

AN APPRAISAL OF THE PRESENT UFO POSITION

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WHEN a problem takes on a frightening magnitude and complexity it is often advantageous to go back to first principles, to set out the soundest evidence and to examine past reasoning. Although this procedure may not solve the problem, it usually provides one with a deeper insight and a closer understanding of where each part lies in relationship to the whole. By this method the mind becomes more receptive to fresh evidence and can place it in its context in a more profitable way. Today ufology presents a bewildering variety of phenomena and an equally bewildering set of theories which attempt to explain these phenomena. Hence let us resort to fundamentals and then examine the reasoning of the hypotheses which stem from the evidence. It must be pointed out that the analysis that follows is necessarily over-simplified for clarity and brevity and the emphasis of certain aspects of the subject may be somewhat unbalanced as a result of this. However, this article is an attempt to outline the whole subject, not to concentrate on its parts.

Science as a tool

As the author has undergone a scientific training he makes no secret of the fact that he favours those hypotheses which clash least with established scientific fact. He does this as he is convinced that the scientific method applied by a liberal mind is the most powerful tool man has for probing the secrets of natural phenomena.

The evidence which any theory on UFOs must consider and explain can be broken down roughly into six groups as follows:

1. Basic evidence:

- (i) Visual sightings by people from every walk of life.
- (ii) Radar trackings.

- (iii) Photographs and films.
- (iv) Telescope, theodolite, etc., sightings.

2. Evidence suggesting intelligent control:

- (i) Flying in formation.
- (ii) Following airliners, rockets, etc.
- (iii) Making off when approached.
- (iv) Repeated sightings over areas one would expect to be of interest, e.g., airports and atomic installations.
- (v) Orthoteny.
- (vi) Concentration of attention on one area of the globe at a time.
- (vii) Mother-craft reported.
- (viii) Structure—domes, portholes, etc.

3. Performance of the objects:

- (i) Lack of noise except at close quarters in most cases.
- (ii) Colour changes associated with speed changes.
- (iii) Right-angle and 180° turns without loss of speed.
- (iv) Very high accelerations.
- (v) Very high speeds in the atmosphere without burning up.
- (vi) "Falling leaf" manoeuvres often reported.
- (vii) Changes in shape reported.

4. Associated phenomena:

- (i) Stalling of car engines.
- (ii) Heat radiation reported.
- (iii) Atomic radiation reported.
- (iv) "Angel's hair."
- (v) Animals affected.
- (vi) Eccentric patch.
- (vii) Colour changes produced in terrestrial objects.
- (viii) Tingling sensation produced on humans at close quarters.

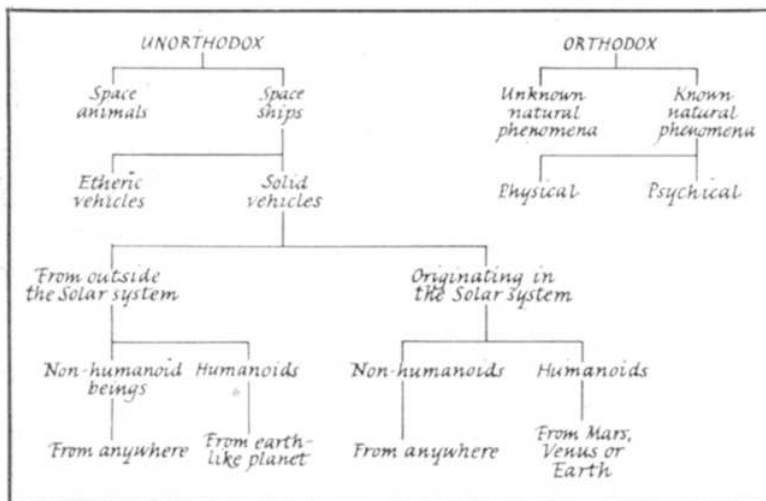
5. Contact reports:

- (i) Humanoids seen in objects in flight.
- (ii) Humanoids seen near objects on ground.
- (iii) Humanoids conversed with.
- (iv) Non-humanoids seen near objects on the ground.
- (v) Alleged flights in UFOs, visits to other planets, etc.

6. Other evidence:

- (i) Sighting waves occur.
- (ii) Reported extensively since 1946 and less extensively for several hundred years.
- (iii) Slugs and metal foils reported as dropping from them.
- (iv) Radar echoes from invisible objects.
- (v) Strong beams of light projected.
- (vi) Absence of reports of extra-terrestrial radio signals consistent with large numbers of alien craft visiting Earth.

