

## **The strange case of Dr “X” – part 2**

**Aimé Michel**

### **Brief Review of the Facts**

During the night of November 1-2, 1968, an individual — whom I have called Dr “X” — claims that he witnessed a very complicated spectacle involving the movements of two objects which fused into one and then vanished on the spot. The duration of the alleged spectacle is several minutes. For ten years prior to the sighting, Dr “X” has been suffering from a hemiparesis of both limbs on the right side, resulting from a war-wound received in Algeria on May 13, 1958, and he also has a fresh wound on the left leg, not healed, dating from three days previously (October 29, 1968). After the sighting these two wounds are healed.

On November 19, 1968, a triangular scarification appears around his navel. Next day, the same kind of scarification appears in the same place on the stomach of his 18-month-old baby son.

My fellow-investigators and I interviewed Dr “X” and his wife during the next few days following the sighting. In the winter of 1969 we start our case-book on the affair. In the spring, after the snow has thawed, we proceed to conduct investigations on the spot. In May I compiled a report, which is published in *Flying Saucer Review's* Special Issue No. 3 (September, 1969) [*UFO Percipients*]. In that report (page 11. col. 2) I indicated that a complete publication of this case was unfortunately not possible at that time in view of the identity of the witness and the personal nature of the phenomena observed.

The purpose of this second report is to give further facts about the case and to set forth the thoughts that it has prompted in me during the course of the three years that have elapsed.

### **1. The Triangle**

For over two years the abdominal triangle continued to be a recurrent phenomenon, reappearing at intervals of about three weeks (but varying from a simple triangle to a triple one), remaining visible for two or three days, then vanishing in a few hours and leaving no trace. When the triangle appeared on the abdomen of the father it generally came half-a-day later on the abdomen of the little boy. Its manner of disappearance on the child was the same as on the father. All dates, times, durations, and particular circumstances have been recorded, and might serve as the subject of a special study. I will confine myself at present however to relating one specially remarkable feature.

On the evening of November 1, 1969, the first anniversary of the incident, my wife and I went to have dinner with Dr “X” and to spend the night at his house. On our arrival there, I ask

him, jestingly, whether he has not perhaps some original piece of geometry on his navel to show me.

“No. Nothing at all”, he says. “See for yourself.”

He unbuttons his shirt and all of us are able to see that indeed his abdomen is absolutely normal. It is now about 7.30 p.m. Present, in addition to Dr “X”, there are his wife, my wife, and myself. The baby, now 28 months old, has already been taken, a few days previously, to the home of the grandparents, 60 kilometres distant, and has not been seen again by the parents since his departure. The grandparents knew nothing at all (and still, in August, 1971, know nothing at all) about the adventure of the night of November 1-2, 1968.

We dine and we chat. Dr “X” is with us the whole time. At about 11.00 p.m., I ask him to play a little music for us (let us recall that he is an exceptionally gifted musician, endowed with a virtuosity of professional calibre). So he sits down at the piano and starts to play. Suddenly he stops, with an expression of astonishment, utters a quiet oath, stands up, unbuttons his shirt, looks at his stomach, and says: “It's here. It's beginning again.” We in turn take a look: the triangular reddening is indeed starting to appear.



I had already had the opportunity on several occasions to inspect the triangle when at its maximum colouring. This was however the first time that I had watched it appearing. So I look very closely. The triangle is very precisely outlined and resembles a mild sunburn.

We continue our discussion for a minute or two, and then we go to bed. I omit here one very complicated nocturnal incident on which I shall perhaps give a report later. (This inevitable

omission is unfortunately typical of cases like this one — for Dr “X” is not unique in the world).

Next morning, while we are all still very tired, a thought suddenly comes to one of us: *what about the child? Has he got the triangle too?*

So Dr “X” telephones to the grandparents, while I listen in on the other receiver. And by coincidence we get the grandmother who, completely distraught, is herself just on the very point of telephoning us: while giving the baby his morning bath she has just discovered “a sort of wound surrounding the navel — shaped like a triangle.” The good lady is in a desperate state and she swears that the baby has nevertheless been well guarded and well looked after: should she call a doctor, she asks. “No” replies Dr “X”, and he reassures her and tells her that “this happens sometimes to the baby” and that “it is of no importance.” And he hangs up.

