

DC

Open Forum *Personal viewpoint - by Capt.
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GENDER SPECIFIC PERCEPTION
OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UFO
SIGHTINGS *SPRING*
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Early UFO investigators loaded their reports with astronomical and meteorological data on the assumption that if you are uncertain what is significant then you record everything you can, in the hope that some of it will turn out to be useful. Nowadays, however, instead of concentrating on random but allegedly objective data in the belief that such facts are somehow more scientific, investigators are beginning to study also the effect of the encounter on the witnesses themselves.

It is of course essential in case studies that we always compare like with like, and fortunately I have been able to investigate three cases which are absolutely parallel in a number of important respects. All three were reported by couples of opposite sex, with a separate account from each partner. Each is a unique event, by which I mean that neither before nor since had any participant claimed another UFO encounter, and finally two of the three cases involve the projection of the "cone of silence", when it is thought that witnesses somehow enter for a time the UFO reality, causing a temporary exclusion from consciousness of normal mundane events.

The third case may have been an IFO, but if so the psychological reactions are puzzling, to say the least.

The particularly interesting common features of these three encounters lie in the essentially similar attitudes to the sighting experience adopted by witnesses of the same sex, and the marked difference in the reactions of all three men from those of their respective female companions. These could be briefly characterised by saying that the typically male attitude to a UFO encounter is one of excitement, modified by a detached yet fascinated curiosity about the objective details of the UFO's behaviour, of which they have a good recall, and a total disregard, or possibly unawareness, of any personal danger. The typical female reaction, however, seems to be both subjective and emotional, coupled with a direct apprehension of a personal threat.

Though these differential reactions may to some extent contain elements of socially constructed role perceptions, they cannot really be attributed

mainly to some postulated masculine need for self presentation in a macho mode and a corresponding feminine willingness to confess without shame to feeling afraid. Neither sex has a monopoly of courage, and it seems from the witness accounts much more likely that the women's experience and perception of the UFO encounter is simply different in kind from that of men, and that they become aware of elements in the pervasive UFO reality field by which men either remain unaffected or which they simply do not perceive.

The three encounters I wish to consider in this regard are the Pitch Hill UFO of 5 November 1988, reported by Karen and Philip; the Westcott UFO of 17 April 1982 seen by Christine and Peter, and the Twyford UFO (IFO?) Of 16 July 1993 described by Colin and Maria. In each case we shall be considering only details relevant to the gender differential, our immediate concern. Interestingly, all three couples made their initial observations from cars.

In the case of the youngest pair, Karen's car was parked and Philip was in the passenger seat when the UFO was first seen. I asked why he got out of the car and Karen did not.

"Just to see better," he answered. "I was very excited by it, the whole thing was ...we both felt it was a strange atmosphere. When I got out of the car everything was quiet - there wasn't a sound! No animals, no wind, nothing at all, as there would have been normally.... I suppose I was very excited to start with, but when it went and the wind came back, I did feel a little bit insecure."

A curious adjective in the context, perhaps, and the least macho of the male reactions, doubtless influenced by Karen's anxiety and her repeated requests to get back in the car so they could move away.

Peter's original account is totally factual and says nothing of his feelings when he "drove up the kerb with surprise" at the sight of the landed UFO close at hand and turned back, hoping to see it again. Interviewed by me ten years after the event, he spoke still of his extreme excitement, "with the adrenalin pumping", as concern to turn the car occupied his whole attention, ignoring his partner's frantic requests to drive on. He had no doubt that what he had seen was a UFO and said so at the time and ever since.

When Colin, journeying with Maria along the A4 towards Reading, saw from his parked car "an illuminated object of cylindrical shape, resembling a short, fat cigar ... possibly 500 feet above the ground and about 2 miles away", he rapidly concluded that he was seeing "an extra-terrestrial

space craft" and described its movements in minute detail. When, at his wife's insistence, they broke off the encounter, he had "very much wanted to stay and actually attempt to get ... as close as possible to the object. I was feeling a sense of self-imposed loss, sorry to be leaving this thing behind," he wrote.

Certainly none of the three men described themselves as being in any way afraid of the possible consequences of their UFO encounters, but the opposite is true of their partners, all of whom expressed varying degrees of fear and apprehension.

Though Karen was able to give a good account of the UFO's movements, because in addition to feeling afraid she was also interested and curious about it, having always wanted to see a UFO, but at the moment of truth she urgently wanted only to get away. I asked her why she did not get out of the car at the same time as her boy friend.

"There was a reason," she replied. "I was frightened because it was so very quiet and I had this odd feeling about the quietness. I didn't know what it was, and I was frightened ... I kept telling Phil to get back in the car, because I wanted to go!"

Christine's account gives an excellent example of the contrasting behaviours of each of the pair at the crucial moment of recognition, the time at which it could no longer be dismissed as a joke. "Peter wound down the window," she reported. "And said: 'Christ! It is a UFO!' Immediately my legs went to jelly - I felt absolutely petrified, my whole body just felt like a jelly. He was going berserk, right up on the kerb ... and I looked behind me and there were two bloomin' great orange jet burners and that made me feel even more scared. It was so eerie, it was horrible, unbelievable. It was an evil looking shape."

Maria's responses were the most complex and severe in their effects upon her. "My immediate reaction," she wrote, "was, 'No, this couldn't be anything so ridiculous as a flying saucer.' ... I convinced myself that it had to be a helicopter... Then something made me decide that it couldn't be a helicopter. ... I really became alarmed. I am a Roman Catholic and in my state of anxiety I reached for my rosary beads in my handbag and focussed my thoughts on God. I had a distinct feeling that the bright object knew that we had seen it ... I was transfixed much of the time in a state of fear at this bright object ... This experience has affected me deeply. During the last few days I have felt very anxious and threatened... Even writing this report was a frightening experience."

From the foregoing it is undeniably clear that

what would superficially appear to be a single shared identical experience, common to two people, is in fact perceived totally differently by each, according to his or her gender. None of these women was anything other than a competent, intelligent adult, totally within the parameters we choose to call normal.

Why then should their experience of the phenomenon be so different from that of the men?

Well, of course we don't know, but we can perhaps speculate that they may enter unwittingly into some possibly subconscious form of communication with UFO entities, becoming aware of intentions which, though not necessarily overtly formulated, are none the less felt to be threatening, especially by females. When we look at the abduction literature - the stolen eggs, the manipulated wombs - we can readily see how this could be so, and if apprehension of sexual violation and exploitation is communicated even subliminally, it would certainly provide every justification for the fears described.

Men don't feel so defensive about spermatozoa or regard them as potential babies, and they have millions of them to spare. Perhaps the psychological consequences of this basic differentiation of the germ plasm are the unacknowledged cause of the gender-specific reactions we have been considering?

Software firm joins search for aliens. But are they already here?

A special report compiled by FSR

The following story broke on 22nd of March 2004 and in some ways is very surprising, for Microsoft should be well aware that in the next few decades computers will be ready to take us on to the next stage of human, or human-computer, evolution. Soon, computers will be in a position - perhaps with our help, or perhaps not - to take computing into realms that were only recently considered science-fiction. As a result, the subject of consciousness - and where we could put it - should become much better understood. Futurologists believe that in the next 100 years or less, computing will have the ability to transfer our consciousness into software; or rather, into hardware-software, and/or or energy fields.

Consequently, we should acknowledge the possibility that aliens more advanced than us have already mastered techniques which will allow them