

HYPNOTIC REGRESSION OF ALLEGED CE-III CASES

AMBIGUITIES ON THE ROAD TO UFOs

A. H. Lawson

Dr. Lawson is Professor of English at California State University, Long Beach. His contribution is based on a paper presented at the first conference of the Center for UFO Studies at Lincolnwood, Nr. Chicago, Illinois, on May 1, 1976, and we hope to publish a follow-up article, with full details of the Garden Grove incidents, in a future issue of *Flying Saucer Review*.

SINCE October 1975, at least eight individuals allegedly associated with CE-III UFO experiences have been hypnotically regressed by an Anaheim doctor with the help of a number of Southern California ufologists. As you see in table 1, two of the cases, Nos. 4 and 5, were determined after regression not to be CE-III's, though one, No. 6, was judged a possible abduction. The alleged experiences occurred variously from 1952 through 1975 — indeed, one witness insists "things" are still happening to him. The question I wish to emphasise is reflected by the last column: seven of the eight cases were judged to be ambiguous, with investigation continuing. My question is, why is there so much ambiguity in hypnotic regression of UFO close encounter cases?

suggest an answer to my own question, and to explore it in these pages. The response I propose is this: hypnotic regression as presently practiced is an inconclusive source of UFO data ultimately because the questioning process leaves us no way of dealing with paranormal information.

Of course, hypnosis has traditionally been the richest and most dramatic method of getting data about UFO encounters — one thinks of the Hills, of Schirmer, Travis Walton, and others. Regression, besides providing the only access to some UFO data, gives us our closest glimpse of certainty, for under regression the subject often reveals the truth. However, the truth he reveals is merely what he *believes* to be true, not necessarily the absolute and unvarnished Truth. And thereby hangs many a UFO tale, and tale-teller.

There are many areas of real uncertainty in hypnotic regressions. If the subject is an unreliable witness, he may become one of several possible sources of error: he may be a clever hoaxer who outwits the hypnotist; he may sincerely believe his own lies; he may wish to please the questioner so that he fabricates or changes his testimony under repeated questioning; he may be a pathological liar; or he may not even be under hypnotic trance at all.

Even a reliable witness can be a source of error: his objectivity is never certain, for he may filter out bizarre or embarrassing information and so render his narrative incomplete; he may misinterpret physical or paranormal details (more on that later); there may be partial or complete sensory blocks about his experience; and the hypnotist's tactics may either lead the subject to avoid potentially fruitful areas, or encourage a sensational but barren line of responses.

These matters are significant because the Orange County regression conditions were nearly ideal. We had the most professional conditions possible. We had a hospital room and practically unlimited time. The hypnotist (who kindly volunteered his services) was a medical doctor with extensive clinical hypnosis experience who had a necessary fund of information about UFOs, and a healthily sceptical point of view which was deemed appropriate for his function.

SUBJECT NUMBER	SIGHTING BEFORE REGR.	CLASSIFICATION AFTER REGR.	CURRENT STATUS
1	CE-III/ABD*	AMB	AMB/CONT
2 (witness)	CE-III/ABD	AMB	AMB/CONT
3 (wife)	CE-I/PARA†	AMB	AMB/CONT
4	CE-III/ABD	CE-II	AMB/CONT
5	CE-III/HUM +	CE-I	CLOSED
6	CE-III/PARA	CE-III/ABD	AMB/CONT
7	CE-III/ABD	CE-III/ABD	AMB/CONT
8	CE-III/ABD	CE-III/ABD	AMB/CONT

- * Abduction alleged
- † Paranormal events alleged
- + Humanoid sighting alleged

Table 1: CE-III UFO cases regressed since October, 1975

There are some obvious responses to the question: first, data from hypnotic regressions are all anecdotal, of course, with few verifiable facts and little unambiguous detail; and the matter of witness reliability is always uncertain. Secondly, the varying capabilities of the personnel involved — hypnotist, investigators, and of course the subject — determine what success, if any, is achieved.

One could add to the list, but I would like to

					TYPE	WITNESSES
1	OCT.	12, 1959	(2:10.4 AM)	GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA	CE-I/PARA	NONE
2	MAR.	14, 1971	(9:06.3 PM)	APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA	CE-III	ONE (?)
3	MAR.	21, 1973	(9:07.4 PM)	APACHE JUNCTION, ARIZONA	CE-III	NONE
4	OCT.	25, 1973	(7:02.3 PM)	BUENA PARK, CALIFORNIA	CE-III	ONE (?)
5	NOV.	21, 1975	(c. 3:00 AM)	GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA	CE-III	NONE
6	DEC.	22, 1975	(Time unknown)	GARDEN GROVE, CALIFORNIA	CE-III	NONE

Table 2: Garden Grove Case alleged UFO experiences

There had been absolutely no disturbing media attention given the witnesses, although several of the sessions were vide-taped for college use. The doctor usually directed the regressions as he saw fit, based on a list of general questions provided beforehand by the investigators, although we wrote many questions during the sessions and on occasion questioned the subjects ourselves. One of these regressees, whose case I am going to relate in some detail, was a good hypnotic patient who went into a deep trance easily, articulated well (often correcting the hypnotist about details), and revived consistently as opposed to the more uncertain use of memory and the past tense. Despite all this, the hypnotic regression experienced was judged inconclusive. Why?

