

BRAND-NEW FLYING CARS: ABOUT FRAUDS, RUMORS AND SCIENCE-FICTION

Alejandro César Agostinelli (Argentine) & Luis R. González Manso (Spain)

"Teleportation: Although a common item of sf terminology, this word is (or has been) used in 3 different ways:

1. Charles Hoy Fort used it in *Wild Talents* (1932) as a synonym for 'psychokinesis' or, later, telekinesis; i.e. the ability to move objects by the power of the mind alone.
2. In sf of the 1950s and 1960s there was a tendency to use 'teleportation' as a special case of 'telekinesis', meaning the ability to move oneself from one place to another by the power of the mind alone; this is probably the commonest usage.
3. Some writers use 'teleportation' as the ability to move people or objects from one place to another by matter transmission; i.e. using scientific equipment to transmit items in the form of information-carrying waves, which at the destination are reconstituted into matter. A particularly implausible version (since there is no transmitting equipment at the far end) is the "Beam me up, Scottie!" gadget in *Star Trek*.
(Peter Nicholls)

The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction (1993)

Introduction

The idea that things or people can break space-time barriers or thermodynamic laws moving instantaneously for one point to another is already mentioned in old popular legends or sacred histories. It is also a common literary device in sf narratives, considered by many as the realm of human imagination. This phenomenon got renewed after WWII, when "teleportations" appeared in the saucerian scene, adding a new dimension to some incidents.

We could begin (along the line draw by Nicholls in his definitions) by considering teleportations as a macroscopic extension of human mind psi-abilities, among similar phenomena as bilocations, out-of-body experiences, or even the so called doppelgängers. From this speculative point of view we could consider as "failed teleportations" all those stories -so abundant in the paranormal literature- that refer to mysterious disappearances. It is not strange that, considering its apparently random and involuntary nature, the successful teleportations are just a few, even more so if we consider the HUGE dimensions of our Universe (1). Limiting the range to our planetary surface is not enough, because 70 per cent of Earth is covered by water and the rest is filled with deserts, jungles, etc. This idea could also gain some strength from its opposite, those mysterious apparitions, like the famous Kaspar Hauser, the "green children" of Woolpit, or all those big cats

roaming the British Islands, so far away from their native jungles. In that case, we could argue for a common cause to all those manifestations.

Some writers consider this phenomenon as part of a panoply of superhuman abilities mentioned in most major religions. As examples they cite the bilocations or teleportations accounts related to Father Pío of Pietralcina or the Venerable Mary of Jesus of Agreda, Sai Baba appearing in two places at the same time, or even the legend about the prophet Muhammad, who is said to have been instantaneously transported from Mecca to Jerusalem around the year AD 618. prior to his ascent to the seventh heaven (2). Nevertheless, it is tempting to substitute the idea of a wild and non-predictable human talent with the intervention of a higher entity. The designs of any creature endowed with supernatural powers are, by definition, inscrutable. But the human custom has always been to suppose that such "intelligence" can be bribed by sacrifices, flattering or pleading (gods), controlled by coercing magic (demons), or convinced by reason or emotional appeals (extraterrestrials).

Morris K. Jessup (1900-1959) was one of the pioneers who explored the old mysteries from an extraterrestrial point of view, foretelling the Ancient Astronauts craze of the 70s. Consequently, he was the first contemporary author to write about the teleportation phenomenon. He would even become a permanent actor in it when someone called Allende used a copy of his book to give an account of the only modern teleportation incident that has reached the silver screen... twice: the infamous (and hoaxed) Philadelphia Experiment.

Thus, the first allegedly well-documented case of a human teleportation was presented by Jessup to the public consideration in his book *The Case for the UFO* (1955) establishing from the very beginning the indissoluble relationship between this mystery and one even bigger, those amazing flying saucers.

Teleportation vs. Inquisition

Jessup related one incident collected by a Mexican XIXth century writer, González Obregón, in his book *Las Calles de México* (Streets of Mexico). According to Obregón, on 25 October 1593, an Spanish soldier who had been on sentry duty at the Governor's palace in Manila (Philippines) suddenly found himself in the main square of Mexico City, nine thousand miles away. The Holy Inquisition investigated and confirmed his allegations. In 1990, the British magazine *Fortean Times* (3) published a detailed research pointing that the narrative really was some kind of ghost story added by Father Gaspar of San Agustín (*Conquista de las Islas Filipinas*, 1698) a century after the alleged facts.

Curiously, contemporaneous with this second chronicler is the only other known incident, a short reference recorded by an English diarist (3):

Miscellanies, John Aubrey (London, 1695): "A gentleman of my acquaintance, Mr. M., was in Portugal, anno 1655, when one was burnt at the Inquisition for being brought thither from Goa in East-India, in the air, in an incredible short time from."

Bank of fog, curtain of silence

Several centuries (or just a few years, as you prefer) passed until the next teleportation incident, in 1958. Apparently, it was not made public at the time, and only surfaced several years later in John Keel's book *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* (1970). Besides, it is placed square in the middle of the contactee world (followed by astral travels, prophecies, etc.) so it is very difficult to asses:

"One night in November, 1958", Keel wrote, "an Arkansas truck driver (...) R.D. Smallridge was making a routine trip to deliver a truckload of eggs from Hardy, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee. He stopped for a cup of coffee, as was his habit, at an all-night truck stop near Black Rock, Arkansas. When he left the eatery, he checked his watch with the wall clock. It was exactly 2 A.M. (...) He headed for the highway again (...) but, according to his story, he never remembers reaching the highway. The next thing he knew he was pulling up in front of the luncheonette in Truman (60 miles away). When he walked into the restaurant and looked at its clock, he was astounded. It was 2:15 A.M. 'I had traveled sixty miles in eight minutes' he declared. This trip normally required changing highways (from Route 63 to Route 67) and passing over a state weight scale near Jonesboro. He could not remember doing any of this (...) A wide variety of strange, inexplicable events engulfed Mr. Smallridge after this. Eventually he gave up truck driving and became a minister, travelling about the country and preaching" (pp. 285-286).

The next case took place in Argentina in 1959, marking the beginning of one of the most clear constants of this phenomenon: the diversity of versions.

Argentine ufologist Oscar Galindez documented the best known (internationally) version, published by *Flying Saucer Review*, in 1985 (4). Gordon Creighton, who wrote the note, also mentioned the Spanish soldier case and the disappearance of a black car in Japan, after being briefly engulfed by "a puff of something gaseous". This article was widely read at the time and, along with Jessup's book, became the main source about this phenomenon to many writers.

According to Argentine daily newspaper *Diario de Córdoba* (circa 1959) "one day in 1959, an important Argentine businessman was driving back to the south of that country after a visit to Buenos Aires. He stopped for a night en route at a hotel in Bahia Blanca, with the intention of continuing his journey next day. On the following morning he got into his brand-new car and was just about to drive off from the hotel when he became aware of a 'cloudy mass (irradiating an strange and brilliant brightness) enveloping the whole car'. He felt later that he must have lost consciousness at this point, and the next thing he knew was that he was alone, sans car, in some deserted spot in the countryside. Seeing a lorry coming along the road toward him, he hailed the driver, and asked him for a lift into Bahia

Blanca. An astonished lorry-driver replied that he wasn't going to Bahia Blanca, that this place was Salt, and that Bahía Blanca was over a thousand kilometers away! (It lies 1.155 kilometers southeast of Salta). The businessman then looked at his wristwatch and found, to his amazement, that only a few minutes had elapsed since he has stepped into his car at Bahia Blanca. Bewildered, he climbed into the cab beside the lorry-driver, and they went off to report the matter to the local authorities. The authorities, equally dumbfounded by the story, telephoned to the police at Bahia Blanca, giving the registration number and description of the businessman's car, and after a brief investigation the Bahia Blanca police phoned back to say that the car in question was still there, just a few meters from the hotel, with the engine still running!

