

see how
clearly
you can see
how deep
our new
cage
is?



You're looking through our new deep plastic cage for rodents. It clearly anticipates new public law requirements. It all adds up to new convenience for you: More room under the feed hopper. More usable floor space for your research animals. Or more room for additional animals.

It's from Lab Products, Inc., a new company of experienced people with new ideas for your animal care needs. We offer a broad-line of plastic cages, accessories, bedding (e.g., *ab-sorb-dri*®), and special animal care systems.

We've got them all in a new catalog. For your copy, write or phone Doug Anderson, Lab Products, Inc., 633 Midland Avenue, Garfield, N.J. 07026. Phone: 201-478-3000.

lab products
inc

Circle No. 96 on Readers' Service Card

many different cultivars of varying degrees of resistance (or susceptibility) to any one particular strain of fungal pathogen had been planted."

In fact, very many potato varieties were grown in Ireland (and elsewhere in Europe) when late blight first appeared in 1845. Contemporary accounts confirm that the various sorts showed marked differences in susceptibility to the disease. Thus in trials of 176 potato varieties carried out at the time by the Horticultural Society in London, tuber infection was found to range from zero to 64 percent. In the Netherlands a replicated study on 148 potato varieties grown on two different types of soil gave similar results, as did smaller-scale trials in Dublin's Botanic Gardens. It was the increased use of the less susceptible sorts, hitherto in limited cultivation, which enabled the potato to recover from the initial disaster and to survive as a major food crop over the lengthy period until breeding for resistance and the use of fungicides were introduced. A characteristic example was the American Early variety which had been grown on a small scale in England up to 1845, but which graduated to the status of a popular field crop under the name Dalmahoy after 1847.

The tragedy lay in the fact that the potato varieties most widely grown by the poor because of their high yields—such as the ill-famed Lumper in Ireland—were precisely those that succumbed most completely to the new disease. There was a time lag before the less susceptible sorts could be multiplied and brought into general use. In the interim a million Irish had died and another million fled.

P. M. AUSTIN BOURKE
*Meteorological Service,
Dublin, Ireland*

People Who See Flying Saucers

D. I. Warren ("Status inconsistency theory and flying saucer sightings," 6 Nov., p. 599) gives evidence that, among American white males over 21, the highest proportion of UFO sightings are from men with college education but moderate or low income or occupation ranking. He believes this supports the notion that UFO sightings are one reaction by these men to their status inconsistency; that they are one consequence of feelings of status frustration.

It is important to stress more clearly than Warren has the contrast between sighters who interpreted the UFO's as actual objects or vehicles from outer space (8 "believers"), and those who offered some more "normal" explanation (42 "nonbelievers"). Cross-tabulation of frequencies derived from figures 4 and 6 shows that among the nonbelievers with consistent or moderately inconsistent status, there are only about four fewer UFO sighters than would be expected if UFO sighting and status inconsistency were unrelated variables, and only about four more than expected sighters among men with sharp status inconsistency. The relationship in the sample is weak and may well be due to chance (gamma is .2, chi-square is significant at the 10 percent level but not at 5 percent). On the other hand, believers show a far stronger relationship with status inconsistency which is not likely to be accidental (gamma is .8, chi-square is significant at better than the 2 percent level). There are fewer than the expected numbers of UFO sighter-believers among men with consistent or moderately inconsistent status, and more than expected among men with sharply inconsistent status. It appears, then, that what Warren has demonstrated is only a doubtful relationship between status inconsistency and *any* UFO sightings and is primarily a relationship between status inconsistency and sightings coupled with belief in the "outer space" origin of the UFO's.

A more basic question is why the UFO sighters-believers came to have inconsistent statuses in the first place. Warren does not seem to have asked this question, and tacitly implies that if these men had not somehow found themselves underrewarded relative to their education, they would have been much less likely to experience the feelings of deprivation and marginality which led to their seeing (and believing in) UFO's. But, given the generally good academic job market at the time of the survey (1966), it seems likely that college educated men who could not get or did not want high income and high status jobs were men who already differed in significant ways from majority ways of thinking, behaving, or feeling. I suggest that status inconsistency per se may have had relatively little to do with these men's UFO experiences; rather, *both* the UFO experiences *and* their status inconsistency may be consequences or manifestations of other ways in which

they differed from the usual run of men. If so, adequate understanding would require knowing much more about the sighter-believers than seems possible from the survey data used by Warren.