The Garden Grove Case, as I call it, is complex, but my brief outline will help clarify it. The subject's UFO story is intriguing because he alleges not only multiple CE-III experiences, but on two occasions that he had separate witnesses. There is also a paranormal aspect to the case. Other details help make it uniquely interesting.

The dates and places of six alleged UFO encounters are given in table 2. The subject is a 33-year-old male from Garden Grove, California, who is a draftsman for a computer firm. He is a high-school dropout of high natural intelligence. He is also extremely glib.

This UFO encounter time-table emerged only after the hypnosis sessions ended. Before that the chronology was consistently contradictory. The subject's remarkable time preciseness here (derived from a self-induced trance) may represent his apology for the previous confusion. It should be noted that the subject made many drawings of the encounter, including detailed "blueprints" of the craft's interior. These need additional study to determine if their professional appearance signifies anything more

1	OCT.	8, 1975
2	OCT.	15
3	OCT.	22
4	OCT.	29
5	NOV.	5
6	NOV.	12 (WITNESS REGRESSED)
7	NOV.	19 (SUBJECT AND WIFE REGRESSED)

Table 3: Garden Grove Case hypnotic regressions

than the subject's drafting skills and his stimulated imagination.

The Garden Grove Case hypnotic regressions occurred weekly, in accord with the calendar in table 3:

I wish to include a full review of the first alleged abduction in order to provide context for my remarks:

The March 14, 1971 "abduction"

While camping on the Arizona desert around 9.00 p.m., the subject and a friend are levitated into a 200-foot diameter, saucer-shaped UFO.

The subject finds himself and witness in a small room, paralyzed and unable to resist. Suddenly several 7-foot tall beings enter and undress them both, then take them in opposite directions down a curving hallway. The beings are ugly, with sloping shoulders, crocodile-scaled skin, elephant-like feet, and hands with three fingers and a recessed thumb. Supported by two beings, the subject seems to glide rather than walk. Heavy fog or mist is everywhere.

They stop at a door with an insignia on it. There are blinking lights at the top and sides. When touched by one of the beings, the door seems to explode, and the subject moves into a very bright room. After actually walking some distance he is placed against a curving wall, from which he is unable to move. The wall lights up, and he feels pleasant.

Two of the 7-foot beings station themselves at consoles of some kind, and a third stands beside a pole on which there is a movable box with many tiny coloured blinking lights, and two large intense lights. One of these large lights holds the subject's eyes in a fixed gaze; the other is apparently some sort of biological probe. The subject experiences a series of uncomfortable if painless sensations from his feet upward: he senses he is bleeding; he urinates; he feels water run from his stomach; he feels his chest opened and he thinks his heart has left his body briefly; finally his head feels "pulled" violently. Then everything stops, and shortly the lights on the box go off.

The subject senses that the intense lights on the box are connected with blinking lights which seem to traverse a clear cable leading from the moving box to the pole, and perhaps up the pole to another level.

The subject detects a distinct unpleasant odour. Then from across the room out of the fog comes a 9-foot being, like the others only larger. He approaches the subject, who is frightened but calms

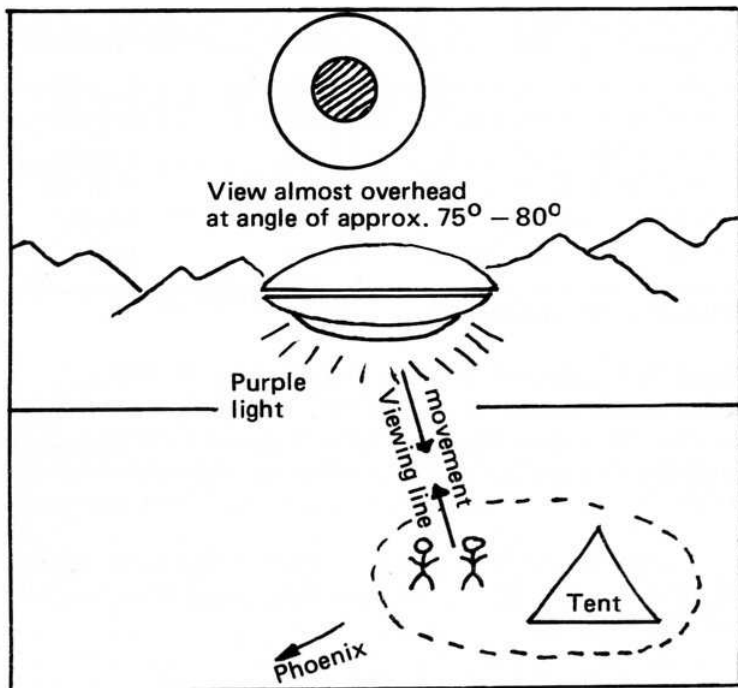


Figure 1: Apache Junction area, looking past witnesses to UFO and then the mountains

suddenly when the being places his huge hand on the subject's head. The 9-footer apparently communicates telepathically with the subject, without moving his mouth. A message is communicated to the subject. Then the subject experiences an out-of-the-body trip.

