

IN DEFENCE OF AMATEURS

Ann Druffel

Mrs. Druffel has written regularly for *Flying Saucer Review* for more than five years and, in addition to the activities she describes herein, she is also a member of the Center for UFO Studies, and gave a paper at the recent Conference. We understand that this article has been accepted for publication in *Skylook*, the MUFON journal.

I N recent months a few books have been published, written by scientists in the field of ufology. We hail the arrival of these books, for they indicate that ufology has at last reached respectability in the public eye.

This attitude should be encouraged, but it is strange, for it should always be respectable to seek truth. But in our technologically-orientated society, the stamp of scientific approval on any field of endeavour is tantamount to public acceptance.

The books referred to above are fascinating. But without exception, each refers to scientists as having an innate ability to seek truth, comparing "scientists" to the "amateurs" who have handled the majority of public UFO research during the past three decades.

Being one of these "amateurs" myself, I must confess the term rankles me. For some obscure reason I have frequently looked upon an amateur as a bungling idiot, akin to an amateur carpenter who smashes his thumb with a hammer, or an amateur plumber who ends up knee-deep in water yelling for help.

Since this meaning of "amateur" is about as far from the real meaning as Pluto is from Mercury, a brief review of terms is in order.

"Amateur," going back to its Latin root, means "one who loves." Apply this to the well-known genre of amateur astronomers, who for centuries have studied planets, discovered comets, and were the first to become aware of radio sources in space. These amateur astronomers, a majority of whom are qualified observers with precision instruments, typically make no money from their contributions, but engage in astronomical study for sheer love of the work.

This is not to take anything away from professional astronomers. But there is no great difference between the *quality* of work put in by a paid professional astronomer and a good amateur. Most professional astronomers are only too glad to admit to this fact.

So to our "amateur" ufologists.

The very word "ufologist" brings up another semantical snag. What is a ufologist? It is one who studies ufology.

The first ufologists *had* to be amateurs. Since ufology has been in existence less than thirty years, it has not yet become a science. Too little is known about UFOs to even properly classify them — and classification is the heart of any science.

Likewise, almost nothing is known of the facts behind their existence — what they are, their purpose and motives, how they are propelled. A prolonged

study into the literature leaves any researcher, scientist and non-scientist alike, agape with their seemingly infinite complexity.

It must be admitted by anyone who studies UFOs that ufology is not yet a science, and therefore a ufologist is not a scientist, *per se*.

The only answer to this problem lies in determining who is competent to study UFOs. At present this research requires two things: 1. detailed documentation, without prejudice, of whatever facts are available from individual sightings, and 2. generous individual donation of time, energy and resources without hope of compensation.

Let us hope that this second requirement will change before very long. But until money grants become available to fund extensive research projects, each ufologist must willingly pay his own way.

Referring back to the two requirements for a ufologist — 1. an ability to perform competent research and 2. a willingness to give of his/her own resources — where does anyone get the idea that only scientists are capable of fulfilling these demands? Why are non-scientists referred to as "amateurs"?

When I was taking graduate training in the field of social case work, an established and respected profession, one of the first things we were taught was the definition of a "profession." A profession possesses two elements: first, it provides a needful and trained service to society and secondly, the members should give that service with financial reward being secondary in their minds.

If one reviews the requirements for a "profession" and for a "ufologist," one will note that they have identical elements. Therefore, a competent ufologist — scientist and non-scientist alike — is to all intents and purposes a professional.

It all comes down to whether each individual researcher is competent to study UFOs. I have known scientists who sadly lacked the ability to interview witnesses properly; likewise I have known competent persons in non-scientific fields who easily gathered "the facts" with open, objective minds. And vice versa.

Let's face it. In ufology there are no real professionals because of the tenuous nature of the subject. There are no amateurs either, if the term is used in semantical opposition to "professional." There are only those persons who can competently give of themselves.

Provided each researcher is competent, we are all professionals *or* we are all amateurs together.

(continued on page 31)

IS THE EARTH A CULTURE MEDIUM?

Dr. Bernard Finch, MRCS, LRCP, DCh, FBIS

H G. Wells was right, as we remember the "pay-off" in his story *War of the worlds*: the aliens were vanquished by Earth's bacterial infections, to which man was immune, but to which the aliens had no immunity. My contention is that a similar situation could have been occurring with occupants of UFOs.

First we notice the reluctance of the aliens to make contact with humans; perhaps they are afraid of contagious infections. To support this point we notice that they are said always to wear protective covering and helmets, but not, apparently, as we originally speculated, to protect them from our atmosphere, but to prevent them breathing in spores from that atmosphere. Again, this would explain the strange antics of UFOs in various areas of the world — from taking up water, to testing for sterility in samples of plants and soil — for they cannot land and expose themselves unless the area chosen is free from bacterial and virus invaders.

Secondly, we see another piece of evidence in several contact stories, where blood samples have been taken from "victims," and frequently by tubes and suction, as in the case of A. Villas Boas. Surely this must be for testing for antibodies which we earthlings all have in our blood. They may use this blood for developing a vaccine for immunising themselves against current infections.

For it would appear that the UFO entities are unable to sustain an existence on our planet without previous immunisation against all the current viruses and bacteria which permeate our atmosphere and lives. This immunity could be short lived and fresh samples of blood from earthlings must be obtained at frequent intervals to keep their immunity high.

During times of epidemics on the earth — when fresh immunisation is required against virulent organisms — so there may be a rash of UFO sightings, landings and abductions, for an immunisation programme.

It would be instructive to plot incidences of landings against incidences of epidemics in the last fifty years when I assume we would find identical

curves. We can conclude that the aliens may have lost their powers of immunity to infection, or they may have had it suppressed by radiations on their own planet, or from space. Is the earth a giant "culture medium" for bacteria and viruses, and do space aliens come here to obtain blood samples, to prepare vaccines to build up their immunity? Failure of immunity, or lack of immunity, would mean the death of the alien — and, by the way, how do they dispose of their dead? By burial, or by cremation? We must not forget that they often have been reported digging holes, and the purpose of this may not always be for retrieving soil samples.

I feel that the time has come for a new appraisal of the whys and wherefores of the landings and sightings, for we must remember that the earth's gravity field attracts all manner of space debris including spores of bacteria and viruses. These sink down into our atmosphere where warmth and moisture are ideal for their multiplication. This is repeated in humans until conditions are ripe for an epidemic. During this period a high titre of antibodies is built up in human blood. After the epidemic, the blood concentration of antibodies is very high, an ideal time for non-immune aliens to prepare a vaccine.

So we must study areas of the earth, after epidemics, for sightings of helmeted and protective covered creatures. Later, having immunised themselves, for a short time the aliens will be safe to make direct contacts... Still later, their immunity wears off, and they avoid contact and appear only in isolated sterile surroundings well away from human habitations.

Let us not forget that we can read in the Bible, and no doubt elsewhere, of objects being seen in the skies after epidemics or plagues, and of "contacts" having been made. There springs to mind the story of the Plagues in Egypt, of the Flight of the Hebrews, of the passage of the Red Sea and of the Pillar of Cloud by day and of fire by night.

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