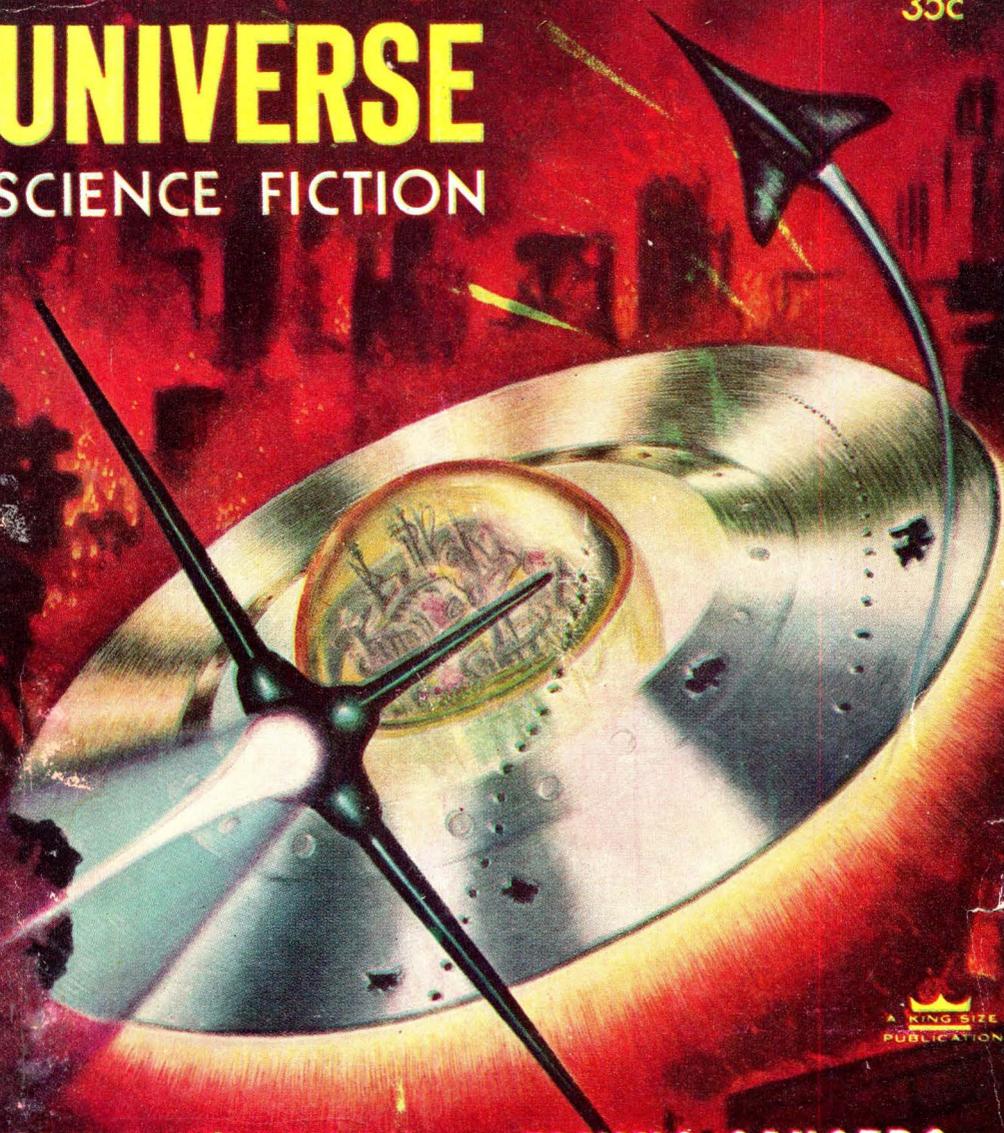


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A KING SIZE
PUBLICATION

IVAN SANDERSON on FLYING SAUCERS

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**an
introduction
to
ufology**

by...IVAN T. SANDERSON

What are possible explanations for the various kinds of UFOs? Are they living entities - or from other galaxies?

GHOSTS have been with us since the beginning of recorded history. Unfortunately they are not only disembodied, but highly elusive things that have proved, after several millenia and despite what anybody may say to the contrary, to be impossible to catch, keep, measure or weigh, or even to photograph. As a result, though probably more than half the people in the world today believe in their existence, they do not exist *in fact* and, mostly as a result of their not being amenable to measurement and weighing, no established Science will accept them as subjects suitable for investigation.

The same may be said about another vast assortment of phenomena.