The message is a combination of vague philosophical statements, general information about the

aliens' origin and purpose, and a promise that they will return. The aliens seem to the subject to be clones of a central host intelligence in the form of a vast on-board computer. The host once had humanoid form, but now can either inhabit the computer or materialize as a humanoid. There is a large lab on the second floor of the UFO where young clones are grown in cylinders. The ship is "checking the original biological plantation" on earth.

The subject's telepathic trip is through future time to the aliens' home, a harsh, purplish world, domed, with two suns. However rugged its geography, the subject senses that it is a very happy place.

On the way to the aliens' home, the subject views earth during a future war — bright flashes apparently signify total atomic destruction. (Dates given for this "doomsday" range from April 3, 1985 to December 24, 2011, but settle on June 7, 1985 at high noon exactly.)

The subject is taken from the wall and returned down the curving hall to the small room where he meets his friend, who looks weak and ashen. They dress and then are floated to the ground. They stumble around in the darkness until they find their camp. About two hours has passed. Neither remembers what has happened, but, frightened and disorientated, they frantically throw all their gear into their truck and race home.

In judging the credibility of the Garden Grove Case, I can mention only a few details. Certainly there are parallels and differences in the case which, when compared to other UFO narratives, tend to strengthen it. Also, I found the subject's emotional intensity during some of the narrative simply

