

THE DIMENSIONS AND THE DEMENTED

by

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WE ARE ALL MAD. That is the one point upon which those who believe in the UFOs and those who scoff at them are in complete agreement. For we who regard the coming of the UFOs as our one hope if the world is to be saved from self-destruction cannot regard the expenditure of thousands of millions upon devilish weapons designed to destroy vast populations as anything else but madness (mutual madness, if you like—madness forced upon us as the lesser of two evils, if you like, but still madness), while if it is not obvious to you that conventional scientists and newspaper editors regard us as lunatics, then it is time you had your head examined.

Baptista Mantuanus (Latin writer of Mantua, 1448-1516) said, "Every man is mad, but in a different manner." Nicholas Boileau-Despréaux (French poet, 1636-1711) said, "All men are fools, and spite of all their pains, they differ from each other only more or less." The truth is that fools suffer madmen and madmen make fools suffer. But a characteristic of madness is that the lunatic thinks all men mad but himself, and that he is benefiting humanity by destroying himself; while the characteristic of folly is that fools let madmen get away with anything, even murder. So we see that as regards war both warmongers and pacifists are mad and foolish—war being Bedlam; while as regards the UFOs, conventional scientists think investigators mad (being insane themselves), while ufologists are fools enough to retain respect for materialistic scientists despite the fact that such scientists are absorbed in activities which must (unless such scientists are soon put in strait-jackets) strip the living flesh from our bones and destroy us all.

The manner in which I express my own madness—or at least one of the ways—is in the collection of mountainous masses of magazines and news-clippings. Heaven alone knows what will happen to them all when I pass into another dimension—if I indulged in such speculation I should literally land in the loony-bin. I accept the fact that I am surrounded by between two and three million news-clippings and tens of thousands of magazines (segregated, more or less efficiently, from my 16,000 books, for I do not imitate Shaw, who kept his news-clippings in golf-bags) and just *use* them, ignoring future possibilities. Browsing among the clippings a few days ago I came across one from an old *Tatler* which seems very relevant to these articles, and my efforts to outline a new non-Euclidean geometry:

Locke says the distinction between a madman and a fool is that a fool is he that from right principles makes a wrong conclusion; but a madman is one who draws a just inference from false principles. Thus the fool who cut off the fellow's head that lay asleep, and hid it, and then waited to see what he would say when he awoke and missed his headpiece, was in the right in the first thought, that a man would be surprised to find such an alteration in things since he fell asleep; but he was a little mistaken to imagine he could awake at all after his head was cut off.

Now I do not suggest that the ridicule sometimes experienced by students of ufology will ever result in any of us going to the guillotine. Whatever the future may hold regarding the coming of the UFOs and their relation to the possible destruction of mankind (either as the result of an appalling holocaust of a few weeks' duration, or through the slower process of accumulated radio-activity), I feel that we who have hope of deliverance, apart from humanity itself, are less likely to lose our heads.

Persecution of heretics today is so mild, as compared with that of olden times, that it is almost flattery. Yet even in its present milder form it persists. As for instance when a well-known literary journal "reviewing my book *The Inexplicable Sky* early this year, classified it under "Aeronautics" instead of "Astronomy" (I had used every work on astronomy of any note in recent years in writing it) and dismissed it with the scathing words: "The whole book displays that wilful ignorance of science that Dr. Menzel rightly attacked more than three years ago." The reviewer's prejudice was, of course, due to the fact that I had analysed Dr. Menzel's book, with its unscientific attack on UFO researchers, in

factual detail. My short, logical letter of protest against the "review" was ignored.

Other reviewers treated the book very differently.

But that sort of thing is happening all the time. As fast as facts are presented to the world's Press they are either given publication in ways designed to ridicule UFO researchers, or are relegated to oblivion. We carry on and do not lose our heads.

The manner in which most anti-UFO editors and scientists express their madness is that *they draw just inferences from false principles*. They do not feel their principles are false. They try to be scrupulously fair in their judgments. But their basic scientific principles *are* demonstrably false and out-of-date, for they judge accounts of UFO sightings—thousands and thousands of them, as they occur in all countries—from the viewpoint of *Newtonian and Euclidean physics, although these principles have been radically amended by Einstein and other pioneers of what may truly be called non-Euclidean and supra-Newtonian geometries*.

But—and please refer to my *Tatler* newsclipping again—if conventional editors and scientists are madmen, strictly in the sense indicated by Locke, then we UFO researchers are assuredly fools.

Wrong Conclusions

For in our UFO magazines, published in various countries, we continually surrender our own case to the sceptics by *making wrong conclusions from right principles*.

That our basic principles are *right*—principles universally endorsed by all UFO researchers, such as the belief that a *prima facie* case has been made for investigation, that a percentage of the sightings cannot be explained by conventional theories, etcetera—is obvious. We all agree that *something unusual and significant is happening* in the world's skies. But we are all more or less fools in the sense that we are very probably drawing wrong conclusions from the sightings, and from the principles we have adopted.