In 1976, another Argentine ufologist, Roberto Banchs, published *Las evidencias del fenómeno OVNI (Evidences for the UFO Phenomenon)* (5) and devoted a whole chapter to teleportations. There appears a more detailed version of this incident, but with curious differences:

(...) "A Mathematics teacher, Mr. N.N., about 50 years old, was driving his Chevrolet 1938 along Route 3. The time was 9 A.M. Suddenly, he heard a strange humming and a violet brightness surround him. He had time enough to stop his car at the side of the road before losing consciousness. Upon awaking, he found himself alone in a road, his car vanished and the landscape seemed to have changed. According to his wristwatch it was just 9:05 A.M. He was awake and unharmed. Seeing a lorry coming towards him, he hailed the driver asking for help, thinking he had been assaulted. When he discovered that he was at ten kilometers from Salta he acted with complete calmness: he went to the police asking them to draw up a report and telephoning a relative in Bahia Blanca. Two hours later, his relative found the car, undamaged, parked at the side of the road, where he left it. According to some versions, the very next day Mr. N.N. took a plane to the United States. (Extracted from *Diario de Noticias*, Buenos Aires, 10 February 1960)".

Both ufologists mentioned to have encountered an "odious curtain of silence" about the identity of the protagonist and also around the details of the incident, which prevent them to verify the real facts. In other words, they had found a non-verifiable story with the typical features of what years later would be known as "urban legends".

Fortunately, Roberto Banchs did not surrender, and according to a recent letter to one of the authors (LRGM), he was finally able to uncover the real facts. After obtaining several contrasting versions (*Clarín*, 2 February 1960; *El Atlántico*, 24 January 1960, etc.) he could track the original version, one published by the newspaper *Córdoba* in the Argentine town with the same name, in a series of articles appeared on 3, 10 & 17 October 1959. They were undersigned by "Agor", pen name of the president and founder of the *Asociación de Hermandad Cósmica* (Cosmic Brotherhood Association), Antonio O. Pérez Alemán (according to him, it was the name of an extraterrestrial craft's pilot, whom he was in telepathic contact). This being would have told him the story in one of his sessions, adding:

"The landowner (...) was transported by a Flying Disc from Jupiter, which covered the distance between Bahia Blanca and Salta, 1.579 kilometers in a straight line, in only 12 seconds!" (Córdoba, "Platos voladores por las rutas del mundo", 17 October 1979).

So, the source of the incident was not a reporter. Instead, all the incident was the offspring of the feverish mind of a contactee.

Nevertheless, it is useful to analyze the mutations suffered by the original account with the passage of time. The version cited in Banchs' book is much more dramatized, including details which made it more credible. For example, it includes an element that will surface years later in Barney and Betty Hill's abduction, an strange humming or beeping. Another credibility-loaded attribute is mentioning the type and brand of the vehicle, and pointing that the driver had time enough to park his car before losing consciousness. Another item we will find in posterior stories is the final car removal to United States. Banchs did not mention any fog or mist. Instead, he told of a violet brightness seen before the incident. This feature, reinforcing the "saucerian" tone of the incident, remind us of a well-known sf story by Jack Williamson, published in the May 1931 issue of Wonder Stories. In this story, entitled Through the Purple Cloud, Williamson describe the flight of an aircraft that, after going through a "purple cloud", appeared in a parallel world.

On the other hand, the account mentioned by Galindez put an emphasis in the distance covered (1.155 kilometers) and the short time involved, "a few minutes". There are two amazing elements: the curious mention to a brand-new car (repeated in some of the posterior cases) and the fact that the car was found "with the engine still running!" (to stress the idea of an instantaneous transfer). This version also included a crucial item, very much played afterwards by Creighton in successive Flying Saucer Review articles, and becoming one of the trademarks of the legend: the mysterious "cloudy mass" which enveloped the whole car of our protagonist.

The Vidal case: in search of a paradigm

On June 3, 1968 the Argentine newspaper La Razón under the headline "Qué es esto?" (What is this?") published how, two weeks before, a couple called Vidal-Raffo, travelling by road from Chascomús to Maipú (in the province of Buenos Aires), had lost consciousness after their car had been enveloped by a dense fog. When they next became conscious, they found themselves in Mexico City, 4.000 miles away and with 48 hours missing in their memory!

Despite the fact that nobody was able to interview them, La Razón (Buenos Aires) and La Capital (Mar del Plata) began to publish more and more detailed news about the incident allegedly obtained from relatives of the protagonists. According to La Razón, the Vidal telephoned from the Argentine consulate in Mexico to a family called Rapallini, living in Maipú. Thus, the case was related with the lawyer

Martín Rapallini, alleged relative or neighbour, who immediately confessed to know nothing about the matter. The press took such a declaration as a confirmation, "there was a strict veto to talk about the case". The only indirect "witness" for the incident who ever surfaced was a young man (another alleged relative) interviewed in the talk show *Sábados circulares de Mancera*, one of the most popular TV programs at the time.

Let us read the version of the incident as presented by Oscar A. Galindez in the *Flying Saucer Review* (6), source of all the multiple citations (especially in Great Britain and United States) which followed since then.

"(...) Early in May 1968 a well-known Buenos Aires attorney named Dr. Gerardo Vidal went with his wife, Señora Raffo de Vidal, to a family reunion in the town of Chascomús, distant less than 120 km. southwards from the capital, Buenos Aires. Leaving the party a little before midnight, they decided to drive on to Maipú, a town some 150 km. to the south of Chascomús, where they have relatives and friends.

They went by National Route No. 2, and ahead of them in another car went another married couple who also had relatives living in Maipú. This other couple, whose names are not known, arrived safely in Maipú without incident, but not so the Vidals, whose failure to arrive caused concern. The other couple therefore set out again by car along the highway back to Chascomús hoping to find them, but had no success, and returned again to Maipú having found no trace of either the car or its occupants.

Some 48 hours after the disappearance of the Vidals, in the residence of the Rapallini family (let us remember this name!) in Maipú, a telephone call was received from the Argentine Consulate in Mexico City -6.400 km. distant- and in this phone call Dr. Gerardo Vidal informed them that all was well and told them of the exact date of the proposed arrival of himself and his wife at the Ezeiza International Airport, Buenos Aires.

In due course the Vidals both arrived at Ezeiza as notified and were met there by their friends and relatives. Señora Vidal was taken straight from the Ezeiza Airport to a private clinic for treatment of a nervous disorder, and meanwhile Dr. Vidal told his amazed family of the astonishing thing that had befallen them both.

Dr. Vidal said that as they were leaving the suburbs of Chascomús on the night of their disappearance, a "dense fog" had suddenly appeared in front of them, and from that moment onwards they had been unable to account for 48 hours in their lives. When they came to again, it was daytime, and the car, with them still inside it, was parked in an unknown lane. Both of them were unhurt, but both had a pain at the back of the neck and both had the sensation of having slept for many hours.