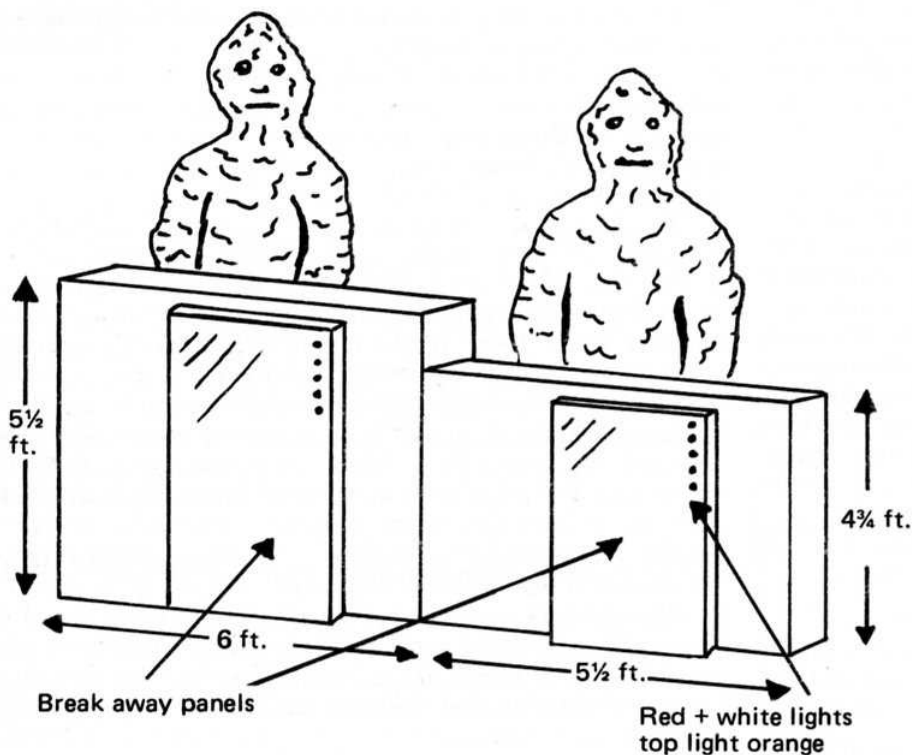


Figure 2: The creatures at their consoles

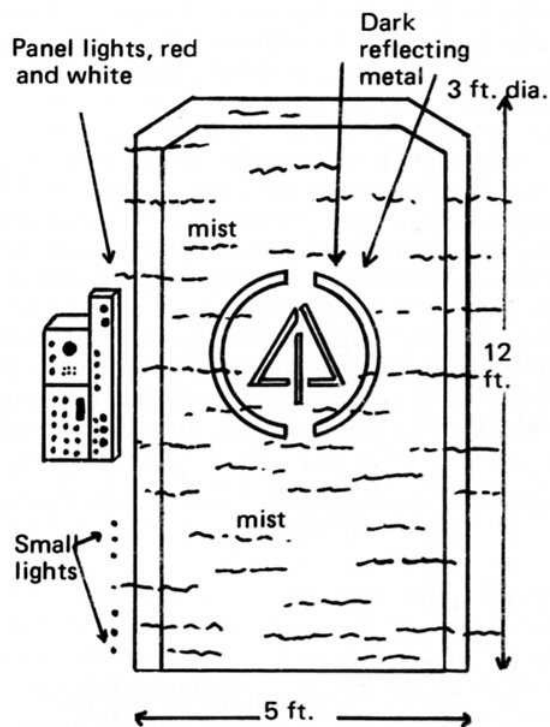


Figure 3: The door

stunning, as did two professional hypnotists, an M.D. and a Ph.D. not connected with the case. There was a surprise factor in the subject's narrative, which consistently electrified the investigators, who felt the subject's responses to be beyond his powers of invention. For instance, he would answer some questions eagerly, with a rush of words, then trail off in confusion with a mumbled, "I don't understand..." as if there were two channels of information, his own and another. His observational powers were sharp: asked what his alien attendants did during his physical examination, he said they shifted their weight occasionally from side to side. (We thought this perhaps the first description of alien boredom in all UFO literature, as if the beings were saying, "Oh, wow! Another human, another physical!") When asked if Christ were known to the aliens, or whether they were angels or demons, this marginally literate, unchurchly man answered, "Not related to the images man projects." Or another question: "How many people have been abducted (by this particular UFO)?" and his off-hand but time-independent response: "Twenty... Nineteen, one to come..."

Some hard information was secured: the name and location of his fellow "abductee" in the 1971 case. This second witness was flown to Anaheim and regressed. He had absolutely no conscious recollection of the alleged encounter, but during regression he manifested great fear and a severe head pain which seemed associated with releasing any information about a possible abduction. This reaction was interpreted as a possible data block, although final judgement was indeterminate.

On the negative side, it must be emphasized that the subject's background and behaviour are not reassuring. He had spent time in jail for fraud in 1971. His behaviour during the investigation and hypnosis sessions became increasingly unstable, including daytime trances, a 24-hour "disappearance", and frenzied phone calls to ufologists nationwide. In addition, the "contactee" or messianic dimension of the case began to dominate the regressions. After the fourth session, the investigators were faced with acute credibility problems: the subject began to report seeing "balls of light" in and around his house. These lights, which were reportedly seen by four of the subject's friends and family members, were tentatively classified as paranormal phenomena. The subject's by now seemingly very dubious credibility was climaxed when he was caught in an apparent hoax activity, after which the investigators ceased working with him. In the next few months he was able to interest at least three other groups in active investigation of his case, which activities are continuing at the present time.

I choose to discuss this case not only because of its richness, complexity, and resounding ambiguity, but also for the reason that since it is an on-going case it symbolizes the inconclusiveness of the whole immense UFO problem, which is still "there" — as mysterious and impenetrable as ever. The Garden Grove Case is also interesting because it shows, I feel, that the investigators did not know how to

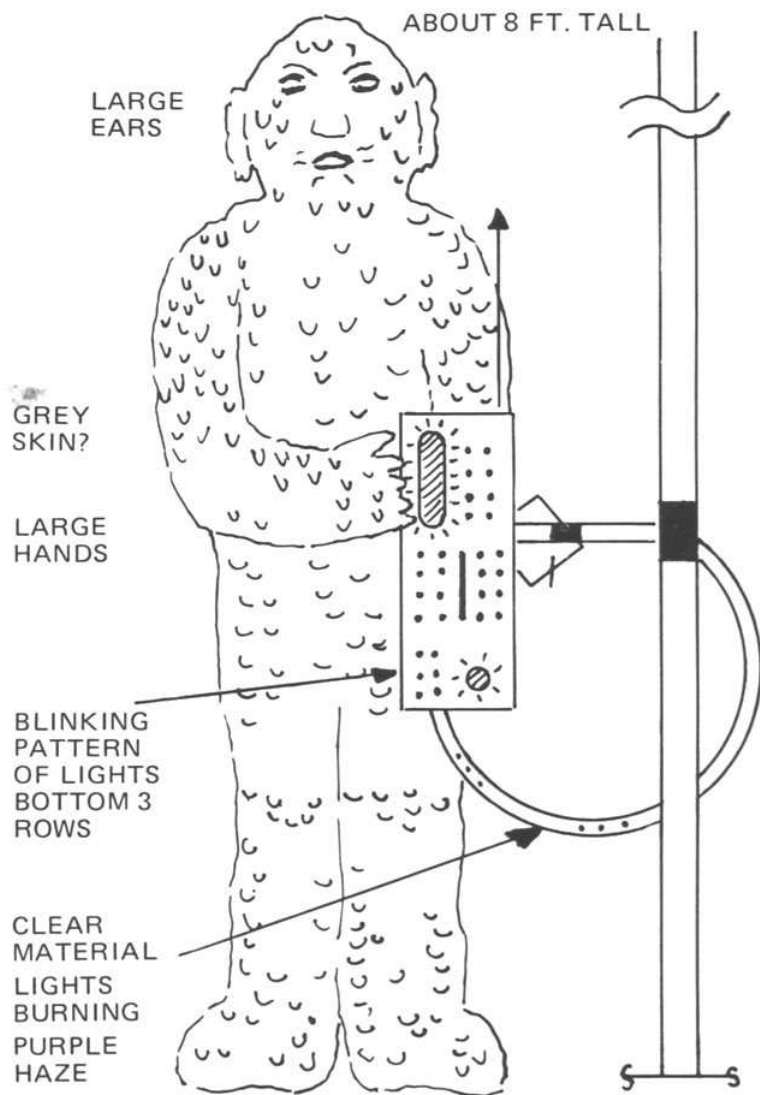


Figure 4: Creature at pole with moveable box into which data from the probe in witness's body was fed; thence via clear cable to vast computer on 2nd floor of UFO

