

Dim Sum

During these lean years when UFO reports are few and far between, one of the more stimulating activities for a ufologist is giving a talk or a lecture. I gave four in January, on very different topics, and needed to develop these talks for presentation to very different audiences. I was an invited lecturer for a Philosophy course taught by Michael Feld, a well-known face in the current nebulous condition of the Winnipeg Science Fiction Society and the traditional Saturday morning Chinese brunch at the Grand Garden. Well, a promise of a free round of dim sum in exchange for a talk to a Philosophy class was too good to pass up. I had given it before, but I still find it a useful talk for my own benefit as well: "The Epistemology of Ufology". Think about it - what do we really know about UFO's after over 35 years of the Modern UFO Era? We do know much more than James Oberg gives us credit for, but of course, without actual, solid, reach-out-and-touch-it proof of extraterrestrial intervention, we remain unable to prove our thesis. At a more social level, it is simple to show the role belief plays in ufology. For the epistemology talk, I start by asking: "Do you believe in Australia?" After suckering them in, I ask the questions towards proving their beliefs. Why do you believe in Australia? Have you seen it? touched it? seen photographs of it? Some of the students claimed to actually have spoken with people who said they were from Australia! What is the only difference between Australia and UFO's? The answer is that Australia is reproducible at will (with a bit of monetary expense). So far, UFO's are not reproducible at will, and this is basically the only drawback preventing their scientific credibility. However, it can be pointed out that ball lightning is not reproducible on command, yet is scientifically accepted. Similarly, Einstein's theory of relativity was not fully believed until starlight was finally observed to bend around the Sun's gravitational well during an eclipse. While ball lightning cannot be observed on command, conditions conducive to the formation of it can be identified, though its behavior cannot be predicted. The problem of belief and proof for UFO's is much more complicated. We can extend the concept of SETI (ignoring Frank Tipler) to suggest that other civilizations in our galaxy have achieved space travel, but we cannot link this idea with the appearance of discs and luminous phenomena in our atmosphere directly through solid logic.

We can attack the problem a slightly different way, and still end up with the null hypothesis. We cannot prove, for example, that we are presently not under observation by advanced civilizations, advanced enough to easily hide their presence from us. The result is the same: no physical proof.

The second talk I gave was also interesting, and it required research into UFO theology. The course was one on religious cults, and had previously covered covens, Moonies and Druids. It's no secret that there are (and were) several churches and religions based on UFO's around the world. The Aetherians, Adamskians, Mark Age and, as noted last issue, the Raelians are just a few of the groups which exist. These groups do not differ fundamentally from contemporary standard religious philosophy, as they abhor violence, speak against nuclear war and warn that mankind has drifted far from spirituality. The interposition of God and "space brother" is merely a rejection of established theology and the production of one more firmly

rooted in the space age. The priests are therefore the contactees, who receive the group's dogma directly from the "deity", and pass it on to the group members. The only serious danger is that the groups are generally anti-science in nature, and this constitutes a danger in itself.

The other two lectures for the month were to the Knights of Columbus and to a meagre audience for Celebration '83 at the U of M. I spoke on the UFO's of Manitoba, showing slides of photos and sketches of objects seen in the province over the years. I included graphs and charts resulting from some analyses I had performed on the 500 cases I have records for. Both the talks were poorly-attended, but well-received. As i said, these are lean years.

WITS

On January 22nd, 1983, my home became the meeting place for what I would like to call the Winnipeg Independent Thinkers (don't worry, it's just a suggestion). Attending were: myself, Wally Nilsson, Grant Cameron, Roland Choquette, Bill Borody, Ted Butters and two invited guests. Bill and Ted are sasquatch hunters while the rest of us were more or less general forteans. It was a nice time, chatting about recent and old UFO sightings, sasquatch, parapsychology, Indian legends and other "off-beat" things. Perhaps the most noted discussion of the evening was the one centered on the reality of the sasquatch. As in ufology, cryptozoology has factions with different trains of thought. Ted butters believes the sasquatch is a flesh-and-blood ("nuts-and-bolts") creature that is intelligent and wise to the actions of man. He believes it can eventually be caught, given the resources and money. Bill borody is the director of the Manitoba Sasquatch Research Centre. He believes in the existence of the creature, but feels it is difficult to reconcile the wealth of reports with a physical animal. Many odd stories exist concerning its quick disappearances "into thin air", and how it can hide in areas with sparse vegetation. It is also odd that some people will see them in an area and some not. The two views acknowledge that sasquatch exist, but differ in their interpretation of the data. How to resolve this? Catch a sasquatch, if you can.