Astonished, they got out of the car, and found that its surface was burnt as though by a blow-torch. The engine however was in perfect running order. Driving along

the unknown road, in unfamiliar scenery, they met people and enquired where they were, and always the answer was the same: in Mexico....

Their watches had stopped, but with the aid of a calendar they established that they had been away from Argentina for 48 hours. In due course they arrived at the Argentine Consulate in Mexico City, where they made themselves known, and from there they put through the telephone call to the Rapallini family in Maipú in the Province of Buenos Aires. The Argentine Consul, Señor Rafael López Pellegrini, asked them to preserve total silence about the case until the authorities had had time to make a thorough investigation. Dr. Vidal's car, a Peugeot 403, was sent off to the United States for scientific study, and it was arranged that he would receive another car of the same make in replacement of it".

Galindez insisted in the "silence curtain" soon descended over the case, when nobody talked about it and denied any knowledge or relationship. Besides, he also draw the first similarities with the experience of Barney and Betty Hill (strange marks in the surface of their cars, watches stopped, and missing time). Although the reporters referred to the couple as Vidal, later somebody explained that it was a pseudonym in order to protect their privacy because "the family belongs to the high society". Galindez called the husband "Gerardo", but the newspapers never mentioned any first name. His wife, surnamed Raffo, was allegedly "taken straight to a private clinic for treatment of a nervous disorder". Later (7) it was even said that she died (of leukaemia) early in 1969, adding an ominous ending to the incident. Other writers have added to the dramatic weight of the narrative. So, Patrice Gaston dares to include a "textual" citation of Mrs. Vidal who would have asked aloud: "But, then, what have they done to us in those two days? In which creatures' hands have we been?" (8). Even sceptics made their own contribution to the legend, airing rumours of an opposite sign. For instance, Peter Rogerson (9) mentioned that "in 1969 or 70 I was at a UFO group meeting in which a British businessman who worked in Argentina and knew Dr. Vidal's boss said that the case had been made up to explain Mrs. Vidal's absence from home for psychiatric reasons".

As time went by, the case became an urban legend growing upon the witness' anonymity and the impossibility to verify an amazing story so heavily spread. Oral gossip also helped: a compulsory subject every time you talk about UFOs, almost unavoidably somebody would say to have known the Vidal's couple in person or that a relative confirmed the incident. But you could never go very far: if anybody tried to obtain any useful clue, he never got a direct contact with the protagonists, only "somebody" who had heard the story second or third-hand.

The answer to the enigma arrived in 1996, when one of the authors (ACA) followed a suggestion of another Argentine ufologist, Alejandro Chionetti, and met film director Anibal Uset, who admitted to have forged the story with the help of a journalist called Tito Jacobson and two other friends related to the show business, in order to promote the film *Che, Ovni*, a roguish comedy that reached the silver screen two months after the alleged incident. Uset explained that the "witness" who

appeared in the TV show was his personal assistant and actor in the film, Juan Alberto "Muñeco" Mateyko, nowadays a popular figure in Argentine television.

Ché, Ovni, with its chaotic and bizarre plot, was flunked by the critics. Like a far relative of Ed Wood, Uset made his flying saucer with two custard moulds against each other. The scene is very short to hide the shortcomings. The film went almost unnoticed, but several years later, some film buffs decided that it had all the requirements to become a fetish of the national SF cinema, despite the fact that it only used the subject as a hook, and everything else was parody, surrealism and unintentional humour.

Thirty years later, Uset confessed to be alarmed by the magnitude reached by the story. That was precisely one of the reasons he kept silent. "So many people came to tell me that they had met the Vidal that I began to doubt", he said. "Even more, there was so much confusion that I thought that maybe our story coincided with a real event".

The film, directed by Uset, starts with a tango singer making auto-stop in the middle of the night. A blonde girl picked him up. An amorous flirtation (censored) followed. Afterwards, the main character, starred by the famous tango singer Jorge Sobral, sit at the steering wheel. The car was a white Peugeot 403, just like in the Vidal's case.. The light from a saucer made the singer sleep. The blonde girl went out of the car, panic-stricken and blinded, and the UFO "undress" her magically. The next image shows the handsome man riding the car again in daylight and dumbfounded discovering that they were now approaching Madrid (Spain). Besides him a girl with black hair, who is quickly identified as an extraterrestrial by her "mistakes" in the dialogue. The point of the abduction was to have a son by him, because the aliens, programmed to work without rest, needed a certain quota of laziness to balance their race. The rest of the film showed new teleportations (without car) to London (where the singer denounced the incidents in the Argentine embassy, and nobody believed him) and Paris (where he met with the blonde human girl instantaneously transferred to the Eiffel Tower). The end happens at Ezeiza airport (Buenos Aires) when, after the arrival of the singer and his girl, his agent is lured aboard an aircraft (a camouflaged UFO?) by several beautiful stewardesses, taking off into the unknown with its alien crew.

Nowadays, with a 30 years hindsight, it is quite difficult to avoid the temptation of finding UFO and abduction precedents in several of the scenes or items showed in the film. For example, all the scenes shot aboard the alien saucer (hardly more than a TV set and a keyboard with plenty of lights) were filmed in black and white (not colour)... but the aliens are fat human beings dressed in tails and with motorist's helmets. On the other hand, we should point to the differences between the written and the filmed narratives: Mr. And Mrs. Vidal did not see any light or UFO and their car did not stop before being teleported. However, in the film, there is no mention of any "strange fog" and all the teleportations are instantaneous. The car did not show any marks and the watches did not stop. In the film, the relationship between the teleportations and the aliens' mission is clear. In the

Vidal's case, the ufological relationship is not so clear. La Razón mentioned the presence of burnt marks ("as though by a blow-torch")(10) and, at the end of the article, just commented about "these times so filled with amazing tales of flying saucers". This chronicle, according to Uset, was written by a friend journalist after a joint trip to Montevideo, when they concocted the story in order to promote his film. Uset did not remember the sources tapped to develop the film's plot and the Vidal's story, but did not discard the possibility of having read something remotely similar in Argentina or England, where he lived for several years.

Magonia 906: The epidemic spreads

The Vidal teleportation caused a great stir and some ufologists blamed it (partially) for the UFO flap that enveloped Argentina soon afterwards. This opinion is open to controversy, but the fact is that in the very same article were La Razón commented on the Vidal story, they released the first full-blown post-Hill Latin American abduction, that of the "well-known Argentine painter and sculptor Benjamin Solar Parravicini", also during a foggy night.

The news about this incident quickly arrived to the Motherland across the Atlantic (for instance, in *Diario de Barcelona* 13 June 1968) appearing in the # 110 issue (July 1968) of *ALGO*, the only Spanish magazine with an Ufology section. Curiously, they mentioned the fog, the loss of consciousness and even the watch stoppage, but no teleportation! (maybe they thought it was too much incredible). Maybe that explains why it did not promote any new reports of similar cases. In the Anglo-Saxon world, after the apparition of Oscar Galindez's article in *FSR*, the incident was mentioned in two of the most influential UFO books of the period: Jacques Vallee devoted a few paragraphs in *Passport to Magonia* (1969) to the case, relating it with the fairy-folks, and included it in his catalogue with number 906. John Keel also mentioned the case in his *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse* (1970).

Next step: Brazil. Two years later, Gordon Creighton compiled several similar cases from this country, all of them from the states bordering with Argentina (7):

+ The teleported honeymooners: In 1968 a newly married Brazilian couple were on their honey moon and had stopped for a rest during their journey by car through the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. They were sitting in their Volkswagen when suddenly they were overcome by a powerful drowsiness. When they recovered consciousness, they were allegedly in México.