## 2. The Child



The child is now more than four years old and is at kindergarten. He is a little fellow with exceptional vitality, very intelligent, and even exhausting to be with. For about two years following upon the incident of November 1-2, 1968, he suffered badly from insomnia. This was very troublesome for his parents, and it was necessary to have him treated by a child specialist. The parents have never spoken of the incident in the presence of the child, so that he should have absolutely no knowledge whatever of it.

Nevertheless, he began telling his schoolmistress one day that he “*would go away in the red machine later on.*”

“What red machine?” asks the astonished schoolmistress.

“The big red round machine that made a *fou-fou* noise in the sky, with flashes.”

The teacher does not at first give her full attention to these things that the child is saying. But, as he continues to insist on it, she decides that it would be advisable to tell the parents (who are very much at a loss for a soothing explanation).

The parents continue as before to say nothing whatever to the child, but he nevertheless (to their considerable concern) goes on repeating frequently that one day he “... will go off into the sky with the big red machine.”

### **3. The Father**

Since November 2, 1968, the people around Dr “X”, although knowing nothing of the incident, have a tendency to note perplexing coincidences of a telepathic nature. I myself have recorded such coincidences on two occasions:

(a) I have already described briefly (see page 12 of my previous report, in FSR Special Issue No. 3) how one of the best French specialists in hypnosis, a Bordeaux doctor, put Dr “X” under deep hypnosis three times, with a view to interrogating him. These sessions took place on December 21 and 22, 1968. Throughout the whole of the week previous to December 21 I was constantly obsessed by a theme from Liszt, a composer towards whom at that time I did not feel myself drawn in the least. I dreamt of the theme by night, and during the day I would persistently start whistling it as soon as my thoughts had turned to something else, and it reached such a point that it irritated my wife, who suggested several times to me that I should “put another record on”. This obsession of mine ended on December 19 or 20.

On the evening of December 21, after a hypnotic session that was particularly tiring for Dr “X”, I suggested that, in order to relax, he should sit down at his piano. “Gladly”, said he.

He sits down, and at once starts to play the very tune that has been obsessing me. I listen in astonishment, and then I tell him what I have just related above. He replies that, throughout the whole of that week, at his piano, he too has been constantly studying this same piece of music. His wife confirms this.

(b) On a certain date, which unfortunately I did not note down, I was working in my office. My wife was busy in her work-room separated from my office by two doors, a flight of stairs, and the length of a corridor. From the work-room the telephone can be heard — but not conversation.

Suddenly the telephone rings. I lift the receiver. It is Dr “X”. I would add that he seldom telephones me, rarely more than once a month, and that sometimes several months go by without his 'phoning me, and that I have numerous telephone calls daily from other people.

We chat for a moment, and then I hang up. A few minutes later, my wife comes into my office and says: “It was Dr “X” who 'phoned you.” I ask her how she knows this. She explains that, as the 'phone bell rang the first time, the image of Dr “X” immediately came into her mind, accompanied by a feeling of absolute certainty.

According to the parapsychologists, this telephone phenomenon is common with certain people. However such is not the case with my wife, who belongs to the category that J. B. Rhine calls “the goats” — i.e., individuals who are devoid of any “gift”.

I am not claiming that these two facts signify anything. They are merely coincidences. What I am reporting here is simply that, since November 2, 1968, a sort of game is going on among the people around Dr “X”, and that this game consists in noting down such coincidences as this, which have multiplied to the point that they attract attention. It had not been like that before November 2, 1968.

#### **4. Poltergeists?**

Dr “X” and his wife say that in their home they have frequently been present at, or have been the victims of, inexplicable phenomena — such as objects that have moved, clocks that stop and start up again by themselves, and so on.