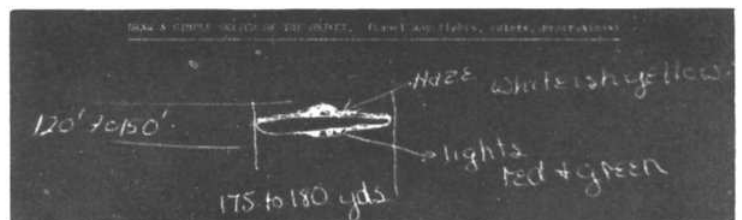
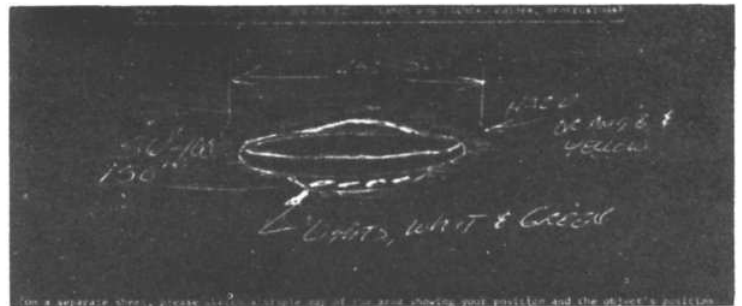


Figure 5: Drawings by Garden Grove witness and second witness, a 16-year-old babysitter, of UFOs at CE-III sighting Buena Pk, October 25, 1973

	"REASONABLE" DATA	"EXOTIC" DATA	"PARANORMAL" DATA
	(LOGICAL OBJECTS, EVENTS) (DATA PUZZLING BUT RATIONAL)	(ODD OBJECTS, EVENTS) (SENSORY RESPONSE QUESTIONABLE)	(DATA INCOMPREHENSIBLE) (UNCONSCIOUS DATA EMERGE LATER)
PHYSICAL EXAMINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -UNDRESSED -EXAMINATION APPARATUS -“ATTENDANTS” -RATIONAL, THOROUGH FEET-TO-HEAD PROCEDURE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -EFFECT OF PROBE -APPARENT HIGH TECHNOLOGY -BLINKING LIGHTS PATTERN -RAPIDITY OF EXAMINATION -TEMPORARY PARALYSIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DISSECTION (HEART LEAVES BODY) -SEES BODY IN “BEAM OF LIGHT” -RESTORATION OF HEART -TRANQUILIZED BY 9-FOOTER
9-FOOTER'S TELEPATHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -CHIEF ALIEN BIGGEST -ONLY CHIEF ALIEN “TALKS” -DOESN'T SPEAK ENGLISH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -PHYSICAL CONTACT W/ALIEN -“GOD! BUT HE FEELS UGLY!” -BREATH OF VAPOR -FOG/MIST EVERYWHERE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -TELEPATHIC COMMUNICATION -MESSAGE CONTENT RAMBLING -OUT-OF-BODY TRIP -TRAVELS “FORWARD IN TIME”

Table 4: Increasing strangeness of UFO experience

respond to the data they found. This investigator, at least, was initially embarrassed by the “contactee” shape the case gradually assumed; later, I became rigorously apathetic about the supposedly paranormal “lights” the subject reported, and turned off by his stupid hoax (which, incidentally, I don’t think negates his case). My point is that through his inability to deal with the “contactee” and paranormal aspects of this case, the investigator himself may have become a source of error. Let’s look at table 4.

As anyone familiar with the literature knows, hypnotic regression often reveals individual experiences which involve events ranging from the very mundane to the most exotic imaginable, and past that to the paranormal. Similarly, there were “reasonable”, “exotic”, and “paranormal” aspects to the Garden Grove subject’s physical examination as well as to his telepathic trip.

The “reasonable” part of the examination may include his being undressed and placed in front of an apparatus which, while tended by several personnel, examined him in orderly, rational fashion from his feet up to his head, and then was turned off. The “exotic” part of the experience might include the apparently painless though uncomfortable probing, the evidently near-automated technology, and the patterned blinking of coloured lights in the moving box and up the clear cable. The “paranormal” might include the reported dissection of his heart from his chest, seeing his body in a beam of light, and his heart’s restoration.

