

TOWARDS NEW CONCEPTIONS OF THE COSMOS

by Arthur Constance

KING-CRABS, scorpions, spiders, ticks and mites form a thousands-of-millions world family which can serve as a microcosm of the human race. Ants, bees and wasps would not serve our purpose, although it would flatter mankind if we chose any such community. For man, despite his sporadic and superficial areas of humanism and culture, remains fundamentally nomadic, cruel, spider-like. Worse—he sucks his own blood for his armaments, and cuts his own nerve-centres in his industrial disputes. Make no mistake, his multitudinous virtues shine more brightly for the blackness, even as any spider's good qualities (craftsmanship, motherhood and the rest) are star-like against the horrific night of its character. Our microcosm will be found apt enough when we think of astronomers peering past crossed spider-threads fixed in some of their telescopes at the tangled stars; spiders falling from the sky in places like Carlisle (1869), to mention but one of many instances; and man himself, enmeshed in his machine-madness, hopelessly beaten by the spider's living, lightning-like looms.

Any of the 100,000 *kinds* of spiders (dismissing scorpions, ticks, mites) might teach man something, if he had the God-directed intuition of butterflies or birds. In advance of our finest mountaineers (some of whom found the Attid spider awaiting them, living on question-marks, 22,000 ft. above sea level on Everest), spiders have forestalled scientific research as flyers, divers, hunters, net-casters, tunnellers, surgeons and weather-forecasters. And I have no doubt that if man ever reverses his centrifugal truth-seeking, and starts searching in earnest, centripetally, his spiritual quest will be paralleled by an expedition through the world's orange-skin: only to find spiders ahead of him, in the heart of

the earth. When scientists can tell us how *Desis* and *Argyroneta* have transmitted the diving-bell-making instinct through countless generations of spiders (despite the fact that an aquatic mode of life gives them no advantages in food-acquisition, nor any in avoiding enemies, as they simply substitute underwater foes for terrestrial ones) I will accept the monkey hypothesis and worship blind chance. But I watch a web-spinning spider, think of its 600 turn-at-will taps for running silk, or the metabolistic miracles it performs in coal-cellular fastings, and am irrational enough to believe that design implies a designer. Having committed the unpardonable sin of mentioning God in relation to science, I proceed to further blasphemies against the text-book deities, not unaware that my readers are already asking restlessly what all this has to do with Flying Saucers and the Cosmos.

My answer is that U.F.O. researchers, and in fact all seekers after Cosmic explanations, are finding themselves (as pioneers have always found themselves) hampered and harassed by a ruthless enemy, or (if you like the metaphor better) battering their heads against a brick wall. And the enemy, or implacable wall, is Spiderism. But before I define Spiderism, I ask your agreement with certain statements. This article being written for the sophisticated, and not for jibbers

Arthur Constance, who is 63 years old, has been interested in odd phenomena for 30 years. Born in Canada of Gloucestershire parents, he has collected information about flying saucers from the remotest sources. His library has 16,000 reference books and 2,000,000 cuttings referring to the strange phenomena in the skies, on land and in the sea. He is in touch with observers all over the world.

or gibberers, I am assuming that you have read at least two or three of the twenty or thirty books published on Flying Saucers in recent years:

- ... *That we have had enough factual, well-witnessed sightings since 1946 (apart from countless cases in previous centuries) to prove their non-terrestrial reality.*
- ... *That U.F.O.s come, or emerge, in a variety of shapes and sizes, and that they can change size, shape, colour or speed while under observation.*
- ... *That, at the same instant, they can be seen yet not photographically recorded, or (alternatively) photographically recorded and not seen.*
- ... *That they can materialise and dematerialise while under observation.*
- ... *That some kind of other-than-this-world intelligence control them, and that "beings" other than earthlings have sometimes occupied certain types.*
- ... *That those controlling the U.F.O.s have made attempts to communicate. To gain general assent to this statement I do not imply either success or failure in the attempts.*

Lack of Data

I feel that these facts have emerged from the mountainous masses of sightings we have accumulated. Although I sympathise with Mr. M. K. Jessup's last-chapter appeal for intensified research, in his recent book *The Case for the U.F.O.*,* I cannot imagine that further accumulations of sightings will help us to find an explanation. The facts, like the poor, are always with us. Poverty has always been a problem. So have the U.F.O.s. In each case we need to examine the accumulated data from all angles, to find a solution. It may well be that all our social and industrial problems, and even the problems of atomic warfare and the threat of it, will pale into insignificance as light on the U.F.O.s spreads, even as stars fade at dawn. For the problem of the U.F.O.s is neither a national nor an international one—it is a Cosmic problem.

* The Citadel Press, New York (1955).