According to them, the old clock in their living-room has at times got three hours behind in the course of a single night. It is a mechanical clock, with weights and balance-wheel. I personally have never been present at such phenomena in Dr “X” 's house. In one particular case however the phenomena have been experienced and verified by qualified persons who are totally unaware of the other misadventures that have befallen Dr “X”. In the case to which I refer, the features are electrical phenomena which have something of the poltergeist about them and are identical with the phenomena studied at Rosenheim, in Germany, by Hans Bender and his fellow-workers of the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau and of the Max Planck Institute in Munich.<sup>(1), (2)</sup>

Without going into details, I will merely say that there was a failure of the electrical circuit in Dr “X” 's house, although the fuse-box was unaffected, and although the experts from the French Electricity Authority, examining the circuit and the fuse-box, could find no defect anywhere. The current would then come on again for no detectable reason. In at least one case something even more absurd happened, *for the electric current continued to flow despite the fact that the circuit had been broken and the circuit-breaker was tripped*. As these incidents were a great nuisance and the experts from the French Electricity Authority were getting nowhere, Dr “X”, growing impatient, asked them what then he ought to do. The head of the team replied, half-jokingly, half in earnest: “Sell the house. For this is outside our province. This is witchcraft!”

After a certain time the incidents ceased, for no known reason. The specialists on poltergeists will no doubt ask whether there was not a young girl at the age of puberty in the house?<sup>(3)</sup> The answer is: no.

All these incidents have been noted down, with the supporting documentary evidence, and dated. They — like the triangles — might well serve as the subject of a separate study.

## 5. The Mother

Mme “X” comes from one of those peasant families of the French Midi in whom the culture and delicacy of the old Provençal civilisation are combined with the realism of the soil. In the beginning she was profoundly distressed by the extraordinary changes that had occurred in her own life and the lives of the members of her family from November 2, 1968, onwards. Provence is not a land where marvels flourish. The Provençal legends are ironical, satirical, and sceptical; never magical like the Celtic, Germanic, or Scandinavian legends. The Midi has given France great jurists, great scholars, great military leaders, but very few writers, and not a single poet since the Troubadours.

Mme “X” consequently felt at first an unendurable sensation of unreality, as she has often told me. She expected me, and the other people whom she consulted, to find an explanation which would bring everything back once more on to a basis of logic and reason. When she began to perceive that this was impossible and that she and her family would be obliged — at least for the time being — to resign themselves to the realm of the irrational, despair was added to her impression of unreality. She started to consider that she would have to ask her husband to sell the house (which was built by him and is very beautiful) and go away and change their lives entirely.

Then her objective mind began to face up to this situation, which it was necessary to accept as a new and different reality. She is today quite calm. Nothing astonishes her any longer. From her point of view, it is the refusal to accept the extraordinary that — whenever this occurs — now seems to her to represent unreality. Since — to the extent that it is accepted — this extraordinary aspect lends a deep significance here to the Universe, and to life, and to death, the adventure experienced by her husband and her son has ended by giving her a kind of happiness and equilibrium never previously attained by her. Dr “X” and his wife have become profoundly religious people, for whom every circumstance and every event in life secretes or reveals some transcendental meaning. They present the spectacle of people who possess what others seek via the various initiations provided by Occultism. This purely subjective fact would not perhaps possess any interest for the investigator had it not been obtained through Mme “X” 's own conviction that everything her husband tells her about his personal experiences is entirely genuine. It is precisely because — after a long period of perplexity and refusal to accept the situation — Mme “X” herself has now arrived at this certainty that her husband is telling the truth, that both of them are now living in a state of inner peace, harmony, and love of life. They frequently say that “nothing more can happen” to them; that “neither pain, nor sickness, nor old age, nor afflictions, nor death, any longer constitute any problem” for them. And, what is perhaps even more significant, this state of mind is spreading out around them, among their friends and their relatives, *even among those who know nothing of the happenings that have caused it all to come about.*

Mme “X” 's certainly is worthy of attention for at least two reasons which I shall now proceed to examine:

On the one hand, many of the experiences reported by her husband are unacceptable by the usual criteria of verisimilitude and, on the other hand, she has to take him at his word, for neither she nor anyone else has ever been a witness of the events (except in the poltergeist cases mentioned above and in a few more episodes of the same kind).

## 6. The Evidence

Before penetrating to the heart of these facts which constitute the problem that we are examining in this report, let us recapitulate briefly the principal evidence that, right at the beginning of the affair, differentiates it from a mere fairy tale:

(a) An old hemiparesis of ten years' standing, that had been treated in vain for months on end by specialists in military hospitals, is cured totally and definitely in five minutes.

(b) A three-day-old deep wound is instantly cicatrised and healed, along with the periosteum.