+ In 1968, two young men were travelling in a jeep in the same area. When somewhere near Porto Alegre, they allegedly ran into a bank of white fog, and the next thing they knew was that they were in an unknown landscape, which again turned to be Mexico.

+ On January 15, 1969, the Rio de Janeiro newspaper *Diario de Noticias* carried the following interesting report which speaks of two cases and names a witness:

"There are rumours that two persons who were travelling in their car along the President Dutra Motorway were transported from there to a town in the USA and close to the Mexican border. The car bore marks by the hooks of the transporting vehicle. Another Brazilian couple (named Azambuja) are also said to have been transported to Mexico in their car in similar circumstances."

+ Sr. Marcilo Ferraz, of the big Brazilian sugar concern Açúcar Uniao, and his wife, were allegedly driving down southwards from the city of Sao Paulo, in Brazil, one day in 1968 or 1969. When somewhere near the frontier of Brazil and Uruguay they encountered the usual "white cloud" on the road, and "woke up again" in due course in Mexico. Both suffered severe traumatic shock and the husband began to feel so ill that after a few weeks he consulted a doctor and was found to have a tumour in the brain. Shortly after that, during the Carnival Season, Ferraz shot himself. A colonel in charge of security matters in the Brazilian Air Force is reported by our informant to have admitted that he knows of these teleportation cases and that they are authentic, but that they cannot be discussed or even mentioned in the press as they have been classified as top secret and fall within the scope of National Security.

+ The case of the flying station-wagon: According to a report published in the Rio de Janeiro newspaper O Jornal for July, 24, four businessmen of the State of Rio Grande do Sul underwent a strange and hair-raising experience one night earlier that month: being raised from the road by a light beam coming from a saucer, and subsequently dropped again at a point much farther ahead on the same road.

After this "mini-flap" of alleged incidents, always enveloped in a curtain of silence, everything calmed and several years passed without more teleportations. There were cases where a beam of light (sometimes from an unknown origin, others from a saucer) lifted the witnesses (and also their cars or horses) for a few moments. The ominous fog became a typical feature in abductions, i.e. the Aveley case (October 1974) in England, where a whole family suffered from "missing time" after they drove through a green mist covering the road (the Aveley encounter is acknowledged to be the first British abduction to be explored with the use of hypnotic regression). There are also abductions where the victims were allegedly dropped hundreds of kilometres from the site of their capture. In contactee cases like those of Onilson Patero (24 April 1974, Brazil) and Carlos Antonio Díaz (4 January 1975, Bahia Blanca, Argentina) the researchers ascertained that they had time enough to reach the new location by conventional means, so at least those supposed "teleportations" were just undercover abductions.

However, once more, the tireless Oscar Galindez finally succeeded!. He located two real witnesses who had been teleported in August 1972: Mr. Atilio Brunelli and Mr. Severino Porchietto. His report appeared in Flying Saucer Review and also in the Spanish UFO bulletin Stendek # 12 (first mention in Spain of the Vidal's case). But the features of this incident were very much lighter than in precedent cases:

On the night of July 15, 1972, after a party, Mr. Atilio Brunelli (52, musician) and Severino Prochietto (58, retired) were travelling home from Balnearia to Córdoba (185 km) driving his Ford Falcon. They departed around 2:30 A.M. after filling up the gas deposit. Suddenly they noticed a flash of light and few moments later they saw a series of rectangular lights to the side of the road. They dismissed them as a train and were commenting the sighting when they discovered themselves near the town of Montecristo, without any memory of passing through the towns between.

Dr. Galindez estimated that "the protagonists remembered nothing at all about an 81 km track". Considering that they were sure to have arrived home at 3:30 A.M. that means "they took less than an hour to cover 185 km, using half the normal gas consumption!".

Despite Dr. Galindez's estimates, everything could be attributed to "driver's hypnosis", that altered state of consciousness commonly experienced by long-distance drivers. In fact, the "missing time" is less than 30 minutes and the gas savings could not be precisely ascertained (because they still have some left).

Crossing the herring pond

The next teleportations flap took place in Spain. Between May and June 1979 hints and rumors crisscrossed the Peninsula, appearing in several magazines and newspapers. All the versions coincided in the teleportation of a couple and its car from Spain to Latin America. According to Antonio Ribera in his book *En el túnel del tiempo* (Through the Time Tunnel) (12) several towns were cited: Palma de Mallorca, Madrid, Alicante, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Valencia, Bilbao and Lérida.

Before, in June 1976, we found an interesting precedent in an article published in the only Spanish magazine devoted to the paranormal at the time (*Karma 7 # 43 p. 61*). After the strange disappearance of a whole family in Sevilla (the Vargas couple and their four children) on November 22, 1975, the ufologist Carlos Batet wrote his suspicions about an abduction by ufos, and cited a listing of disappearances and teleportations (including the Vidals and the Hills). During the 70s, several books published in Spain mentioned the Vidal teleportation (usually, translations from French authors). Curiously, one of the teleportations considered by Ribera as genuine had allegedly took place around May 1976 or 1977. Julio Marvizón investigated how a couple travelling from Granada to Sevilla was enveloped by a strange fog or cloud, and found themselves near Santiago (Chile), but was unable to locate the victims.

Thanks to the archives of the oldest Spanish UFO group, CEI (Centro de Estudios Interplanetarios), we have found several news clippings, that will present chronologically (and extracted):

Tuesday, 8 May 1979 (Sur and Correo de Zamora)

UNUSUAL TRIP. FROM SPAIN TO CHILE IN TEN MINUTES

MADRID, 7 (Pyresa).- After an International UFO Congress which brought together experts from all over the world last week, a rumor spread around the city citing as protagonists (among others) two of our reporters. We have collected 3 variations:

1) Ten days ago, a couple began a car trip from Madrid to Sevilla. After some hours, suddenly, they saw "a few meters above the road, a big red and yellow ball emitting a blinding light". The next thing they recalled was being in a strange road. After reaching a gas station, they were informed to be near Santiago (Chile). After some problems because the employee did not want to accept foreign currency, they continued up to the capital and the Spanish embassy. Only ten minutes had elapsed. The ambassador obtained two flight tickets for them and their car was returned to Spain by ship.

2) The circumstances are identical, the only change is the protagonist. In this case, he would be a respectable professor at Madrid University who commented about the incident during a meeting with colleagues.

3) Last Saturday, a well-known professional reporter working at present inside the Government, telephoned to our editor in chief asking: "I have just learnt about the story. Please, tell me who are those two reporters involved". "What story?" we replied. And he added: "You know what I am talking about. Those two Pyresa reporters driving to Sevilla who woke up in Santiago (Chile)". We flatly denied any knowledge.

Saturday, 19 May 1979 (Revista de Badalona, Barcelona)

FROM MADRID TO SEVILLA, BUT GOING THROUGH LIMA (PERU). Xavier Guijarro

(...) Last April, a couple departed from Madrid in order to spend several days at Sevilla's Fair. They went by road, driving their Dodge Dart, with a full gas deposit. Few kilometers later the needle pointed to "empty" so the driver stopped at a gas station for refilling. After a few (relatively) more kilometers, the needle pointed again to "empty" so the driver stopped at another gas station and asked the employee to check the deposit. No leak was detected but when the driver paid with a 5.000 pesetas bank note, he was refused. The employee explained that they were at 20 km from Lima (Peru). The embassy helped them to return to Spain but their car was sealed by the NASA in order to proceed to a meticulous analysis.