GEORGE L. COWGILL

*Department of Anthropology,
Brandeis University,
Waltham, Massachusetts 02154*

Warren attributed the greater frequency of "sightings" among white males whose incomes lagged appreciably behind their educational and occupational levels to the "marginality" of their situation, saying: "Alienation and distrust of official explanations and a general questioning of the merits of the 'system' are common attitudes among status inconsistent." As mediating variables Warren postulated "status frustration and, especially, . . . perceived status deprivations relative to one's position on the social ladder." This explanation suggests that removal of status inconsistency, for example, by providing these individuals with higher pay, would reduce saucer sightings, and their concomitant attitudes.

This sociological report ignores an obvious alternative explanation. Like many present-day sociologists, Warren completely disregards individual differences between people, in this case, differences in degree of mental health. Sighting saucers, and especially believing that they represent extraterrestrial vehicles, might easily be considered neurotic and psychotic symptoms. Abnormally low income in the case of a person with a high amount of education is apt to be pathognomic of a level of functioning that has been reduced by mental illness to such a point that society is unwilling to remunerate him at the going rate for his educational level and nominal job classification. . . . The mental health interpretation also fits the fact that certain kinds of inconsistency in achieved status, as I infer from Warren's presentation, apparently do not lead to sighting saucers: for example, low education combined with high income. This is because they suggest a *high* level of functioning. . . .

Although Warren freely acknowledges that, "Another and reasonable, though not necessarily mutually exclusive, procedure for organizing social data might provide an equal degree of explanatory consistency," this is always true, and therefore no excuse, in view of the virtual monopoly that sociol-

ogists have over the presentation of certain kinds of data, for consistently ignoring obvious interpretations that are informed by knowledge from other sciences. Natural scientists should be made aware that many sociologists hold to a doctrinaire antireductionist position concerning the psychological explanation of social phenomena, particularly when individual differences may be involved. As it stands, Warren's acknowledgment of other possibilities is tantamount to being a disguised claim that the task of science is merely to point out the logically possible, not necessarily the empirically probable. It may be questioned whether such a peculiar science, which weaves its nomological net horizontally, but seldom vertically, is meeting its public responsibilities by presenting findings unconstrained by the need for epistemological consistency in *all* directions.

ROBERT A. GORDON

*Department of Social Relations,
Johns Hopkins University,
Baltimore, Maryland 21218*

Flying saucer sightings may have been an unfortunate choice of behavior phenomena by Warren to employ to support the theory of status inconsistency. Nearly all of those sightings have occurred in rural areas. The theory does not explain why status inconsistent individuals residing in cities almost never have reported such sightings.

Warren may perhaps explore the notion that the rural-urban dimension may be ordered along a status inconsistent continuum, so that those who reside in rural areas are more likely to be status inconsistent than those individuals who reside in cities. The theory needs more validation than has been supplied by Warren.

PETER DUBNO

*Graduate School of Business
Administration, New York University,
100 Trinity Place, New York 10006*

In Cowgill's comparison of my figures 4 and 6 the cross-tabulations described are misleading. "Nonbelievers" and "believers" are calculated *only for the population of "sighters."* Therefore the statement by Cowgill that "among the nonbelievers with consistent or moderately inconsistent status there are only about four fewer UFO sighters. . . ." confuses the issue. What figure 5 shows is the incidence of reported sightings among white male status consistent, moderate inconsistent, and sharp in-

the world over



...more
laboratories have
standardized on
Tygon plastic Tubing
than on any
other kind

Always insist on
genuine

TYGON[®] TUBING

For your protection, every foot of genuine Tygon Tubing is branded with the Tygon name and formulation number.

crystal-clear • chemically inert
non-oxidizing • 73 standard sizes

At laboratory supply houses everywhere, or write Norton Plastics and Synthetics Division, Akron, Ohio 44309.

NORTON

PLASTICS & SYNTHETICS DIV.

FORMERLY U.S. STONEWARE INC.
AKRON, OHIO 44309

32-144

Circle No. 84 on Readers' Service Card