(c) The recurrent triangle on the abdomens of the father and the son; and its simultaneous appearance on both of them when they are at a distance the one from the other.

(d) The extraordinarily complex geometrical and chronological coherence which only came to light after five months of investigations and complicated calculations — a coherence that it would have been absolutely impossible to have introduced in advance into a story that is seemingly incoherent. See particularly, in my previous report, the table and calculations on pages 12, 13, 14, and 15; the graphs on pages 13 and 15; and the facts emphasised in the key to the chart on page 13; one should think too of the coherence in the errors of appreciation (see paragraph 17 (c), at foot of page 12): if we were to suppose that all this had been deceptively cooked up, what Machiavelli would have been able to foresee that anybody would take it into his head to *make* such calculations? All the more so, as the angular data furnished by Dr “X” were requested from him on the spur of the moment *and at random*, in connection with the photographs taken subsequently by Pierre Guerin, the orientation of which photographs was consequently *a priori* unforeseeable because dependent on chance. Every mind familiar with scientific analysis will recognise in this coherence the *experimentum crucis*, the experimental demonstration that, *whatever the real nature of the experience reported by Dr “X”*, what we are dealing with is not a fairy tale but something else.

(e) The unsolicited memories of the child; these memories incidentally seem to concern a part of the phenomenon that was not observed (or reported) by the father. It is difficult to ascertain this for certain without questioning the child and thus introducing into his imagination facts that are foreign to his own experience. We must therefore wait patiently for him to talk.

(f) All this induces us to accept the reality of what Dr “X” has reported, without however (as will be seen) being in any way explicit as to the *nature* of that reality.

Bearing all this in mind, we can now tackle the embarrassing part of the problem: embarrassing for the investigator but, above all (as I have been able to see for myself) embarrassing for Dr “X” himself.

## 7. The Twilight of Reason

I have said that, in addition to the experiences of Dr “X” which are accompanied by some evidence, there are other experiences which are not accompanied by evidence and which therefore ultimately, for the investigator and for those close to him, come down in the end to the mere accounts of these experiences as given by the witness himself. At times these are facts (real or alleged) of a psychological nature, premonitions, interior voices, sensations and feelings, and so on. For example, if my wife and I were at the house of Dr “X” during the night of the first anniversary of his initial experience, this was because Dr “X” had several times “heard” a voice warning him that “something would happen that night.”

But frequently, too, it is a question of material, exterior facts, implying a physical activity. The traces of these facts are perfectly observable. We can measure them, photograph them, and take casts of them. But they obey a law which up to now has presented only one single exception... that of “poltergeists”: *these traces, photos, or measurements not merely prove nothing, but they are engineered in such a manner that they all tend to cast upon Dr “X” the suspicion of having fabricated them himself, and they consequently tend to discredit his testimony.* I will explain more precisely: they are not skilful hoaxes; in most cases there are only simple, elementary traces, just such as would have been left by the fact described by Dr “X” *if it had really happened*; except only that it all looks premeditated in order to cause us to doubt his story and in order to suggest to us the idea that in reality nothing happened and that he himself concocted the traces. Here is an example:

On several occasions Dr “X” has declared that he has been taken up into the air at night by levitation. If levitation exists<sup>(4)</sup>, it is a truly fantastic phenomenon, combining the two greatest mysteries of this world, namely gravity, and the relationship between matter and mind. Nothing could be more interesting than to observe such a phenomenon. The trouble is merely that nobody has ever been able to *see* Dr “X” levitating. He himself, more than anybody, is aware of what a poor case he makes for himself when he declares that he levitates, at home, in his house, a few metres distant from his wife, without her having ever been able to observe it, either because she is elsewhere in the house at the precise moment, or because she is sleeping so deeply that his calls to her (when, so he says, he is floating near the ceiling) “fail to awaken her”.

Worse still: the “proofs” are so laughable that a child would not dare to invent them. For example, a sticky flypaper is found, adhering inexplicably to the ceiling of the living-room which, being on two floors, is consequently in the neighbourhood of six metres high (19½ feet).