The various explanations of the evidence outlined above and where the primary explanations lead to are shown in the diagrammatic scheme below.



The scheme shows more clearly than anything else the fact that once certain decisions have been made others must follow automatically. For example, once we decide that UFOs cannot be explained as natural phenomena, we are led step by step to the conclusion that there exists intelligence in outer space. In order to be brief, the present analysis does not consider such problems as whether the beings who would fly UFOs are friendly, hostile or indifferent to us. The analysis stops just short of deciding precisely where the UFOs come from because all the evidence we consider, except that of the contact

stories, is insufficient to provide sound conclusions on which to base further analysis. There is such a marked disagreement between most of those contact stories in which an actual conversation took place, and so much of the information obtained in this way clashes strongly with accepted scientific fact, that this evidence cannot carry much weight at this stage.

It must also be remembered that the further we probe into the origins, motives, etc., of the hypothetical space visitors, the more we are compelled to rely on fewer and fewer observations. As the deductions we make from the evidence become more elaborate their reliability decreases, therefore.

The choice

When considering the diagram, the line of least resistance will be followed. That is at each alternative explanation the available evidence will be consulted and the choice most consistent with the evidence accepted. The first decision of all, whether to accept the orthodox or unorthodox explanation, requires the greatest amount of thought and analysis because once this decision has been made so much of the rest must follow.

There is no need to reiterate the orthodox views here as most readers of the REVIEW will be conversant with them. These are the astrophysical and meteorological explanations expounded by Menzel *et al.* and the psychical expounded primarily by Jung (though see "They Come from Inner Space," by J. B. Priestley, in the *New Statesman* of December 5, 1953). Most readers will agree, I think, that the overwhelming weight of evidence points away from simple misinterpretation of natural phenomena and wish-fulfilment hallucinations. The possibility that there is a completely unknown natural phenomenon or group of these which could produce the characteristics listed above of the bona fide UFO is so unlikely that the alternative explanations seem more plausible.

We come then to space ships or space animals (I use the word in its widest sense) as the possible explanation for UFOs. The evidence for animals rests largely on the ability of UFOs to change shape and photographs of nebulous-looking objects. When we compare this with reports of domed objects, portholes, fantastic accelerations and right-angle turns we realise that at best space animals could account for only a small part of the UFO evidence. In view of the fact that some of the evidence, such as shape changing, can be explained by the peculiar properties of one of the suggested propulsion mechanisms of UFOs, not

to mention the biological difficulties involved, we leave the space animal hypothesis with grave doubts as to even its partial validity.

The evidence indicates that the UFOs are space vehicles, but are they composed of matter as we understand it or are the strange phenomena associated with UFOs best explained by postulating that the objects are "etheric" or come from another dimension? Here the scientist has no hesitation in rejecting the latter and on first thoughts may accept the former. However, on reflection he may reject the former also because UFOs in many aspects of their behaviour (right-angle turns without slowing down, speeds in the atmosphere that would cause a normal body to burn up, etc.) appear to behave contrary to the laws of physics. Thus the scientist would have to choose between two alternatives, both of which involve a contradiction of many scientific laws. I believe that it is largely because of this difficulty that so many scientists reject UFOs outright and bend over backwards to find conventional explanations for the evidence. Once the scientist admits that a UFO sighting cannot be explained by orthodox means he must face this decision—or become an ostrich.

The way round

The way round this dilemma lies in the propulsion of the UFO. If we postulate that the UFOs have some form of gravitational force as their prime motive power, then much of the evidence drops neatly into place. Fantastic accelerations that no living thing could stand, right-angle turns, colour changes, no burning up at high speed, the eccentric patch, all these and many of the other peculiarities of UFOs can be explained by the gravitational propulsion theory. (For details see *Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucer*, by Cramp, and *The Truth About Flying Saucers*, by Aimé Michel.) It is interesting to note that although gravity propulsion sounds like Dan Dare it is the subject of much scientific research, especially in the U.S.A. (see "Electrogravitics. What it is—or might be," by A. V. Cleaver, *Journal of the British Interplanetary Society*, Vol. 16, No. 2). Etheric saucers, the alternative explanation, involves a far more radical alteration in modern physical concepts and until the feasibility of a gravitational field propulsion system is shown to be impossible we can regard it as a blind alley.