Of course, as with UFO reports, I suspect that the nine-tenths law is in action: 90% of everything is garbage. Perhaps many of the sasquatch reports are fabrications or misidentifications. We also know too well that lame-witted skeptics have fashioned themselves "sasquatch feet" and walked around the wilds just to prey on serious trackers. The trouble is to try and weed out the "good" reports from the "bad" reports. Ay, there's the rub.

The sasquatch proponents have the same catch-22 as the ufologists: they can't get funding for obtaining good data, but they can't get good data without proper funding. It is a classic case of science marking time. But proving a legend exists has never been easy. Columbus couldn't get backing to prove the Earth was not flat. Edison had trouble finding the funds for more research into "artificial light". And how many "legendary" cities have been uncovered by archaeological digs?

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Thanks for printing assistance to Guy Westcott.

Typographical and other errors by the editor. It's been a long day.

Book Reviews

Knight, David C.

UFO's: A Pictorial History from Antiquity to the Present
McGraw - Hill, 1979

The title of this book is quite accurate. This book places many of the better-known UFO photos in chronological order, a sort of "UFOgraphy". and comments on each one. Although not fully restrictive to photos, this annotated volume is an excellent introduction to the field. In some ways, it might serve as a companion volume to Jacob's 'UFO Controversy in America', since it covers a broad time period. The text is interesting and humorous, but not sarcastic. Knight oscillates between pro and con in his accounts, though I'm not sure why. He fails to point out an obvious phot hoax, yet doggedly pursues a debatable one. One of the book's major flaws is that none of the photographs is in color, but perhaps this lowered the cost to be accessible to a larger readership. I'd recommend this one.

Article Review

Persinger, M. A. "Geophysical Variables and Behavior: IV. UFO Reports and Fortean Phenomena: Temporal Correlations in the Central UFO" Perceptual and Motor Skills 54 1982 pp. 299 - 302

Michael Persinger has published another installment of his continuing research into the effect of geomagnetic and geoelectric forces on the natural environment. His latest paper suggests that as geophysical strain increases, effects progress through EM radiation, UFO displays and finally "poltergeist-like episodes".

LoCs

A note of thanks to those who responded to my query of what's happening in Canadian ufology. Bonnie Wheeler remarked: "let's just keep going." I hope we can. It's always hard to maintain interest in something that seems inactive at the moment. But remember, ufology made it through two lean periods during the 70's, so there's no reason why we can't hang on. There are ways to encourage interest and awareness. Have any of you considered a public display in a shopping mall?

From Ritchie Benedict, a short note as well as a book review, which follows. He mentions that SGJ seems to be one of the few remaining ufozines. Well, I know that the glossy UFO magazines have all but vanished, although I just saw Saga's 1982 UFO Annual. It has some good articles by the likes of Allan Hendry and Terence Dickinson, and is worth checking out. However, Bill Boroday pointed out to me that the editors saw fit to publish the articles with stock UFO photos, most of which are fakes. I don't understand why, although I suspect it's to break up the articles and make them more "readable".

In Britain, Probe is still going and getting better with each issue. I haven't seen hide nor hair of the new OSEAP Journal, although I think I represent Canada for them. And Notizario UFO is struggling, but will reach issue #100 this year. I have no word on the next volume of the Journal of UFO Studies, and I have never seen an issue of UFO Phenomena, but am told it is still going. I mentioned some Canadian zines last issue.

Ritchie Benedict's review is of the second volume of the Andreasson case which so outraged the skeptics when it first appeared in print. Quite frankly, it is a bizarre story, and in that way resembles the Sandi Larson abduction in North Dakota, with odd medical examinations and the like. The skeptics simply say "balderdash" and point derisively at the ufologists for listening to such nonsense. But these are not isolated incidents. What if...

Book Review

The Andreasson Affair - Phase Two
by Raymond E. Fowler
Prentice-Hall, Ontario, 1982

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

Twenty-five years ago, a book such as this could not have been published. Or, if it was published, it would be with great difficulty, and a minor company would accept it. It is a measure of how far we have come in analyzing the UFO phenomena that accounts that are fantastic in detail and implications are now almost accepted as commonplace. On the surface, this book seems like the wildest of science fiction, just as its predecessor did several years ago. However, there have been quite a few other abduction cases in the last decade that are equally as mind-boggling. Also, the man who wrote both books, author Raymond E. Fowler, has a good reputation as an objective investigator of UFO cases. This, in itself, means that we should give a thorough hearing of any evidence he has to offer in cracking the UFO enigma.