If I now part company from those ufologists who believe that the UFOs are material, as I again express my conviction that the visitants come from other dimensions (although they may use "landing-places" like Mars, Venus and the Moon for what I may perhaps best describe as "technical reasons" connected with their materialisations and dematerialisations), then I ask the indulgence of such investigators, believing in their sincerity even as I trust they will

believe in mine.

I have said again and again, in effect, that we have accumulated enough sightings to convince anyone of the reality of the UFOs who is not blinder than a bat, deafer than a doorknob, and more stubborn than a bob-tailed mule. But, after a decade of Himalayan evidence we still lack explanations.

We ask ourselves, "Why have so few contacts been established?"—and we cannot agree an answer amongst ourselves. We cannot agree from whence they come. We cannot agree regarding their purpose in coming.

We are fools—all of us, though in varying degrees, depending on variations in our own blindness, stubbornness and mulishness—because *we continually make wrong conclusions from right principles, and from authenticated facts*. Now this sort of foolishness has been particularly evidenced by writers on fourth-dimensional problems. I believe that their foolishness—confined as it is, of course, to the limits of Locke's distinction between fools and madmen—is at the root of our own, as ufologists.

Biggest Fools

I now speak very frankly. I am convinced that the biggest fools among us (Locke's definition, please) are our materialists, who are still trying to explain the UFOs as resembling earth aircraft. Surely—I say to them, with all respect—there have been sufficient instances of "mat and demat," instantaneous change of direction in flight, changing of shape during observation by competent witnesses, and propulsion at speeds far beyond anything attainable by material planes, to justify the conclusion that a proportion of the UFOs, at least, come from other dimensions?

But *all* of us are fools in the sense of the Locke definition. I have said that I am entirely with Meade Layne and his school of thought regarding UFO explanations. This does not mean that either he or I are committed to belief in trance communications, holus-bolus. But it *does* mean that we are prepared to investigate any field of possible contact with the UFOs, *with an open mind, in search of evidence*. And I confess myself a fool, even as all investigators of sky-phenomena—right across the range from the most sincere materialists to the most sincere spiritualists—are fools, because neither I nor anyone else has yet seen the full implications of the probable existence of other dimensions.

We can examine any of the books so far written on the fourth dimension—any ultra-dimensional

books whatever that are available to us, and we shall find foolishness in each and every one of them, according to the Locke definition.

However brilliant, however profound, however logical, fourth-dimensional writers have this foolishness: *from right principles they make wrong conclusions*. There is an obvious explanation of this: all writers on the fourth dimension are still in this world of three dimensions. They make wrong conclusions because they are so appallingly handicapped—as I am handicapped in these articles. They are trying to translate from other-world “languages” into our own world-physics language, and they are trying to translate terms and conditions which are utterly and irreconcilably “unearthly.” So utterly and irreconcilably “unphysical,” in fact, that any approach to the truth regarding other dimensions must *necessarily* be expressed in language that must immediately label the writer as a gibbering lunatic.

But this truth must at once be appreciated: All pioneers in history, and particularly in scientific fields—all investigators who have dared to contradict the pontifical pronouncements of established opinion (while observing factual straws which indicated the way the wind of truth was blowing at the time) have been regarded as idiots with straws in their hair.

No Relation

All attempts to describe a four-dimensional world lying beyond, or interpenetrating, our own three-dimensional world must inevitably fail if they preserve any of the geometrical terms or forms of our own world. There is an excellent reason why they should fail. All geometrical shapes—and this applies even though we construct new ones, or apply Euclid's shapes to spherical surfaces, or find new “directions” within or extending from three-dimensional bodies, or revolve rods, planes or spheres so that they pass through two-dimensional planes, or three-dimensional forms, or what have you—all geometrical shapes of which the components are straight lines, curved lines, or even points, are merely distortions of three-dimensional space, *and have no relation whatsoever to a fourth-dimensional world*.

It is true that a being in a one-dimensional world (as conceived by Dr. Abbott in *Flatland*, and by other writers) could—theoretically—be taught two-dimensional geometry by showing him combinations of straight lines; and that a being living in a two-dimensional world could be taught three-dimensional geometry by manipu-

lating lines, curves and plane surfaces to form solids.

From our three-dimensional viewpoint we can create fanciful figures in one-dimensional and two-dimensional “worlds,” as Dr. Abbott did, *which can help us to understand the nature of our own three-dimensional world*. But the truth about all this imaginative speculation, based on points, lines, curves and three-dimensional figures, is that *it is all three-dimensional*. All that we are doing, in effect, is taking the components of our physical, time-space world and using them to build spatial figures, as a child might use the components of a meccano set.