How did the flypaper get itself stuck up there? Dr “X” 's reply: “I suddenly started to levitate in the living-room just as, having unrolled the flypaper, I was about to place it somewhere else. Terrified to find myself rising, I put up my hands towards the ceiling so as not to bump my head on it. The flypaper remained sticking there, and then I fell down again gently.” True or false, this story leaves the hearer only two choices: either Dr “X” soars through the air like the flies and like St Francis of Assisi of the Golden Legend, or he sticks flypapers to the ceiling with a pole or whatever other means come first to hand. Will a reasonable man be

more inclined to believe in the existence of a miracle, or more inclined to believe in the existence of a pole?

But, if it was done with the pole, then Dr “X” is a jester. And in that case, even from the simple point of view of a psychologist, the problem is one of abnormality. How could a man of his intelligence, of his character, find pleasure in such games and then expect folk to believe him? Can you imagine Hynek or Vallée sticking flypapers on the ceiling and then describing how they have been levitating?

Furthermore Dr “X” is, as I have said, perfectly well aware of the derisory content of what he reports. I myself have seen this man (in a different matter) aghast at the offensive feebleness of the “proof” that an “inner voice” had promised him, and I have seen the tears come into his eyes as, in his humiliation, he kept repeating: “It's a load of humbug! A load of humbug!”

Shall we then consider the question of “second degree ruse”? In that case, Dr “X” would be concocting ostensibly absurd proofs so that their *very absurdity* might make it seem improbable that he had concocted them. This kind of “proof” has one weighty advantage: it is easy to stage. It has nothing of the sophistication of the Adamski photographs, for example, whose false technicality is suspect right from the word go. It is infinitely more subtle and more intelligent than that.

The investigator who is bent on securing the truth would like to be able to believe in this explanation, even if it meant losing a friend and introducing tragedy into a family that he respects.

But — and without its throwing any light whatever on the actual authenticity of what Dr “X” says — *we possess the proof* that he is not an impostor and that, at least in a certain fashion, he does himself believe what he tells us: this proof resides in the fact that, under deep hypnosis, when needles stuck suddenly into his fingers provoke no shudder or wince of pain and the flash of a cigarette-lighter being lit a few centimetres from his open eyes provokes no blinking, he relates to us precisely these same stories. The hypnosis has even revealed something else — something that we could never have guessed from the waking behaviour of this educated man: this something else is a profound physical distress, as though his own body is afraid of what his spirit has accepted — indeed has received joyously. The account given under hypnosis is accompanied by trembling, by pallor, by sweating, and even by spasms of the oesophagous (vomiting).

## **8. Occam's Razor**

Let us attempt to approach the truth by another method. Let us *try to believe as little as possible and to explain as much as possible*.

In the first place, is it possible to deny the whole affair lock, stock and barrel — that is to say, given the fact that Dr “X” is anonymous and given the fact that I am the only person who has mentioned the case, is it possible to suppose, say, that it is all a nice little fictitious novel by Aimé Michel?

No. It is indeed true that few people have met Dr “X” for the purpose of hearing the account of what I have reported in FSR. *But...* among those few people there are, to my personal knowledge: one astronomer of international repute (and soon there will be two); one French ufologist whose integrity and critical mind are respected by everyone; and also there is his wife. Then, in addition, there is the Bordeaux doctor, and his woman assistant. None of these people (any more than I myself) can declare that Dr “X” is speaking the truth. But all of them know that I have only reported what he says, plus my own reflections thereon.

Let us next seek to find an Occamian explanation (of minimum type) for the evidence produced.

#### **(a) The healing of the hemiparesis**

There are cases of hemiparesis (hysterical) and of other paralyses which can be healed suddenly (4), (5). Dr “X”, according to this argument, would have had a hysterical paralysis after being blown up by his landmine on May 13, 1958. Let us however note the diagnosis that was arrived at in the military hospitals by means of radiography: “sub-dural haematoma of left occipital region” (and in fact what he *had* was precisely a *right* hemiparesis), “possibly with occipital fracture.” The hysteria explanation is consequently not very satisfactory. No matter. Let us run Occam's razor over all the difficulties, and *let us accept this explanation*.

#### **(b) The new wound that healed in a few minutes**

Here, if we want to find precedents, we must go to Lourdes. From the medical point of view, and bearing in mind the details, this type of healing is called a “miracle”. It is at the very least a question of Parapsychology, and of the most controversial and disputed kind too, i.e., *involving physical effects*. The edge of our razor is getting a bit notched.