In January, 1967 (a peak year for UFO reports and other paranormal events), Eddy Andreasson, a seemingly ordinary housewife, and her 11 year-old daughter, Becky, were apparently abducted from their Massachusetts home by humanoid creatures that had the disturbing habit of walking through the front door without opening it. Both of them were returned to their home after some sort of physical examination. The report did not come to light until 1975, when Mrs. Andreasson responded to a newspaper story by astronomer/investigator Dr. J. Allen Hynek. The letter was buried until 1977, when Mr. Fowler investigated the case with all the resources at his command (hypnosis, lie detectors, psychiatric tests, etc.), and as a result wrote the first book which became highly popular in 1978. Since 1978, Mrs. Andreasson has remarried to a man named Bob Luca, and the story has continued to develop. It is these new experiences that the book is about. Not only have paranormal events continued to occur in their household, but new facts about several earlier abductions have emerged under hypnosis, and they are every bit as bizarre as those described in the first book. Not only that, but Mr. Luca apparently had brushes with UFO's during his youth, and these have been revealed after he has been hypnotized! An implication is that even the new marriage may have somehow been arranged by the aliens for purposes unknown.

Both books can stand on their own as separate views of an ongoing event. It is not necessary to have read the first in order to appreciate the second. Both books point to the extreme difficulties investigators experience in distinguishing paranormal elements from concrete, objective reality. Mr. Fowler admits as much when he says he was skeptical that some of Mrs. Luca's religious beliefs were overlapping the actual UFO experience.

There are enough correlations to objective reality, however, to create some very chilling moments. For example, during the 1950 experience, it is mentioned that the aliens attempted to place some sort of probe in her brain by temporarily removing one of her eyeballs from its socket. That probe was apparently retrieved during the 1967 experience. It immediately struck me that this was similar to a 1976 case in Danville, Kentucky, where three women were abducted, one of them describing an almost identical experience. I was surprised that Mr. Fowler didn't refer to this, as he does mention the abduction but not the eye incident. It was omitted from some of the accounts published at the time because some thought it to be too gruesome and sensationalized, so therefore it is quite possible he has never heard of it. He does mention some similarities to other cases, in particular a 1978 Italian case and a 1980 Texas case. The new information about Betty goes back as far as 1944, when she was 7 years old. As with the earlier book, there are a number of detailed diagrams to clarify the points that have come out while she was in trance. The remaining one-third of the book is taken up with areas of ufology that relate to this case, such as the mysterious Men in Black and phantom helicopters that are often reported at the scene of some UFO sightings (Betty and her husband have experienced both). The author makes a valid point that was first stated by Dr. Carl Jung in his 1961 book Flying Saucers: a Modern Myth, to the effect that there is a theological and psychic aspect to all of this, despite the attempt to reduce it to technology and mere hardware. And further, that we may never be able to fully understand this peculiar phenomenon (let alone ghosts and poltergeists) without probing ever more deeply into the mind of man himself. Mr. Fowler readily admits that some of the events in this book left him at a loss for an explanation, and it is to his credit that he does not attempt to impose one.

This book is an excellent addition to the library of the ufologist, and anyone who is seriously interested in the unknown. In some respects, the sequel is even better than the first volume, so it should not be missed. A richly detailed and highly puzzling piece of the jigsaw.

Manlike Monsters on Trial
Halpin, M. & Ames, M., eds.
UBC Press, 1980

Reviewed by the editor of this Journal.

There are only a few books on cryptozoology that are considered landmarks, even though there have been a huge number of books and articles published on the subject. But one which grew out of a conference on sasquatch, held at UBC, has established itself as a unique compendium of scientific thought about the subject. Manlike Monsters on Trial is a well-edited collection of papers and essays regarding sociological, zoological and biological aspects of the possible reality of the elusive creature.

The book is in three parts: the first deals with the concepts of belief and interpretation when dealing with a scientifically-unaccepted phenomena. Included in this section is a paper by Ron Westrum, a writer familiar to ufologists for his articles on science and social intelligence. His comments on scientists' reactions to sasquatch include comparisons to UFO sightings and the reporting mechanisms which exist. The second part of the book has

papers concerning the historical and legendary aspects of the sasquatch. The papers cover a broad field of anthropology, folklore and tradition, dwelling on the use of sasquatch in rituals and legendary tales as part of native culture. The more rigorous, scientific articles are found in part three, with articles on such things as speculations on the population of sasquatch, analyses of reported sasquatch yells on audio tape and analyses of feces and hair thought to be from sasquatch. All of these articles, including one by noted sasquatch hunter John Green, were for the most part well-written and are very interesting, and show how scientific techniques can be applied to the investigations into the sasquatch phenomenon.