Sunday, 20 May 1979 (Diario de Mallorca)

TOWARDS SANTIAGO. Francisco Riutord

Two married couples from our town decided to drive around the Iberian Peninsula. Everything was right up to the final leg towards Sevilla. One couple arrived safely

but not so the other, whose failure to arrive caused concern. After 24 hours without any trace, they decided to return home. There they learned what had happened. The other couple keep driving for hours until they saw a city but did not identify any monument or landmark. Asking some people they learned that the city was Santiago. "Once again you took the wrong road -said the wife- and we have made a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela" (NdT: famous catholic shrine in the Northwest of Spain). "No, you are wrong" commented the pedestrian, "this is Santiago, in Chile"

(According to the letter enclosed with the clipping, the witnesses were known by the daughter of an office colleague of the person who sent it. He also suggested that they should undergo time-regression hypnosis "or, marcoanalysis" (sic). Letter dated 23 May 1979. CEI Archives)

Monday, 21 May 1979 (Hoja del Lunes, Palma de Mallorca)

THE INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE OF A MAJORCAN MARRIED COUPLE. THEY TRAVELLED BY CAR AND APPEARED IN CHILE. THEY DO NOT WANT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE INCIDENT, WISHING TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS. F. Rubén

A Majorcan married couple, with their brand-new car, decided to travel around Andalusia. They crossed the Mediterranean by ship, disembarked at Alicante and continued his trip by road. The journey was normal and peaceful and they enjoyed the beautiful countryside. Suddenly, the driver felt something mismatched, the road seemed different. Suspecting a wrong detour he kept driving looking for any road sign, without success. Even though his wristwatch says it was midday, the night was falling. Finally, they found a farmer beside the road. After some explanations, they found themselves at 20 kilometers from Santiago (Chile)! The wife started to cry and his husband was astonished. When they calmed and denounced their plight at the local police, the officials told them "Do not worry. Similar incidents have happened lately but we do not know the causes yet". They were offered two air tickets, but their car should be examined. It will be returned later.

(The reporter mentioned other teleportations -including the Vidals- as well as the Chilean corporal Valdés time-travel incident or the famous Bermuda Triangle, but did not mention UFOs)

Saturday, 26 May 1979 (Faro de Vigo, La Coruña)

TWO TEENAGERS FROM VIGO COULD HAVE BEEN TELEPORTED. THEY WERE DRIVING AROUND THE SOUTH OF SPAIN AND... APPEARED IN PERU. THEY NOTICED IT WHEN HIS SPANISH CURRENCY WAS REFUSED AT A GAS STATION

As happened with the Vidal case, this flap was also mentioned on the other side of the Atlantic. The Argentine magazine Radiolandia published on June 29, 1979 an outlandish version (even giving the names of the alleged witnesses):

THE MONTOYA'S BROTHERS WERE DRIVING TO HUELVA WHEN A COMPACT FOG ENVELOPED THEM. FEW MINUTES LATER THEY WERE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY. AMAZING! FROM SPAIN TO PUERTO RICO... WITHOUT GETTING OFF!

Surely the reader is wondering if all these rumors reached Chile. Thanks to the electronic mail, it has been able to locate the following Chilean news clipping:

7 June 1979 (La Tercera, Santiago de Chile)

EUROPEAN JOURNAL RELATES AN EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE.
MARRIED COUPLE TRAVELLING AROUND SPAIN APPEARED IN SANTIAGO.

(Textual transcription of the Spanish Hoja del Lunes 21 May 1979 clipping)

"With so scarce details -none of which have been corroborated after questioning all the police precincts 20 km away from Santiago- we decided to ask several experts on this phenomena, (who agreed in their skepticism)".

At CEI's archives there are also some hand-made notes by someone who tried (unsuccessfully) to track back the chain of witnesses, after his brother-in-law told him about the case of two girls and two boys teleported while driving between Malaga and Madrid. Another ufologist wrote about "the Nth version of the Interrupted Journey to the Seville's Fair" where the married couple was teleported to El Salvador after seeing some strange lights at night. Still another version mentioned two nurses (a man and a woman from Málaga) who arrived at Chile.

In his book, Antonio Ribera mentioned several others examples. A Catalanian doctor, driving to Málaga, who stopped at a gas station and discovered they were nearby Lima (Peru). After going through "dozens of varieties", Ribera concluded only two of them looked promising:

+ The alleged? cousin of an anesthetist working in Barcelona, colleague of another doctor friend of Francisco Rovatti (a well-known paranormal researcher) was taken to a private clinic in Madrid for treatment of a nervous disorder. The anesthetist himself told the tale: His cousin and wife were driving to Sevilla when they went through a dense fog. When it finished, the driver discovered that the gas needle pointed to "empty" and... you know the rest. This time they appeared nearby Lima. Rovatti tried to track the direct witnesses, but the anesthetist reluctantly explained that "an American company has paid a big amount of money to cover for the loss of their car -to be meticulously examined- as well as for their psycho-therapy in the United States, resulting in a total erasing of their memories about the incident".

+ J.J. Benitez, the most famous Spanish ufologist, said to have investigated the case of two men driving their Renault 12 nearby Madrid, who after going through a strange fog appeared in Alicante (100 km away). There was "missing time" but they had also spent the gas needed to cover such a distance, so the teleportation was dubious.

How and why had this story crossed the Atlantic, adapting to our country? It is difficult to be certain. But in our opinion the main suspect would be Fabio Zerpa, an Argentine actor converted to ufologist, who presented a paper at the International UFO Congress celebrated in Madrid (Spain) on 27-30 April 1979, and spent the following weeks all around the Peninsula with his own multimedia UFO show. Among his favorite cases at the time were Dionisio Llanca's abduction (Villa Bordeau, 28 October 1973) and the Vidal teleportation. In fact, we should remember that the first news clipping published (Sur, 8 May 1979) suggested such a relationship, presenting one of the most ufological variations, which included a UFO.

However, such explanation should be discarded, after the following letter found at CEI's archives:

Barcelona, 25 April 1979
Friend Pere:

This evening I have just heard something you may be interested in, specially if you have any delegate in Madrid who could investigate. Please, keep it confidential. The office colleague who told the story assured me that it is completely true, but... who knows. If it were genuine, it would be something really amazing.

My friend has a sister who lives in Madrid and works at the Standard Electric factory. Last Holy Week a companion at work took a few days of holiday, collected his wife and two children at home and departed by car towards Andalusia. The night fall. They were nearby Valdepeñas (careful! Land of Wine)(sic)when in front of them appeared a stationary light blocking the road. He stopped the car and all the family observed the light until its extinction. They did not entered the lighted area. They set off again but the road seemed different, much more bumpy. They reached a gas station, asking for directions but did not recognize the town mentioned. Finally, they found themselves in Peru!...

They had to contact the Spanish embassy, and the ambassador himself, very much surprised, arranged their return home by air, sending their car later by ship.

The witness can prove that he was hours before in Madrid, at the factory, and later found himself, along with his family and car in Peru, without passport, etc. He also kept the receipt of the car arrival at Spain (port unknown). Nobody believes him. You can imagine the rest.