And it will be solved when we have learned to think in terms of the Cosmos. Which brings me to a definition of Spiderism.

A spider—any of the 100,000 kinds—lives in a spider-world, conditioned by spider-habits, such as the making of any of the devices it uses to provide itself with food. If you suspect I am comparing humans with spiders, and think "we are more than spiders," I confirm your suspicion and agree with your statement. We are far higher in the scale of creation than spiders. And I am sure you will agree that spiders are far higher in the scale than some other forms of life. So that any spider might echo your feeling of racial pride and say, if it could speak, "We are more than aphides." I am comparing humans with spiders *only* in this sense: that spiders explain the entire Cosmos in terms of spider-habits, spider-experiences, spider-facts. Even as we humans explain the entire Cosmos in terms of human-habits, human-experiences, human-facts. Spiderism, then, may be defined as the tendency to interpret the entire Cosmos in terms of one's own limited consciousness, coupled with the tendency to reject all suggestions, experiences and data which appear inconsistent with the fitted-together facts of one's own limited field of observation. The essential difference between a spider and a man is that he has the power to penetrate his Spiderism. Spiders have not changed their habits in the course of centuries. Man continually changes his ideas. As he penetrates the Spiderism of one generation and reaches out towards more Cosmic truth, his tendency to consolidate and formalise his penetrations of previous Spiderisms remains. So we find that truths which pioneers have agonised to attain become commonplace, and form part of the Spiderism of a succeeding generation.

Limited Logic

If I could speak to a spider, I should find it quite impossible to convey to its limited intelligence any conception of our own human world. My obstacle would be its Spiderism. Everything that I said would be translated into terms related to its spider-habits and spider-conceptions. It would have its own limited "logic." Facts which fitted into that "logic" would be accepted. Facts which did not would be rejected. A man's face has no significance *as a man's face* to a spider.

A piece of newsprint is probably a kind of leaf. Spiderism prevents the spider from attaining any degree of Cosmic truth.

Is it not probable—even certain—that there are intelligences as far superior to our own limited intelligences as our intelligences are superior to that of the spider? How could such superior intelligences communicate with us? The obstacle would be human Spiderism. We should translate all revelations from them, all facts regarding them, into human-world terms. Return to the spider: Which phenomena would be *false*, in the widest Cosmic sense, among those observed by the spider? *Those things which the spider regarded as both commonplace and consistent with its viewpoint that the world existed as a place in which insects had to be trapped and eaten.* Anything which confirmed this viewpoint would be logical and consistent to the spider. Anything which did not would be miraculous and ridiculous. If a spider *could* reach out for Cosmic truth, which phenomena within the range of its observation would be most likely to be true? *Those which appeared ridiculous and inconsistent to the spider.*

Charles Fort

Only a few years ago countless facts of modern life—such as transmitting pictures through space—would have been ridiculed as impossibilities. The Spiderism of that day could only have been penetrated by seeking the ridiculous. All human progress has been made by humans who have questioned—in greater or lesser degree—the accepted Spiderism of their times.

Charles Fort had collected 40,000 notes under 1,300 headings when his *Book of the Damned* was published in 1919. How many more he had accumulated by the time of his death 13 years later I do not know. His plan was “collecting notes upon all subjects of human research upon all known phenomena . . . to try to find the widest possible diversity of data, agreements that would signify something of cosmic order or law or formula . . . always seeking similarities in widest seeming differences. . . .” In short, seeking the incongruously-congruous, the logically-illogical, the seriously-ridiculous.

When so-called facts “fit together” they are probably forced into position to confirm a theory.

Varying viewpoints make police-court evidence more probably true when there are contradictions. Distrust the coherent—it has a habit of becoming unstuck. I have sought instances of the ridiculous, the inconsistent, the impossible, for thirty years. I have accumulated over two million notes or clippings, classified under 5,000 headings—always working on Fort’s principle: that news-items relegated to unimportant positions by editors (swathed in Spiderism) are likely to be highly significant. The things science cannot explain. But my news-clippings, and 16,000 books (collected also with an eye to the fantastic), are mere material for quiet thinking—the numbers matter nothing.