But in the end, what has the book really told us? Perhaps it is said best by co-editor Michael Ames in his epilog to the book:

"The evidence for existence is scattered, circumstantial and heavily-laden with mythology, so discussion of existence usually devolve into epistemological debates regarding the nature of evidence, the origin of perceptions, the reliability of witnesses, and the need for physical specimens. The few scientific analyses of 'physical evidence' presented were considerably more sophisticated than the data on which they were based."

Well said and unfortunately very true. Although the conference was not a waste of time, it accomplished little else than allow anthropologists to inject their views into the debate between scientists rejecting the reality of sasquatch and the sasquatch hunters themselves. But a forum such as this is very useful in that it points out problems in the interpretations of the data. There is no lack of circumstantial evidence, but physical evidence is almost completely absent (note the strong comparison with ufology). It appears that Grover Krantz came closest to the truth through all the discussions. He was reported to say that "only an actual specimen will resolve the debate". And he's right.

A notable inclusion in the volume is a bibliography compiled by L.G.M. Ruus, giving hundreds of references on the subject of sasquatch and its relations. My overall impression is that the book serves a useful purpose by filling a large gap in cryptozoological literature. It is vastly different from, say, Bord and Bord's Bigfoot Casebook, and contains few actual sasquatch sighting reports. A very interesting tome.

Reading Matter

Sunday, February 13th, 1983, saw the largest ever Psychic Fair held in Winnipeg. Not what I would describe as well-advertised, it nevertheless drew a crowd of about 2,000 people to the Fort Garry Hotel, and threatened to extend beyond its 6:00 PM limit. When I went about 2:30, there were lineups everywhere, with the hallways filled with individuals comparing astrological signs, health foods and "feelings".

Now, why, you might ask, would a scientist ever go to something like this? Well, it must be remembered that I am interested in the sociology of forteana, and that I find this all quite fascinating. As an astronomer, I recall that early astronomers were, in fact astrologers, and that even today, the two are generally interchanged by the average layman. I also realize that science can't quite explain away all reported psychic phenomena, despite the claims of the CSICOP to the contrary. The unknown has always intrigued me.

Actually, for a psychic fair, it was somewhat less than my expectations. There were few displays, and no true huckster tables with books or talismans for sale. Inside the door, one chap was giving a continuous slide presentation on iridology (the eyes have it), and beside him, a healer had his business cards. Shaklee had a table, and beside its heap of fresh vegetables was a display on reflexology, and someone was feeling somebody else's bare foot. There was a table with representatives of the local astrology association handing out membership applications. And then a large table for the Fair's organizing group, the National Spiritual Growth Centre. It is an established church, and holds regular services and psychic classes Sunday nights. In another room, a fellow was describing how to read palms, and a program said that the room also had hosted other lecturers and films on things like the pyramids. In a much larger room, you could have your tea cup, foot or whatever else you wanted read for a minimal fee of \$3.00 (cheap!), the proceeds going to the church.

A quick poll showed that the majority of attendees were female (75-80%) and that the ages varied between 8 and 80, though the median was about 40. The most common readings appeared to be tea cups and palms, though I couldn't get into the main hall to confirm this. There was a profound lack of skepticism on the part of those I spoke with, so objectivity was right out the window. This was an event molded out of belief, and only belief, so science was right not to interfere.

Article Review

Brooker, C. "Magnetism and the Standing Stones". New Scientist, 13 Jan. 1983. p.105.

Before reading this article, I checked to see if I was reading an April Fool's issue. How could New Scientist, which regularly lambastes pseudoscience and even publishes anti-pseudoscience issues, ever consider printing an article proving that ley lines and dowsing have a basis in fact? But, sure enough, Brooker, a BBC engineer, compared readings on a magnetometer with a psychic's impression of "forces" inside a megalithic ring. The result: a "perfect correlation", showing that the psychic's sensitivity was "based on a magnetic sense", detecting "magnetic gradients as small as 5 gammas in an ambient field of 0.48 gauss - 10 parts per million." Brooker even went as far as to detect ley lines with his magnetometer, and found that the spiral pattern of magnetic lines formed a "Stone Age Faraday cage." It's difficult to assess his results, since he doesn't mention any calibration or controls, but he admitted in the article that he didn't know how to use a magnetometer before the experiment (he got help). What will the physicists say about this one?