(...) I remember the case of the Spanish soldier teleported from Manila to Mexico, and must point some similarities between both cases:

- Both happened at night
- Both appeared in a similar site, but in a different country (Spanish road - Peruvian road; Philippine barracks - Mexican barracks)
- The same language is spoken in both countries (Spanish in Philippines - Mexico; Spanish in Spain - Peru)

Regards. Jaime Gil Raso

If there was no date mistake, the story was already circulating around Spain before Fabio Zerpa's visitation. Interesting variations: teleportation of a whole family (four persons), previous sighting of a strange light, and changes in the road surface leading to suspicions. On the other hand, it is quite unbelievable that the car was returned so quickly, less than a month by merchant ship and from the Pacific coast!

20 years without traces

In 1996, a Spanish priest and ardent believer in the Paranormal, father José María Pilón, published *Lo Paranormal ¿Existe?*. Curiously, he devoted a whole chapter to dismythicize several urban legends, included one about the honeymooners who appeared in Santiago (Chile), This is his version (pp. 261-2):

THE HONEYMOONERS WHO APPEARED IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE

A couple just married decided to make their honeymoon trip driving to Granada. When they (supposedly) reached the outskirts of Bailén, they stopped at a gas station. After refilling, the employee refused their money, because it was a foreign currency. Amazed, they asked where they were. "In Santiago (Chile)" was the answer. They remembered that after crossing Despeñaperros their car was enveloped by a dense fog, something quite usual at the place.

(...) I got the story from a cousin of the witnesses but I was never allowed to interview them directly. Dining with other friends they commented that the car was still sealed at the Spanish embassy in Santiago. As a former pupil of mine was precisely working as a Secretary in that embassy, I wrote him asking for confirmation. A complete fabrication!

This revival could be attributed (at least partially) to a TV program *Inocente, inocente* (Fool, fool), widely broadcast around Spain by local stations at the time. This program, quite a success, centered around pulling the leg of several famous people. One of those pranks was to make a famous actress to believe that during a nightly car trip in Spain she had been teleported to Germany, after seeing several bright lights among the mist and stopping at a gas station carefully arranged to deceive her (12).

In April 1999, two reporters published a book study about urban legends in Spain, collecting several variations about an urban legend going all around the country (13):

1. Joana Arteaga, 20, Bilbao:

"I have heard this legend in several places. A newly married couple were on their honeymoon. They were going North from a small village in southern Leon. Near La Bañeza they came across a dense fog bank. They spent less than five minutes inside it, but suddenly found themselves in Portugal".

2. Ainhoa, 19, Leoa:

"I heard it in TV or somebody told me, I am not sure. Somebody was driving and then found himself in another country or place. For instance, if he was driving between Madrid and Toledo, he suffered some kind of spatial lapsus (sic) and appeared in Mexico...."

3. José Antonio Vigo Sánchez, 27, Benamocarra (Málaga)

"A young married couple were driving through a rural area in Sevilla, going towards the capital. The car developed some problems and finally stopped; it happened in the middle of the night so they decided to continue on foot looking for help. Few minutes later a strong wind began to blow and they saw a big brightness in the sky. They frightened but after a few moments everything calmed down, so they kept walking. Then they saw the lights of a city and a road sign saying: 'Santiago de Chile. 5 kilometers'. They needed the help of the Spanish embassy to return home".

The authors also mentioned an interview with Victoria Cirlot, Medieval Literature Professor at Pompeu Fabra's University in Barcelona, who heard a similar history while leaving in Peru. In this variation, the car would have finished in Brazil, so the driver was asked to pay its gas in cruzeiros.

COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite all our efforts, we have been unable to find similar incidents in Anglo-Saxon or European countries. For the moment, this kind of cases seems to be limited to Argentina, Brazil and Spain and the destination countries being Mexico, Chile and Peru.

Nevertheless, the Vidal case (a proven fabrication, maybe inspired by the precedent 1959 contactee's tale) have taken hold in the popular imagination, as proved by the TV program already mentioned. We would add two more examples, from both sides of the ocean:

On February 11, 1980 several UFO sightings were denounced at the Argentine province of Rio Negro. The skeptics attributed them to a Soviet Kosmos 1164 re-entry but what interests us now is the commentary of one of the witnesses: "I hope

it is a flying saucer, taking us as those couple driving to Mar del Plata... we would arrive sooner" (14). At the same time, another witness, Carlos Vommaro, after seeing the alleged UFO, lost his consciousness and later awoke still at the steering wheel of his Ford Falcon, but 15 kilometers and 1 hour away from the place of his sighting (15).

This "mini-teleportation" phenomenon also manifested in Spain. Jesús Callejo compiled several examples for an article published in 1996 (16): One night, José Paguet was driving in a street at Madrid, lighted the wrong end of a cigarette and when he looked again to the road, he found himself in a different street, few kilometers away. Two friends returned home when they met a white fog. After travelling for ten minutes inside it without crossing with another car, they found themselves 55 kilometers North of their destination. Finally, a 22 years girl, Agustina Morales, was returning home driving her Skoda Felicia when, just after leaving a tunnel, she heard a big explosion to her right, but did not see anything strange. Looking again to the front, she read a road sign 60 kilometers further than her home.

Even if the witnesses spoke about an instantaneous displacement, the opposite could fit inside the usual parameters due to confusion or absentmindedness. Specially dubious seems the teleportation between two busy streets in Spain's capital, at a rush hour and without any accident when a car suddenly materialize (unannounced) in the middle of the street.

There is also an alternative explanation for some of this "mini-teleportations", including plenty of the defining features of this kind of stories. Let see the version offered by the Argentine ufologist Rubén Morales (17):

Well, two years ago, I was driving from Rosario to Buenos Aires with my wife. Our attention was attracted by the total calm in the air, no birds singing, no leaves ruffling. Nothing! Suddenly, just in front of us, in the middle of the road, a thing.... (#)

A sudden darkness fell upon us, I could see nothing outside, and felt as if the car was raising from the road. My wife and I began to feel sick. It was an horrendous sensation, I was going to vomit.

Did you see or heard something then?

We could see nothing, but we heard strange and irregular noises like somebody or something hitting the surface of the car.

Very soon all was over, the darkness disappeared and we found our car stopped in the middle of a ploughed field, two hundred meters from the road. The car started without problems.

Had you got any problem with it later?

The car was O.K. Well, not so O.K. The paint became dulled, it was impossible to bring back the gloss, I had to paint it again. Besides, it had several electric problems, one after the other, so as I finally had to sell it.

Did you have any physical problems?

Not at all. Just a short sickness.

The explanation? The witness himself told us, and we decided to delete it before, putting an (#) instead:

... (#) a triangular dark thing with the point downwards. I told my wife: 'See! It is a whirlwind'. I decided to reduce speed trying to avoid it but looking at the rear mirror I noticed a dark mass gaining on us. I realized that in front of me I was seeing an mirage of the whirlwind which caught us from behind.

There are bigger problems with the traditional teleportations, across thousands of kilometers. The difference in gravitational potential energy between sea level and the top of Everest is enough to accelerate someone to 1500 kph: what happens when you teleport from one to the other? It would be dangerous to teleport too far north or south - Earth's spin makes the equator move nearly 1700 kph faster than the poles. And what about mountains, or people - or even air molecules - occupying the space where you materialize? There could be a nasty explosion.

It is interesting to analyze the evolution of the narrative. We began with a single driver who is teleported instantaneously more than a thousand kilometers, but without his car (Bahia Blanca - Santa, 1959). The next case (Chascomús - Mexico, 1968) offered a much bigger displacement, to another country, bringing into scene problems like different currency, visas and passports. Nowadays, commercial jets span big distances in few hours, so the teleportation of the car itself is included to make the story strange enough. However, in the Vidal case the teleportation is not instantaneous, a dramatic defect which is properly mended in later versions. Maybe too properly, because if the displacement goes from Europe to America, the victims are gaining several hours to the Sun, something that should be immediately evident to any person.