#### **(c) The triangle on the abdomen**

Hysterical stigmatisation is a proven and demonstrated experimental fact(6). We have accepted hysteria for (a). It can serve here too, *but only for the father!* How, indeed, could an eighteen-month-old child have the idea of a triangle which — as Piaget has shown — he only got much later? As regards the simultaneous appearance of the triangles, with an intervening distance of 60 kilometres, whereas the periodicity of the phenomenon was very irregular, varying from simple to triple — well, this is Lourdes again and miracles; it is Parapsychology with physical effects combined with telepathy: Our Occam's razor is going on strike. Well, at any rate *mine* is. It must be of poor quality.

#### **(d) The coherence of the calculations**

We are tempted to call on Parapsychology to explain the fact that a diffuse and absurd account should subsequently reveal mathematical structures(7).<sup>7</sup> But known precedents resemble only very remotely what we are encountering here in this case. In the experiments of Mackenzie in Brussels, calculations of a transcendental nature were indeed performed in a state of unconsciousness. But they were true calculations, with exact results. Here, in our case, there was at the outset no basis on which calculations might be made, and the results appear

with the same features of approximation as do the results of a physical experiment. Confronted experimentally with a *real* object, the witness makes a mistake in his evaluation. Mistakes of the same order appear subsequently in his account, and this for each of the seven occasions on which the reality of the object is called in question.

#### **(e) The Peruvian case**

Another physical miracle case, combined with a telepathic miracle between virtually one side of the world and the other.

At this point, let us call upon our reason to perform an heroic effort: all right. The Peruvian customs official and Dr “X” are, despite everything, fabulating hysterics, and there is no truth in their respective stories. All that remains now to be explained is how they managed to invent, practically at the same time and without knowing one another, the one in France and the other in Peru, the same old silly story.

It will be noted that, for the sake of Occam (and of our friend Fouéré, who is very attached to the famous razor) I have permitted myself some marvellous explanatory facilities, I have endowed Parapsychology with a highly elastic generosity, and I have assumed from the outset that Parapsychology (at a loss to find explanations for itself) was competent to provide explanations for me. The Virgin Mary too has helped me greatly in rescuing my flagging rationalism, and I shall surely be inspired one of these days to make a pilgrimage to Her at Lourdes in the company of the good fathers of miraculous memory, Père Condon and Père Menzel.

Meanwhile, while awaiting this edifying celebration, I may perhaps be permitted to repeat here what I once said to Dr “X”: “Even if — though I don't know how — you have concocted all this, and even if, while you are listening to me, you think yourself able to chuckle inwardly as you contemplate this excellent farce that you have staged, the problem raised by your false story remains in its entirety. It has merely changed its nature — — *and is even that certain?*”

### **9. De Natura Rerum**

Vallée, scientifically in *Passport To Magonia*, and then Keel, following in his various writings the bent of his imaginative pen, have in recent years diffused the highly stimulating idea that the complete spectrum of the UFO phenomenon might very well not relate to any concept now existing. The *Magonia* catalogue shows that a studied juxtaposition of the case histories permits us to detect no discontinuity at present from the *hardest* type of case (for example, film confirmed by radar, magnetometer, and marks on the ground) right the whole way across to the *softest* of cases (for example, the Santa Claus who, with his sack of toys, appears to a child in a dream).

Although I had discussed it a great deal beforehand with Vallée, the reading of his *Passport To Magonia* depressed me profoundly. His destiny seems to be to destroy all inner comfort, stealthily to spirit away the very armchair in which we are sitting, and to chuckle rudely at the results without leaving any respite for intellectual laziness.