These are the many "things" that could in appropriate circumstances be measured or weighed if there happened to be anybody around at the time of their appearance capable of doing either, but which are otherwise almost as elusive. These

Ivan T. Sanderson, distinguished naturalist and author, turns to a question asked by hundreds of thousands WHAT ARE THE UFOs? Distinguished explorer, well known for his radio and TV programs, author of numerous works including the recent FOLLOW THE WHALE (Little Brown), LIVING MAMMALS OF THE WORLD (Hanover House), HOW TO KNOW THE AMERICAN MAMMALS (New American Library), and CARIBBEAN TREASURE (Viking Press), Sanderson brings a trained scientific mind to the study of this important question.

could probably best be called *Forteana* after the late Charles Fort, who spent a lifetime collecting records of their occurrence. They are of an altogether more concrete nature, such as fires that break out spontaneously hour after hour and day after day all over a single house, hunks of angular ice with icicles depending therefrom that land on highroads in broad daylight, and other such incidents that are customarily attributed to what is called "Poltergeist manifestations".

Now, among *Forteana* there is one very large category of alleged happenings, involving *things* of a particularly difficult, or *obnoxious* (to many people) nature. These are what Charles Fort called "Objects seen Floating in the Sky", or OSFS as they were once somewhat endearingly known. According to a very wide variety of chroniclers, ranging from fairly ancient Chinese historians to Roman Augurs, the authors of the Bible, august members of the Royal Society of England, Peruvian peasants, and members of the United States Airforce, an enormous number and variety of such unorthodox objects have been seen in our atmosphere throughout the centuries. Unfortunately, however, these things, though apparently susceptible to photography, and which usually show up on radarscopes (at least, ac-

ording to the Airforce), are almost as elusive and unsubstantial as "ghosts", because they have steadfastly refused to lay themselves open to being caught, measured or weighed.

For these reasons they have been either wholly discounted, pointedly ignored, or crowded into a special limbo created for their reception. Although an appreciable percentage of the population of the earth has apparently seen, or believes he or she has seen, at least one example of such an Object, the damned things are still generally regarded as nothing but a myth. Apart from being copy for an occasional newstory, they have no worth, for they too do not belong in any established Science. As a result, they have for centuries been ignored by the learned, treated as "signs" by the superstitious, or as mere natural phenomena by uneducated though often more enlightened primitives. Today they are regarded as a public nuisance.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the then rather new, fresh, and eager discipline called "science" became somewhat interested in these phenomena and reported many of them in its more august technical journals. However, as the things continued to elude capture they first became a bore, and then a confounded nuisance

so that they were entirely dropped. Nobody, except a few very odd types, who seem to have been born with a desire to make themselves unpopular, deigned to so much as mention them, though reports of their occurrence continued to flow in at a steady pace. It was not, in fact, until men became thoroughly scared about hostile bombers, and radioactive clouds drifting about over their heads, that anybody dared question the nature of these obscenities that apparently wander about in our atmosphere. The man, Kenneth Arnold, is to be greatly complimented for having jeopardized his career by asking somebody to do something about a number of such shining, lenticular-shaped items that he said he encountered while flying over the area of Mt. Rainier.

The results of his modest request are now history. A whole new category was added to mass news coverage; strange new words like "Flying Saucer" and "Ufo" appeared in dictionaries; military and other departments of many governments started spending millions of their taxpayers' money on "investigations"; a few publishers somewhat enhanced their slender profits; and all kinds of people, from airline pilots to Romanian peasants, began *seeing things*.

All of which brings us to

the pertinent question: are there such things or is the whole business a combination of hallucination and imagination?

If it is all from imagination, we have to start with some editing of the Bible and sundry early Chinese, ancient Egyptian, many mediaeval and other texts, a drastic revision of a large number of scientific journals, and the immediate censoring of several recognized astronomers, and the prompt suspension from duty of quite a significant percentage of professional airline pilots. What has to be done about military personnel is, of course, none of our business except in so far as we pay for its maintenance and equipment, but a lot of dismissals therefrom would seem also to be in order.

If the business is *not* wholly imaginative, it can only mean that there are Unidentified Flying Objects buzzing about in our skies. We cannot have it both ways. Moreover, if there are such things, it is high time that somebody did something constructive about them. But what to do?

What, anyone may well ask, can you do about something that isn't there? If you can't examine or handle a thing, how can you categorize it or start to study it? Well, neither our own subconscious nor extra-galactic nebulae are any more available for

handling but quite a lot has been—or is alleged to have been—discovered about both. Just because you can not readily get your hands on a thing does not mean that it cannot be recorded, investigated, and above all, classified. We would be in an even prettier pickle than we are now if, for instance, physicists had refused to study or accept the existence of neutrinos just because they can't see them and have the utmost difficulty in weighing and measuring them. Charles Darwin might just as well have abandoned all his ideas at the outset because nobody could loan him a skeleton of an Ape-Man. The basic trouble with UFOs, at the moment, is that there is no assigned place for them in any branch of Science.