Afterwards, the feature of the honeymooners is included, providing a different kind of surprise to their travel of discovery. The story adapts to the passage of time. With improved highways, it is difficult to find nice rustics to help, so their role is assumed by the gas employee, putting the stress in the currency problems and the costs of repatriation. However, and even though the trip is always between countries with the same language (we do not know details about the Brazilian teleported to Mexico), it is very difficult to accept that the drivers did not notice the change earlier.

Almost since the beginning, these cases were related to the UFO phenomenon, first maybe just as a joke, but later as a possible hint of an abduction. There are several cases on record where the witness lost consciousness after seeing a UFO and woke up kilometers away. The best example happened, once more, in Argentina. On September 23, 1978, in the middle of the last leg of a rallye after going through all Latin America for a month, the Citroën driven by Acevedo and Moya was travelling at high speed when it was flowed by a strong light, raising into the air. Seconds later, both pilots lost the notion of time. Next, a jolt, and they found themselves landed again, and his car stopped. They continued racing, and later discovered they were 123 kilometers North of their point of departure. The odometer marked only 52 km, the watch clocked 2:20 hours when they should have employed just 75 minutes and their auxiliary deposit (40 liters) was empty. Just the opposite to an instantaneous teleportation! (18). The image of a UFO emitting a beam of light from its bottom, a tractor beam raising a car from the road, has become an icon (see graphic examples).

The end?

Case closed. Along these pages we have tried to document the genesis, popularization and metamorphosis of an "urban legend" similar to the famous "phantom hitch-hiker".

However, as happened to Michael Goss (19) when he investigated such urban legend, we have finally located, not without surprise, some credible witnesses of a teleportation... in Australia!

Well-known Australian ufologist Bill Chalker personally interviewed both witnesses, making the following report (20):

QUEENSLAND, 1971 "INTERRUPTED JOURNEY"

Report by Bill Chalker

Note correct date: 1-2 August, 1971

For a number of years a number of researchers, including me, had heard rumors of a strange incident in the Gladstone area. In 1977 VUFORS published a translation of a Finnish magazine account of the case. They were not able to locate the witnesses. I decided to try. Two years of investigation took my inquiries from Queensland to Western Australia, then as far afield as Finland and Sweden, to finally return to Queensland. I finally managed to catch up with the original witnesses and I am confident that what follows is an accurate representation of what happened.

On the night of August 1, 1971, a Finnish couple, Ben and Helen K (names and address on file, but not for publication) were returning home after visiting friends. The couple left Gladstone soon after 11.35p.m. Having found no petrol stations open, they were very low on fuel but decided to risk the trip to Rockhampton, hoping to find an open petrol station in one of the small centers on the way, before their tank ran dry.

The night was foggy and dark. By midnight, they had arrived at Calliope River. After passing over the bridge, and beginning to travel along the straight stretch of road that followed, they became aware of seeing a Caltex station on the left side of the road, north of Mount Larcom, some 20 miles beyond the Calliope River bridge! The station was closed but, after driving some 50 yards passed it, Ben K became aware that he could see "a green light at the level of the treetops" in the rear view mirror. His wife confirmed the presence of two green lights. Then, Ben K said: "Suddenly we had a feeling that we had been driving straight forward all the time. The road seemed straight, foggy, and surrounded by trees (in this area the roads are usually winding). And we had a feeling that we were repeating the same words over and over again. We thought we should have been arriving at Mount Larcom."

Suddenly, the couple saw a light to their left and, above them, a circle of lights, similar to the lights on a merry-go-round or carousel. The next thing they saw was the Port Alma road sign, some 40 miles north of Calliope River. Immediately, after this observation, the couple found themselves at a railroad crossing outside Rockhampton, about 20 miles from Mount Morgan. Ben K indicated: "We wondered how we had managed to get so far and why we had not seen any villages on the way. We should have seen at least four of them. We felt that something strange had happened to us. We were afraid. I took a rifle out of the trunk and loaded it. We drove to Rockhampton with the rifle on my knees. Our dog, Candy, who usually sleeps on the back seat, was afraid and wanted to come to the front seat."

In the middle of Rockhampton, the couple found an open petrol station. It was there that the bizarre nature of the trip really struck home. They were shocked to find that the time was only 15 minutes past midnight! Only 40 minutes had passed since they had left Gladstone. At the average speed, the couple estimated they were driving at, some 35 to 40mph, the trip time would have been in excess of an hour, probably closer to two hours. It seemed that the couple covered the distance in almost half the required time and, on top of that, had no conscious recollection of passing through any villages. They only remembered the Caltex station and the Port Alma road sign.

The service station attendant in Rockhampton became very interested in that. Then peculiar things were discovered on the car. The couple's car (1971 Valiant sedan) was covered with a very thin film of odourless oil. The attendant could not identify it but suggested it would be used on "very fine machinery unknown to him." In the corners of the oil covered bonnet, four round marks, two in each rear corner, were noticed. All were identical, being one eighth of an inch wide and nine inches in diameter. In the middle of each circle there was a spot - a one inch solid circle. Oil traces ran in two stripes from the circles towards the nose of the car. A defect in the duco, described as being burnt, was found on the right-hand-side front of the bonnet (with respect to viewing site from in front of the car), above the headlight (left headlight with respect to driver).

The mystery deepened as the number of people gathering around the car, in curiosity, grew. Ben K said, "after a while another driver came to the station. He said he had passed us before the Calliope River. He couldn't understand how we could have arrived at Rockhampton before him. "Finally, we went to the police station and told our story. But the young officer said (after examining the oil and marks on the bonnet): `All I can say is that I have often fallen asleep at the steering wheel and woken up after 200-300 miles'." Beware of somnambulistic police officers in the Rockhampton area! The couple wanted to contact the local newspaper but, at that hour, it was closed. They drove around Rockhampton for a while, with their car drawing stares wherever they stopped.

In an effort to reconcile, in their own minds, what happened, Ben K states: "Slowly it dawned on us what happened. As we were so concerned about the petrol station, UFOs lifted us from Calliope River, past Mount Larcom, to the Caltex Service Station, and from there, during a second lift, via Port Alma Junction, to the railway crossing a couple of miles from Rockhampton. (That is an excellent solution to a petrol crisis.) "We continued our trip around 3 o'clock and had 300 miles of foggy driving ahead of us. We were wishing that UFOs would come and help us again, but that didn't eventuate.

"During the following day we did inspect our car more carefully and thought that the paint work had burned, lifting off in flakes. This wasn't the case; as the oil, mixed with dust, had started to dry up, it produced this flaking. We tried and found out the mixture of `oil and dust' was water soluble..."

The experience on the night of August 1-2, 1971, changed the couple's lives to a degree. They subsequently saw a number of UFOs and Helen K had several possibly related experiences of telepathy (one in relation to a UFO event and precognition).

For example Ben K. returned from night shift at approx. 2.30 am. Helen, his wife, woke up from a deep sleep 2.55 am and walked out into the dark night. 150 yards away in the direction of the woods, she observed a bright yellow light between tree tops and the ground. It did not illuminate the surroundings. After standing there for a minute she claims she heard an inner voice (ostensibly telepathically) saying, "Go to bed, don't walk toward the light." Helen turned and started to go back to bed, but then returned to her original viewing spot, only again to be greeted by the "inner voice" urging her to go to bed. This time she did.