If, in Ufology, one can pass imperceptibly from the illusory to the real, the vague conclusion that more or less consciously imposes itself upon the mind, is that the “real” — in this case — is only an insidious form of the illusory. This, as we all know, is the theme of my old adversary and friend Jacques Bergier, another supremely irritating personality, the genius incarnate of contradiction. According to Bergier, if there still exists any “UFO problem”, it is because men are idiots (the only assertion, incidentally, on which, up to now, Bergier and I are in agreement: that is to say, naturally, provided that this means with the exception of Bergier, me, and our readers). The men of this planet (says Bergier) are of feeble imagination. They refuse to grasp the fact that the illusory can be real, and *vice versa*; that by suitable manipulation of the illusory we can blow up the planet; that magicians are terrible liars, but that nevertheless it can sometimes happen that they manufacture *authentic gold (the alchemists) fallaciously*; that the scientists are unwitting magicians who are just as mendacious and just as illusory as the other magicians (Bergier is a Ph.D. in Chemistry and he worked with Madame Curie) although their illusory formulae are a bit more successful, though not very much, and that, in a word, the flying saucers are a junkload of hoaxes — which fact makes them eminently interesting. (Bergier reads and records everything on the subject.)

It will be understood that Bergier read with delight the catalogue given in *Passport To Magonia* and also the misadventures of Dr “X”. The deeper I got bogged down in my enquiry into this case the deeper was his rapture. In Bergier's system — which is an anti-system — Dr “X” presents no particular problem. On the one hand, Dr “X”, in his view, is a confounded liar and has never seen any of the things he talks about — though possibly he himself knows nothing of this. (For everybody is right); on the other hand, the healings, the triangles, and the other miracles only prove the stupidity of the doctors and scientists who are still frantically determined to reject anything that does not come about in accordance with their own formulae. Dr “X”, in short, is very interesting, but no more extraordinary, and no less extraordinary, than an apple falling from the tree. In general, Bergier says the scientists don't believe in flying saucers because it is unacceptable that the pilots of these craft hold no diplomas from either the Sorbonne or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and that he does not believe in the saucers any more than the other scientists do, because they are the *scientific* interpretation of a banal fact that Science rejects. Something, he says, did indeed happen to Dr “X”, but not what Dr “X” thinks, for the respective explanations proffered by the scientists and by the saucerians beget each other by a common dialectic of contradiction. But then what, according to Bergier, is the *real story* about Dr “X”? If he turns to Bergier's famous book(8) the reader will see that the philosophy of this original mind is a vision of the world, the particular application of which vision still remains to be established, particularly as regards Ufology.

As far as I myself am concerned, I would be satisfied if I could answer more limited questions, such as: how did the flypaper get stuck on the ceiling? Here we have a *physical fact*, and had anyone seen it happening before his eyes he would know enough about it to be able to satisfy me, at least for the moment. I think that the continuity from the factual to the illusory demonstrated by *Passport To Magonia* does not in the slightest justify any

assimilation of the former to the latter or inversely. Continuity does not exclude a change of nature: this is the most profound fact that we are taught by Palaeontology and by Systematics. No systematist will ever classify Newton among the *Gastropoda Opisthobranchia*. Nevertheless we know that Newton and the snail have a common ancestor, from whom they descend via *continuous evolution*, and that, in consequence, the orderly juxtaposition of all of their respective ancestors would permit the transition from Newton to the snail *without discontinuity*.

*Passport To Magonia* shows that there is something in common between Santa Claus and the machine at Socorro, just as between Newton and the snail, both, of whom, as living beings, were formed of cells and endowed with a nervous system, etc. If however the object of my study is the origin of the theory of gravitation, then I am running the risk of wandering slightly off the track if I go snail-hunting. If we can include Santa Claus and Socorro in one and the same catalogue it is only due to our ignorance. It is correct that there is not much difference between the body of a snail and an old piece of Newton's posterior, even when examined under the microscope. We know as much (perhaps!) about UFOs as a naturalist possessing a portion of the said most illustrious posterior would know about Newton and his theory of gravitation. Why, after that, should we be surprised that a Dr "X" disconcerts us, just as we are disconcerted by *all* the cases observed and studied in some depth? Let us imagine for ourselves the shock felt by the naturalist, stooping over the Newtonian relic, and suddenly hearing it establishing the truth of his proposition  $m \propto 1/d^2$  !

Amongst all the phenomena of the Universe, the one that interests us here is the only one that is ascribable to a kind of "mind" or "thought" that is sovereignly skilful at eluding the grasp of our own minds, at baffling our minds, at mocking their techniques — in a word, at *dominating* our minds. Whatever the nature of this other "mind" may be, it is present *here* in our world, and we are not *there* in its world. Let us remember the laughable attempts that a monkey makes to grasp his own image in the mirror when a facetious visitor points the mirror at the cage. This is *our situation vis-à-vis* the UFO phenomenon. It is a frustrating situation.