Scudder Klyce

The men I envy are men like Scudder Klyce, of Winchester, Massachusetts, United States. Of course, you have never heard of him. His name, like the term “Flying Saucers,” invites derision. He spent most of his life studying unusual facts and theories of the Cosmos. He wrote a book, and called it *Universe*. It analysed Einstein’s ideas. It dealt with vortices. It went so far down into gravity that any reader felt himself floating in a bottomless pit. It showed how to get energy out of atoms. Eighteen publishers rejected the MS. The cost of publication, even in 1921, would have been colossal. One asked him to pay ten thousand dollars. The MS. had 250,000 words—thousands of algebraic symbols. Klyce bought type, paper, books on printing, and set the whole thing up himself, making and binding 1,000 copies. I often wonder where the other 999 are. Klyce was just one of countless pioneers who have tried to penetrate the Spiderism of their times. The seeds are scattered. Somewhere, somewhere, they come to life—but the harvest is far ahead. Meanwhile, numerous ships of speculative thought which never “came home” for their authors find haven in my library. I give you my conclusions regarding the U.F.O.s, for what they are worth—my reading has covered many unusual fields. We are making little progress in converting the man-in-the-street because we have no real explanation to give him of the unidentified flying objects.

Do we believe they come from Mars or Venus? I think it is far more likely that Meade Layne is right, or at least on the right track, in saying that

they emerge. From another dimension? What is a "dimension"?* What size or shape is our solar system? Yes, I know the answers—any textbook can give one a picture of it. Our oblate world, tipped on its axis, spinning in space, speeding round the sun. And the sun flashing through space. And the wheeling galaxies, and our speck of a world somewhere near the rim of one. And the nearest star in space—and the multitudes of suns, like dust across the heavens. And the entire Cosmos? Expanding or contracting, or both, or neither. And all the material Cosmos—the myriads of suns—mostly made of *what?* In the light of atomic research, *of empty space*. So we have a Cosmos which consists of multitudes of holes in the ether, the ether itself being more solid than the holes.

On Speck

We ask timidly *where* the astronomer was when he mapped it all out—compressing all modern astronomers into one for convenience' sake. Well, we find that he was somewhere on this speck of a planet, physically. But his composite mind was somewhere out in space. Of course it was, for his entire conception of the Cosmos was taken from a Viewpoint. I have never had this Viewpoint defined by any astronomer. From it the astronomer sees our earth. The North Pole is on top, the Magnetic Pole moving somewhere near it. The plane of the solar system is horizontal, the earth's axis spins on it, causing the precession of the equinoxes. The entire picture is planned—"seen" if you like—from an imaginary Viewpoint.

No one has ever stood at that Viewpoint. No one has ever seen the moon, planets, our sun and the rest of the Cosmos from that precise position. The Viewpoint is pure imagination, based on mathematical calculations. Substitute "clever guesswork" for "mathematical calculations" and you may be nearer the truth. The picture of our solar system—sun at the centre, planets running round it, satellites all in their places—is also a purely imaginary one. So is the larger picture of the Cosmos—astronomers are still making up their minds about that.

The Viewpoint has changed again and again.

* This and similar questions might best be answered in a tape-recorded discussion between Claudius Ptolemaeus, Al-Sufi, Copernicus, Kepler, Einstein, Professor Dunne, J. G. Crowther, George Gamow and Hermann Weyl, a conference which I seriously believe possible, even probable.

The picture of the solar system has changed—astronomers have continually contradicted themselves. But *we* have at last reached the true picture, we think. Have we? A human named Einstein comes in to it. We know now that space and time are illusions—that rods shot through space shorten, and alarm-clocks shot through space keep working but register no time at all, while bottles dropped from railway trains can travel (any one of them) differing distances in exactly the same period of time, at exactly the same speed. Astronomers, scientists, believe all this. *If applied to other subjects than the U.F.O.s.* If applied to A-bombs or H-bombs, or anywhere along the nuclear fission Alphabet of Destruction. But not in the U.F.O. field. In that field they stick to Newtonian mechanics. So Spiderism is a kind of silken shroud, worn by dead minds, which can be changed at will, to make ridicule more effective.

I am convinced that we shall make no progress towards an explanation of the U.F.O.s until we dismiss time-and-space ideologies. As long as we think of U.F.O.s "coming" from anywhere—Mars or anywhere else—we are spiders, blinded by Spiderism. We are interpreting the Cosmos in terms of our own three-dimensional existence.

Facts may Fit

Hold to that three-dimensional ideology if you wish. Conceive our world, our solar system, the Cosmos as material. Conceive mind as the product of matter, by chemical or electrical processes. You may find all the facts fit—if you choose to ignore the facts that do not. But even the materialists have passed out of that kind of Spiderism. If we believe in a material Cosmos, however, and nothing more, we are faced with insoluble problems regarding the U.F.O.s. I need do no more than mention that there *are* such problems for the materialists.

There are probably as many problems for the dimensionalists, the occultists and the religious researchers who believe that the visitants from elsewhere are angels. No research is easy, and investigation of the U.F.O.s is more difficult than most. I suggest that we concentrate on explanations rather than sighting-accumulations. And I believe we shall get somewhere when we dismiss the concepts behind "somewhere" and "when" from our attempts to find a solution.