An analysis was done on the "burnt" spot on the bonnet by Finnish UFO researchers and it was concluded that the site came in contact with extreme heat. Hypnotic regression was also attempted on the couple, however, nothing further was elicited. Each time induction was attempted, and recall of that evening was attempted, they would begin to shake violently. The hypnotist gave up the attempt. Subsequent "recollections" suggest memories of a strange entity in a strange environment. I have spoken with the couple more recently. They remain puzzled by the experience.(21)

Contrasting with all the other "legends" commented here, in this Australian case (as well as in the incident which took place seven years later during a rallye in Argentine), the main characters are people with a name, a surname and a legal address who, besides, told their story to interested researchers. Unless it were possible to obtain additional information about the problematical aspects of these and other cases (that, at present, prevent us to determine any reality to the teleportation phenomenon), it should be stressed that the Queensland's incident has all the same features that the "urban legend": a married couple, the enveloping fog, the burned paint work, the gas station scene... But adding a new turn of the screw: it was a DOUBLE teleportation (maybe because the first gas station was closed). Unfortunately, Chalker could not interview the gas attendant. This problem did not appeared in the Argentine case. According to Roncoroni, the first person who met the drivers after the incident, an employee at a gas station named Héctor Forchesatto noticed that both of them were very nervous (specially Moya), and heard them discussing about the mileage and the missing gas, showing an confusion - wrote Roncoroni - "impossible to feign".

But surprise or confusion, reactions which could speak volumes about witness' honesty, do not prove that things happened as described.

Considering the wide diffusion of the saucer imagery, we can argue that, almost in all UFO encounters, the sincere witnesses may look into their cultural background for elements which help them to "understand" an incomprehensible experience. Nicholas Spanos (22) wrote:

"These beliefs serve as templates against which people shape ambiguous external information, diffuse physical sensations, and vivid imaginings into alien encounters that are experienced as real events"

Nowadays, the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis (ETH) is so much culturally accepted that it has become some kind of a cultural prism which allows us to "identify", "interpret" and finally "explain" facts that would not be considered otherwise, or would be given different explanations.

Thus, the spreading of this legend about "brand-new flying cars" would offer to the subjects of "real experiences" a template almost as good as other more prosaic hypothesis which fade into nothingness by comparison to the ETH.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Both authors wish to express their gratitude for his help to a great many people. But specially to Centro de Estudios Interplanetarios (CEI) at Barcelona (Spain) and to the researchers R. E. Banchs (Argentina), Bill Chalker (Australia), Nico Conti (Italia) and Diego Zuñiga (Chile).

REFERENCES

- (1) In "The Last Leap" Daniel Galouye features teleporters struggling with varying success not to imagine the word 'Sun'.
- (2) Koran, XVII, 1.
- (3) Mr. X. "The Aparecido and the death of Gomez Perez Dasmarinas", Fortean Times nº 52 (Fall 1990), pp. 55-9.
- (4) Gordon Creighton, "Teleportations", Flying Saucer Review 11:2 (March-April 1965).
- (5) Roberto E. Banchs, Las evidencias del fenómeno OVNI, Rodolfo Alonso Editor, Buenos Aires, 1976, pp. 124-126. The news clipping cited also included a deformed version of the Spanish soldier teleportation, dating it in 1880 and transforming him in an Indian from Calcutta!
- (6) Oscar A. Galíndez, "Teleportation from Chascomús to Mexico", Flying Saucer Review 14:5 (September-October 1968).
- (7) Gordon Creighton, "More Teleportations", Flying Saucer Review 16:5, September-October 1970).
- (8) Patrice Gaston, Desapariciones Misteriosas, Plaza & Janés, Barcelona, 1975, p. 72.
- (9) Peter Rogerson, "Notes to a Revisionist History of Abduction (Part 4): Recovering the forgotten records", Magonia nº 50, Septiembre 1994, NOTA 37.
- (10) This feature will repeat again very soon (on August 31, 1968) in the famous Villegas-Pecinetti encounter with humanoids at Mendoza (Argentina). Both witnesses claimed that three entities, short with large bald heads, had wrote strange hieroglyphics all over their car with something like a blow-torch. This case is considered a hoax by one of the authors (ACA) who investigated it several years later. Other Argentine ufologists, as Dr. Roberto Banchs, reached similar conclusions.
- (11) Ribera, Antonio, En el túnel del tiempo, Planeta, Barcelona, 1984, pp. 117-144.
- (12) One of the authors (LRGM) did saw the TV program at the time, but can not offer more details. We are trying to obtain a copy for review.
- (13) Ortí, Antonio & Sampere, Josep, Leyendas Urbanas en España, Martínez Roca, 2000, pp. 305-309.
- (14) Chionetti, Alejandro, "Caso Caponetto: un extraño rectángulo luminoso", UFOLOGIA nº 2, enero-marzo 1981, pp. 7-12. <http://www.advance.com.ar/usuarios/moralesr/mytoCA2.htm>
- (15) Chionetti, Alejandro, "El caso Vommaro, ¿una teleportación?", UFOPRESS nº 16, abril 1983.
- (16) Callejo, Jesús. "Perdidos en la niebla", AÑO CERO nº 74 (1996).
- (17) Rubén Morales. Posted in "Anomalist" (electronic list maintained by Fundación Anomalía, www.anomalia.org).
- (18) Roncoroni, Guillermo. "El incidente del rally, ¿una teleportación?. UFOPRESS nº 9.
- (19) Goss, Michael. The Evidence for Phantom Hitch-hikers. Aquarian Press, Inglaterra, 1984.

(20) There is another famous case on record ("Escorted by UFOs from Umvuma to Belt Bridge", Carl Van Vlieden, *Flying Saucer Review* 21:2, March-April 1975). However, I (LRGM) would argue that Peter and Frances did not suffer a teleportation during their trip in May 1974 across Southern Africa, the only hint being that they allegedly spent less gas than expected. In my opinion, the inquiry left much to be desired. An investigator who did not immediately check the amazing claim that "the cheap retreads used for this one journey, which should have worn out by the time they arrived, but instead went on to do 8.000 km of driving without harm at all!" looks very unreliable indeed.

(21) UFOAIKA (Suomi newspaper), 3/1973, pg. 12&13, translation by Ikka Serra UFO Finland; personal communication from original Finnish percipients to Bill Chalker in the form of a detailed taped statement in 1979. He spoke with the couple in a follow up in 1996. VUFORS (Victorian UFO Research Society) also carried a translation of the UFOAIKA article (April, 1973) in their publication *Australian UFO Bulletin*, August, 1977, in an article entitled "A Teleportation case in Queensland?".

(22) Cited in Robert Baker, "Studying the Psychology of the UFO Experience", *Skeptical Inquirer* Vol. 18:3 (Spring 1994) pp. 239-242.

Fuente

Agostinelli, Alejandro César y González Manso y Luis R. "Teleportations: A Review of the Phenomenon in UFOlogy" en *The Anomalist*: 10 (2002).

En Español: 10) Agostinelli, Alejandro César y González Manso y Luis R. "Coches voladores a estrenar: fraudes, rumores y ciencia-ficción" en *Micromegas* (2007).

En la web: <https://micromegas2.files.wordpress.com/2007/02/agostinelli01.pdf>