Father Gill remarked to me one day that this situation contains the risk or danger that any spirit of research will be discouraged. However no research can be validly undertaken on the basis of the illusion that the UFO phenomenon is just another phenomenon like the rest and that we can claim to be able to comprehend it entirely.

We shall never be able to comprehend it except in so far as it does not transcend human understanding, i.e., in that part of it which is the most modest portion of the phenomenon.

In a future article I shall set down some reflections on this difficult problem.(9)

## **10. A provisional assessment**

As regards the particular case of Dr "X", here are the conclusions which — with, of course all the necessary reservations — I venture to propose after three years of investigation, discussing, and cogitation:

(i) Even if we accept only the manifest evidence, that is to say the verifiable portion of this case-history, my opinion is that it reveals the intervention of some kind of “mind” or “thought” that is superior to all conscious human thought, and the intervention of a physical activity that man cannot equal.

(ii) If necessary, this intervention could perhaps be interpreted within the framework of Parapsychology in so far as Parapsychology can serve to interpret anything.

(iii) However, it seems that even the supposedly parapsychological phenomena recorded in this case must relate to, and have their origins in, the general framework of Ufology.

(iv) If this is so, then the case of Dr “X” would show that the “mind” or “thought” responsible for UFO phenomena possesses a direct knowledge of the minds of men (or at any rate of the minds of the witnesses) and that it can operate at a distance on the human mind, as well as on the human body; numerous confirmations of this will of course be needed.

(v) The absurdities noted in the behaviour of Dr “X” show that, even when backed by the entire goodwill of the witnesses, we must not rely on either the explanations or the opinions or the feelings of the latter for the furtherance of our knowledge of the phenomenon, but we must rely solely on critical study of all the details of the case. The witnesses (who are probably not witnesses by any chance or accident) must be respected. All that they do and say must be recorded with respect. These records and observations must then be treated with the same methods and the same critical caution as one would apply to any other experimental material.

It goes without saying that all this has to be understood on one definite condition: namely that the part of man that is most capable of getting to the bottom of the facts of the UFO phenomenon is man's rational intelligence. Is such however the case? Or should the UFO situation be approached in a religious spirit and seen as an intervention into the destiny of man and of his backward little planet? But that is another story.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Translation by Gordon Creighton.**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Notes**

(1) Bender, Hans: *The Rosenheim Poltergeist Case*. (Eleventh Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, September 5-7, 1968), p. 376.

(2) Karga, F., and Zicha, G.: *Physical Investigation of P-K Phenomena in Rosenheim* (ibidem, p. 384).

(3) Commandant de Gendarmerie Émile Tizané: *Sur la Piste de l'Homme Inconnu*. (Amyot Dumont, Paris, 1951.) Also *L'Hôte Inconnu dans le Crime sans Cause*. (Omnium Littéraire, Paris, 1962.)

(N.B.: For more than twenty years Commandant Émile Tizané was the French Gendarmerie's specialist in the investigation of cases involving facts of a poltergeistic nature.)

(4) Thurston, Herbert: *Les Phénomènes Physiques du Mysticisme*. (Gallimard, Paris, 1961.) Ch. I. (I do not know the title of the original edition of this exceptionally interesting book, the author of which is a British Jesuit and doctor. The British *imprimatur* is dated: Westmonasterii, die XVI junii MCMLI — Westminster, June 16, 1951.)\*

(5) Ellenberger, Henri F.: *The Discovery of the Unconscious*. (Basic Books, New York, 1970.) Pp. 90-91, 95, 143, 149, 289, 448, etc.

(6) Thurston: loc. cit. Ch. II. See also *hysteria* in Ellenberger.

(7) Mackenzie, William: *Metapsichica Moderna*. (Rome, 1923). Pp. 67-143.

(8) Bergier, J., and Pauwels, L.: *The Dawn of Magic*.

(9) Michel. Aimé: *Le Projet Dick* (to appear in FSR).

\* *Translator's Note*: This is evidently the French translation of Father Thurston's work which was originally published by John M. Watkins and is now out of print.— G.C.