Regarding the telepathic communication with the 9-footer, the “reasonable” assumption perhaps is that the chief alien would not only be larger than

the others, but would be the one to communicate with directly, just as it might be expected that he does not speak English but rather, as the subject puts it, “all languages.” In the “exotic” category, there is the remarkably intense emotional response at the alien’s touch: “God! But he feels ugly!” The “paranormal” segment is implicit in the reported telepathic communication, the time-related out-of-body trip, and the largely absurd content of the message from the 9-footer.

Are we able to say that data from each of these categories are equally reliable? The problem is complex. Obviously, no clear division between “reasonable” and “exotic” information is possible, due to differences in witnesses’ experiential judgements and perceptual capabilities. Determining the reliability of differing categories is challenging, and one should not generalize. A good example is provided by table 5, which compares the subject’s regression response to two different types of data.

In this case, the “exotic” information is a description of a 5-foot humanoid which allegedly visited the subject in his garage about 3.00 a.m. on the morning of October 26. The “reasonable” data, as it happens, is an account of Dr. J. Allen Hynek at a social gathering last fall. It was the first and only time the subject had seen Dr. Hynek, though the description is detailed and relatively accurate. While one should expect the humanoid visitation to be nothing less than exotic – to say the least – his description (excerpted here) is detailed and, though we can’t match it with the original just yet, the subject’s observational accuracy in the one case suggests a similarly high reliability potential in the other. Note that, whether the subject is hallucinating or whatever, he is describing what he sees in orderly

**"REASONABLE" DATA
(DR. J. A. HYNEK)**

"SEE HIM BEFORE AT A HOUSE . . . A SHORTER MAN OF . . . FACE BEWHISKER. A GREYISH, (sic) DISTINCTIVE VOICE OF AUTHORITY AND COMPREHENSION. AGED – WOULD BE 50's TO 60's. SITTING IN A CHAIR, TALKING TO OTHER PEOPLE . . . OTHER PEOPLE RESPONDING TO CONVERSATION OF PAST VOYAGE TO SOUTH AMERICA, AND SOMETHING OF NATURE OF ANGEL OF – NIGHT? SAME AS OTHER USUAL SIGHTINGS . . ." (Oct. 15 regression)

**"EXOTIC" DATA
(HUMANOID RPT.)**

"HE IS BALD-HEADED, HALF-WAY, FROM THE CENTER OF HIS HEAD. WHITE HAIR FLOWING STRAIGHTLY (sic) DOWN TOWARDS HIS NECK. HIS FACE IS NOT WRINKLED. HE IS OLD . . . YET HIS SKIN IS RATHER FAIR AND NOT BLEMISHED . . . HE HAS NORMAL FEATURES BUT HE IS SHORTER THAN I, MUCH SHORTER. HE HAS A COLLAR THAT HITS ABOUT HIS EARS AND CUTS STRAIGHT DOWN TO HIS NECKLINE. IT IS APPARENTLY ALL ONE PIECE . . . HIS HANDS ARE FAIR, UH – FIVE FINGERS, SMALL HANDS, THUMBS, UH – THERE IS A SLENDERNESS ABOUT HIM. HE DOES NOT WEIGH VERY MUCH . . ." (Oct. 29 regression)

Table 5: Comparably reliable regression responses to "reasonable" and "exotic" data

fashion – from top to bottom, from the object to the actions of the object, from concrete detail to more generalized observation, etc.

If this is a fair example, "exotic" details from regression narratives may be, at best, just as reliable as more rational information. Investigators thus need not filter out data as their strangeness increases – at least, not until encountering paranormal details. Naturally, not all "exotic" data can be given a high reliability: the subject's description of the operations of the patterned blinking of coloured lights and the operations of the moving box are perhaps too vague to carry very high hard data value.

The reliability of paranormal data is very uncertain, but one can speculate on some interesting possibilities. Recent work by specialists in the human brain seems to bear out a long-held theory, that the two hemispheres of the brain have diverse functions. An excellent study of paranormal activities such as remote viewing and precognition by SRI scientists Harold Puthoff and Russell Targ¹ argues persuasively that paranormal experiences are received by the right side of the brain, which has to do with intuitive, synthetic experiences, among others, while the left hemisphere governs logical, analytical processes. The matter is extremely complex and I oversimplify it shamefully here, but if this right-left diversity thesis has validity, it may help explain why UFO regression testimony in the paranormal area seems so unsatisfactory.

For instance, the message that the Garden Grove subject recounted is as platitudinous and absurd as that from any "contactee"; but since speech and verbalization are left-hemisphere functions, the apparent meaninglessness of that and other of the subject's messages may not be as it seems. The very effort of bringing into language and articulation (a left-side function) the paranormal experience of telepathic communication with the alien (a right-side function) may distort the communication into the nonsense we know and loathe so thoroughly.*

This distortion may be inherent – if Puthoff and Targ are correct – in most or all paranormal data from UFO regression narratives. But rather than reject the puzzling or bizarre component of many CE-III cases, we should develop ways to separate a witness's paranormal data from his analytical or interpretive impulses. Regression is usually a verbal exercise, but there are non-verbal means by which some data can be secured and interpreted without distortion or fragmentation. Qualified clinical professionals may be able to develop means to retrieve paranormal data.²

There are apparently at least two additional categories of information involved in CE-III regression data retrieval. Some data may be received by the witness's unconscious and emerge later, as in the common temporary amnesia following UFO close encounters. Other data may never be uncovered, due either to self-imposed or other permanent blocks. Just that kind of permanent block may have been evidenced by the second witness to the Arizona encounter.