From whence do they come? If the UFOs are manned (if such a word may be used in this context) by beings biologically similar to ourselves and come from within the solar system, then we are compelled by the astronomical evidence to

accept that they originate on Mars, Venus or Earth. The last explanation can be rejected immediately for the reasons given a decade ago by Keyhoe, Heard, etc. The astronomers tell us that so far as their present knowledge goes (which is quite a long way in the case of Mars) no technological civilisation could be supported by either planet. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility that a race may have flourished on Mars when the conditions there were more favourable for advanced life forms and this life might have evolved in some way to preserve its foothold on the dying planet. A civilisation might exist in an artificial environment underground, for example.

If UFOs came from Mars or Venus we would expect an increase in their numbers when those planets were nearest to us. Such an increase has been reported in the case of Mars, but the evidence is not at all clear-cut.

The great majority of the better authenticated landing reports (e.g. those involved in an orthodox series of sightings) describe the occupants of UFOs as small humanoids. The evidence for non-humanoids is based on a few "monster" stories which can be rationalised when one allows for the possible misinterpretations caused by fear and darkness. In view of this it is reasonable to take the conservative view that the pilots of UFOs are humanoids. If we reject this view, then saucers could come from anywhere, as we have no conception of the conditions of non-humanoid existence.

Time dilation

The nearest star is four and a third light-years away from us. The UFOs must come from distances greater than that if they do not originate within the solar system. There is still controversy amongst theoretical physicists about a prediction of the theory of relativity which states that time moves slower for a moving observer than for an observer at rest. This effect becomes marked at velocities approaching that of light. Thus a person in a space ship travelling at a substantial fraction of the speed of light would not age as quickly as a stationary observer, hence on the space traveller's return he would find his less adventurous friends more aged than he himself was. There is a school of thought that states that this effect is destroyed during the periods of motion in which the rocket is accelerating or decelerating. If time dilation does occur, then we may indeed be being visited by beings from planets of a distant sun.

If time dilation does not occur, then we rather

flatter ourselves if we imagine that beings are travelling for periods of many years to pay us such fleeting visits, unless they have very long lifespans. An alternative theory is that we may be witnessing the passage through our solar system of a whole race of beings that are searching for a new home following the destruction of their own in some cosmic catastrophe. Prof. Oberth suggested this hypothesis and named the race "Uranides." To decide between this and many of the other possible hypotheses which crop up at this stage is the next problem for UFO research. In this respect the history of UFO phenomena is important. Have we witnessed towards the end of the Second World War the coming of the Uranides scout ships and have since seen the passage of the main body of their vessels and are now witnessing the departure of the stragglers? Or have UFOs been seen in numbers since the dawn of history? Is there a systematic reconnaissance of our planet or are we being watched indiscriminately?

These are exciting questions and I believe that we are capable of finding the answers. Ufology

today is suffering from a lack of co-ordination and purpose; if vital questions are posed we can mould our researches to find the answers and gain some dynamism. Unless this occurs our subject will sink into a thick muffling blanket of woolly thinking and divergent purpose trimmed with a lunatic fringe.

Let us sum up. We have seen that the best interpretation one can put on the evidence for UFOs is that

- (a) UFOs are space ships,
- (b) they come from Mars or Venus or from an earth-like planet of another sun.

The first conclusion is dependent on the gravity propulsion hypothesis and the second follows from the first and assumes humanoid builders. The place of origin can be more precisely determined by the resolution of the time dilation problem and by astronomical discoveries. It is clear that the developments of modern science are very important for ufologists and so they should be working with, not against, the scientist.

Welcome to our Russian readers

THE only reason we have not, in the past, been able to boast of a world-wide readership has been because we had no direct evidence that the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW had penetrated into the Soviet Union. For some time, however, we have had subscribers in one or other of the Iron Curtain countries.

We take this opportunity of welcoming, at last, a number of Russian readers, and we hasten to assure them that we believe the saucers to be inter-planetary and that we have not invented them as "figments of imperialistic warmongering imaginings." If ever we believed the objects were Russian secret weapons, that day is long past, and we trust that our new readers will believe us when we also say that neither are they American.

If these new readers accept both the reality and the inter-planetary origin of the UFOs, which have, we learn, been appearing with some frequency over the Soviet Union, they will realise, even if they cannot openly admit, that the advent of our visitors transcends all ideological differences and offers the only hope available to man of an ending of the cold war and a prevention of the hot one. We, on this side of the world, sympathise with our Russian readers on the ridicule which believers are at present facing in the Soviet Union and it may help them to know that we, too, have had to suffer the same sort of hostility. They may also like to know that this hostility is fading in the western world.