A point, geometrically, is a position *in space*. A line is a direction *in space*—the joining of two positions. It is obviously two-dimensional, and the two dimensions are dimensions *in space*. A three-dimensional figure *must* use the components of a one-dimensional and two-dimensional “world”—for any solid may be analysed into planes and lines and points. But all these components—of all three “worlds”—are constructed from what we might term the “materials” of space. We build them in our imaginations, using such materials—points, lines, curves and planes, all of which may, of course, be reduced to *points*.

Misconception

We may amuse ourselves till the cows come home, constructing “four-dimensional” figures from such “materials,” but whatever we achieve remains three-dimensional. The fallacy in all such four-dimensional juggling lies in the misconception that we can carry on to a fourth dimension in a kind of “build up” of geometrical terms and forms *which are essentially spatial*.

Take Hinton's book, *The Fourth Dimension*, to indicate what happens. It is all very ingenious. He piles analogy upon analogy, and gives numbers of illustrations of what occurs when we pass certain geometrical forms through others—rods, rings, spheres, wheels, and so on, through plane surfaces, and through solids.

He enables us to imagine a “four-dimensional wheel,” by describing a three-dimensional wheel that moves transversely to a plane, so that the whole disc (a solid one without spokes) comes *at the same time* into contact with the plane. He says that it would then appear as a circular portion of plane matter completely enclosing another and smaller portion—the axle.

That is a typical experimental “proof” of the possibility of a fourth dimension. All such “proofs” retain spatial concepts. Many of them are dependent on an arbitrary abolition of time—

but they all need some of the "materials" of spatial geometry in the construction of their hypotheses. This applies to all books purporting to explain the fourth dimension.

Perhaps the most lucid of them all is *The Fourth Dimension Simply Explained*,^o edited by Professor H. P. Manning, of Brown University, U.S.A., and consisting of the best of 245 essays on the subject submitted to the *Scientific American* in 1909. The twenty-two published essays are praiseworthy attempts to explain the fourth dimension in three-dimensional language. But the net result of a clear understanding of them—and of all such attempts to construct a four-dimensional world with the geometrical components of our own—is a series of conceptions of a skeleton world without substance. Matter is not abolished, as it must necessarily be in a fourth dimension—it is retained as a framework of lines.

Bolyai, Lobatchewsky, Riemann, Zöllner (who believed man to be a two-dimensional being, comprehending his three-dimensional world by a purely intellectual process only) and many others, have manipulated hyperprisms, hypercones, hyperspheres and all kinds of other four-dimensional conceptions for their own purposes. But none of the hyper-geometricians who use components of Euclidean geometry can do more than create a conception of a skeleton world, with the stuffing knocked out of it.

Spatial Components

In my last article I suggested that a one-dimensional world arises from a no-dimensional one by the application of movement; and that transition from a one-dimensional world to a two-dimensional one is again accomplished by the addition of movement (lines moving outward from other lines, even as points move between fixed positions to form lines); while a two-dimensional world becomes a three-dimensional one by the movement of lines away from superficial planes.

But there we draw the line so far as drawing lines is concerned.

For all the components we have used to construct our plane figures and solids have been spatial components, implying the existence of physical "here to there" movements.

We must discard such spatial components, not merely from the drawing-table but as they apply in our mental conceptions of our physical world,

and our relationships with other humans, if we are to obtain any conception of the nature of a fourth dimension. For to pass into a fourth dimension—actually (by astral projection, or at death) or imaginatively in an attempt to conceive it—means leaving our physical senses behind us also: not merely the lines drawn by a pencil held in the hand, but the hand itself, the paper itself, the drawing-table itself, the entire three-dimensional world.

Such mental movement—and it is entirely mental and not physical or spatial in any sense—can be achieved, without Euclidean propositions or figures, and without need of mathematical symbols.

Neither time nor space have any significance in dimensions higher than our own. Nor has the phrase "higher dimensions" any significance, for it is a spatial term. It is, however, the only one we can use, in view of the literature that has been devoted to this subject. One cannot begin to use a more appropriate one, such as "non-dimensional world" without causing terminological confusion.

Out of Our Minds

In my next article I hope to show you the real significance of Plato's amazing allegory of the creatures chained in the cave, who perceived only the shadows of themselves and all objects of our "real" three-dimensional world projected on a wall, towards which their faces were turned. Although Plato used this allegory to indicate the relation between true reality and sensory illusion, it can help us to understand the nature of the fourth dimension if we see its relation to Dunne's "artist in a field," and his conception of a "serialistic" universe.

I must conclude this present article with an expression of my sincere conviction that we shall not get anywhere regarding explanations of the UFOs until we go "out of our minds."

Let this phrase not be misunderstood. I fully realise that if conventional science and three-dimensional materialism constitute "sanity," then we are (by implication) not mad enough.

But I use "out of our minds" in a very different sense—in fact, in a sense which implies logic, reason, and true sanity—when I say that we shall begin to understand the nature of other dimensions than our own when we are able to see ourselves as others see us, from selfless viewpoints, in short from positions outside the narrow limitations and prejudices of our own personalities.

^o Munn & Co. Inc., New York, 1910.