Summary

As we see in table 6, an encounter as complex as the Garden Grove Case may expose a subject to experiences ranging in degrees of strangeness from the "reasonable" through the "exotic" to the "paranormal"; and his unconscious may receive some input which makes itself known later; while other

* [My emphasis – EDITOR]

1. *Proceedings of the IEEE*, Vol.64, No.3 (March, 1976), pp. 329–354.
2. Linguistic research indicates that most languages have left-hemisphere (analytical, logical) dominance, including Chinese and English, which are among the most extreme. Some other languages, however, such as several American Indian and Eskimo dialects, are described as "synthetic". These language groups have a greater degree of right-hemisphere dependence, and CE-III reports from such areas could provide a higher reliability of paranormal UFO data.

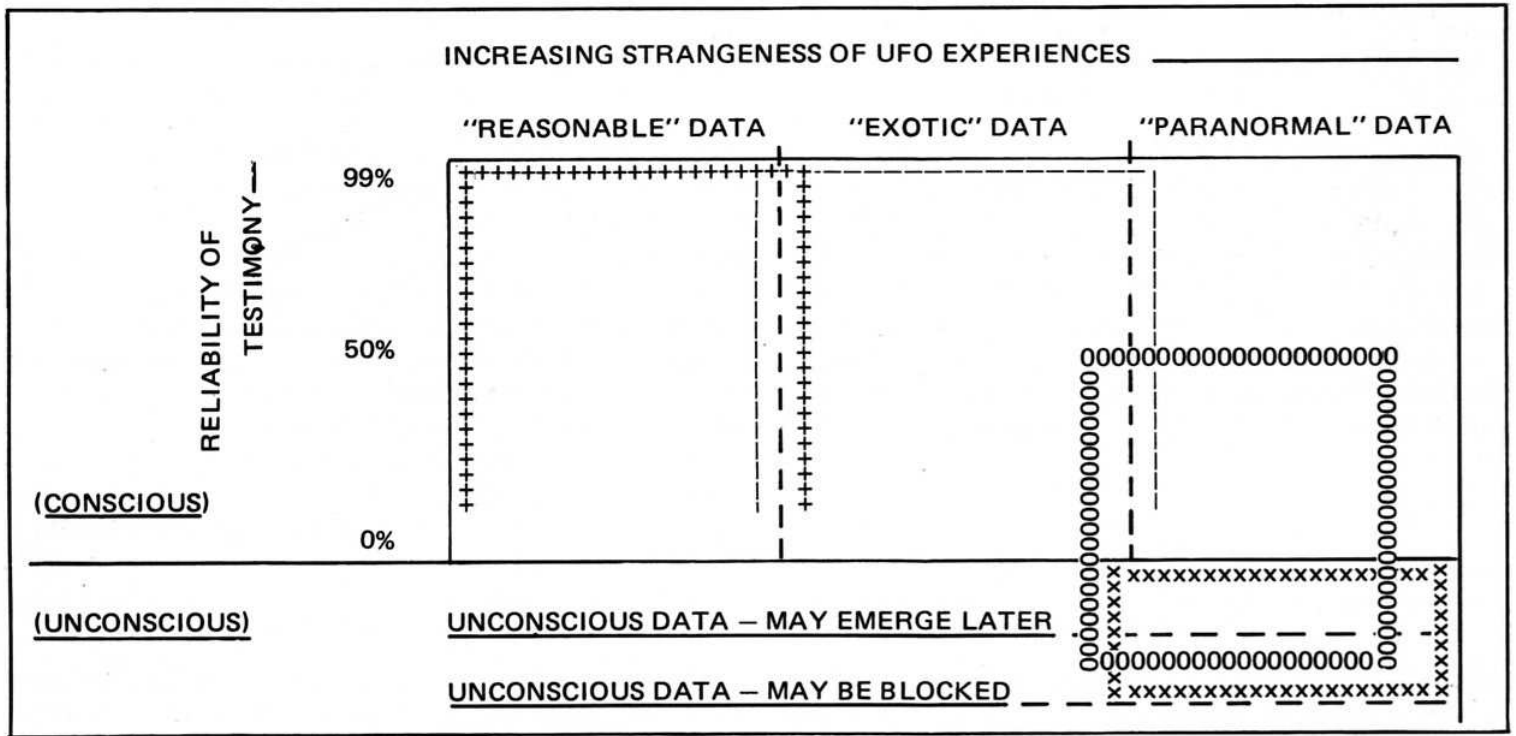


Table 6: Reliability-strangeness ranges of 5 data categories

KEY: ++++++++ (NORMAL ACCURACY RANGE OF OBSERVATION, TESTIMONY)
 ----- (ODD EVENTS; SENSORY RESPONSE QUESTIONABLE)
 00000000 (DATA NOT NECESSARILY RECOGNIZABLE AS DATA)
 xxxxxxxx (SENSORY BLOCK, TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT)

information may be blocked from conscious awareness indefinitely.

