, which he explained prevented freeze burn from the dry ice packed beneath. As a number of Air Police stood

silent guard near by the crates, he managed to get a reasonably good but brief glimpse of the humanoid features. He recalls that their heads were disproportionately larger than the bodies, with skin that looked brown under the hangar lights above. The head appeared to be hairless and narrow. The eyes seemed to be open, the mouth small, while the nose, if any, was indistinct. The humanoids' arms were positioned down alongside their bodies, but the hands and feet, he said, were indistinct. When asked about their attire, he said they appeared to be wearing tight-fitting dark suits and, because of the tight-fit, there was one revealing feature – and a surprising one at that – for one of the humanoids appeared to him to be female. He added: "Either one of the aliens had an exceedingly muscular chest or the bumps were a female's breasts." Later, he learned from one of the crew members, with whom he bunked at the barracks, that the body of one of the aliens was, indeed, that of a female.

My informant also heard from the crew member that one of the little humanoids was still alive aboard the craft when the U.S. military team arrived. Attempts made to save its life with oxygen were unsuccessful.

Another question, an important one, was promptly answered by my informant. That question was how the military knew about the crash, and where to go. He said he heard from a crew member that the UFO was picked up by special tracking equipment at Mt. Palomar in California. They provided the coordinates to the military to determine the crash area. The retrieved craft was found intact, he later heard, and was sent to Wright-Patterson. He had no more details as to when or by what means.

## **Comment**

There were other details furnished by my informant concerning his encounter at Wright-Patterson – and on other sensitive UFO issues that might be identifiable or traceable to him. At his request, I have therefore avoided using these data. For certain, there are a lot of things connected with the UFO that the public does not know about.