It has been my inference that "exotic" data from hypnotic regressions are not necessarily less reliable than "reasonable" information. However, I have no certain guidance to share with you about "paranormal" and unconscious data. I have merely guessed that, while unconscious material may emerge in any of the three categories when it is released, "paranormal" data can never exceed 50% reliability in the form we observe during regressions; it may average closer to 1% reliability. In addition, we have no means as yet of determining the relative proportions of each data category within a single CE-III report. Thus, if the proportion of "paranormal" and/or unconscious data from a given close encounter approaches 99% (i.e., the ultimate in strangeness), it is no wonder that we have problems.

To return to the original question and answer — most regressions are now ambiguous at least in part because we have no obvious way of reckoning with paranormal data. How will we ever fathom the UFO question? If the experiences described in CE-III regressions are true, that is, if witnesses are not lying, being tricked, or in error, and if our limited senses can respond to whatever stimuli are there — then, clearly, those experiences are among the most sensationally mysterious of any in the whole of human history. It seems to me that the UFO problem will be resolved only when we understand enough about an even greater mystery: the nature of human consciousness. I refer not merely to the vast, Melvillean meta-

physics concerning the limitations of human knowledge and the ultimate nature of reality. Rather, I look for questions such as the following: How does the brain work? How is paranormal information processed by the brain's two hemispheres? What physical or other decipherable processes govern the reliability and extent of our perceptions? Then, I suppose, the largest question of all: can these processes be controlled?

In the last eight months I have learned of more than a dozen alleged "abductee" cases in Southern California, with many others already reported. I

1. SUBJECT'S STORY ALL LIES
2. BELIEVES HIS OWN LIES
3. HE IS BEING LIED TO
4. MISINTERPRETATION
5. PART TRUE/PART LIES
6. PART TRUE/PART BELIEVES OWN LIES
7. PART TRUE/PART BEING LIED TO
8. PART TRUE/PART MISINTERPRETATION
9. PART TRUE/LIES/BELIEVES LIES/LIED TO/MISINTERPRETATION
10. STORY ALL TRUE
11. INCONCLUSIVE
12. OTHER

Table 7: Range of possible conclusions about a hypnotic regression story

suspect strongly that there are thousands of closet CE-III's in the United States alone. If ufologists nationwide working with hypnotists, psychologists, or other students of human consciousness could confirm this suspicion, we might sooner expect professional funding of long-range studies to answer some of these questions, and to develop means of interpreting paranormal aspects of narratives, as well as determining the social implications of such a vast body of underground occult experience.

The good folk at Giant Rock have been very

influential. For too long we have dismissed the "contactee" and his bizarre narrative of paranormal events. But we may also have been victimized by limitations in human understanding and communication which are inherent in the right-left functional diversity of our brains. Thus in two ways does it seem that the fault, dear friends, is not in the UFO reports, but quite literally within ourselves. About this matter, unlike everything else in this frustrating fascinating UFO enigma, about *that* there is no ambiguity!

Well — at least, not very much. (See table 7.)

Book Review

UFOs - A STUDY OF THE ABSURD

Jonathan Caplan

TWELVE years or more ago, the prospect of Dr. Allen Hynek and Jacques Vallée collaborating to write a book on UFOs would have caused a few eyebrows to raise. But now, since Hynek has turned progressive — "I was much too sceptical" — this exciting alliance has been forged in print with *The Edge of Reality* (Henry Regnery, Chicago).

The title itself is perhaps about as much as one can really say about the subject unless one asks "Whose reality?" It is a "subject much more complex than we can present," says Hynek. "The whole craziness of the thing, the whole absurdity — it's another world, another realm, that seems to have some interlocking with ours."

As a book it may seem lazy — there is no great amount of new material and the text is unpolished. But this is because the large majority of the book is composed of transcripts of quite informal taped conversations between Hynek, Vallée and a few others. It is a long and leisurely view of the scope of the phenomenon. It ranges thought-provokingly through countless topics such as the patterns of the phenomenon, the nature of contact, the problems of reality, the experiences of close encounter, the value of hypnosis, what children see, methods of

study, the psychic aspect and interlocking universes.

It is not perhaps the type of book that most people who think they are interested in "flying saucers" will want to read, and it is certainly not an introduction to the subject for the newcomer. There are no answers or messages of salvation. Instead it shows the utter complexity of the subject which it exposes, in the words of Aimé Michel, "a true festival of absurdities." A fine thread running through the folklore of our civilization to what purpose? — Hynek and Vallée discuss all this with open minds and with dedication.

Perhaps the ultimate problem is posed in one of their conversations with Dr. Arthur Hastings when he asks: "How do you make judgements and decisions even though you can't make any final conclusions?"

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