The meteorologist certainly doesn't want any unknown thing seen in the sky; he has quite enough to do as it is, and he deals with only certain broad aspects of our atmosphere *per se*. The astronomer wants no part of anything within our atmosphere and, frankly, wishes that the beastly atmosphere itself would go away so that he could get a clearer look at the stars without glimmer or shimmer; besides, his machines are focussed on points far beyond the atmosphere's outer limits. He doesn't like unidentified dark object

floating serenely across the Moon or the Sun either, and has very often said so in no uncertain terms. Physicists, chemists, and other such prosaic folk have no dealings with anything in the atmosphere except the gases of which it is composed. Cosmologists are way beyond the clouds, and the rest of the sciences are earthbound—except for one, namely Biology, and this is very loathe to soar much higher than 25,000 feet, at which altitude some birds have been known to fly. The technologists are even less concerned. If anybody caught a UFO, they would doubtless swarm all over it, but in the meantime they rightly adhere to testing things they can handle, and gadgeteering generally.

In other words, science doesn't want any part of anything in the sky that ought not to be there, and they are jolly well going to see to it that if there are any such things aloft, they stay there until somebody else produces one on a platter for their edification. This is all very sane and practical but it does not help very much.

If this whole business is what is vulgarly called "balony"—though why, for there could hardly be a more satisfactory comestible on the market—we very badly need a pooling of psychologists, social scientists of other

kinds, and the executive branches of our own and many other Governments to examine the heads of a large percentage of our collective populations, including those members of our Airforces empowered with the expenditure of public funds (for projects like those named "Blue Book", *et alia*). This sort of nonsense must be put a stop to and wastage of energy, nerves and money, now spent upon it, eliminated. The millions spent annually today on this ridiculous matter by newspapers, book publishers, and public officials is quite preposterous. On the other hand, it is high time that scientists and the great organizations that support them devote some funds to counteracting all this hysteria by a sane investigation and appraisal of the matter. Up till now, scientists almost alone have backed away from the question, and those that have deigned to recognize the problem have devoted their energies to ridiculing it or trying to explain it away.

But can we blame them? The matters at issue have no place in their routines of disciplines. What is more, working scientists already have far too much to do, are now-a-days constantly harassed by both officialdom and the public, and are grossly underpaid for the enormous responsibilities they have to

shoulder. Persons who have scientific training but who do not earn their living as scientists are few and far between. There is, therefore, virtually nobody available to deal with anything that does not fall into the bailiwick of some established science.

Nevertheless, the dictionary still defines science as the "investigation of the unknown", and if something suddenly pops up in life, nature, or the universe that has not previously been known or recognized, there is therefore no possible excuse for its being left lying around uninvestigated. Further, when such phenomenon have already appeared on the horizon there is a very urgent need for a science to be immediately founded to so investigate it. Such is definitely the case with the Fortean phenomena, now so succinctly named UFOs or "Unidentified Flying Objects", by our Airforce.

If the UFOs are not all illusory, what are they?

The possibilities—if we are to be really scientific about the matter—are almost endless. The limits of the Universe in space and time are unbounded. Just because "life" as we know it exists only between 0 and 100 centigrade on the surface of this planet is no reason that another form could not do so at at eight million degrees ab-

lute in the center of a star or at absolute zero in inter-galactic space. Just because our bodies are based on hydrogen and carbon does not mean that "life" may not be based on other elements; it might even be crystalline! Just because we are *here now* and our ancestors were more or less, *there then*, does not mean that we cannot be *there now* or they, *here then*. We have hardly a clue as to what is going on a mile under our feet, and we know darned little about what lives two miles down in the oceans of our planet or what may exist a few miles above us in our atmosphere. We can only see just so far upwards with one lot of instruments and beyond a certain point with others. There could be countless hosts of things buzzing about up there that we cannot see at all, for our eyes are sensitive to only a limited segment of the full spectrum. What is more, neither living entities nor even inanimate objects need be solid; they could be liquid, gaseous, or composed of what so many people like to call "forces" meaning presumably compositions of electromagnetic wave-particles of orders other than those with which our nuclear physicists are currently fiddling.

The range of possibilities being so great, it is a hard task even to start trying to

bring order out of the present chaos.

Nevertheless, if we are ever going to get anywhere with this business it is high time that we make a start, and it would be best to do so where the other sciences started. This is by establishing some basis for the purely descriptive phase of our study. Before anybody starts theorizing about the objectives of UFOs, it would be worthwhile to devote a little time to the establishment of a framework of reference for the classification of such objects. This calls for the setting up of a series of pigeon-holes for the reception of data, which should be named and grouped according to the multifarious possibilities inherent in the possible nature, composition, origin, *etc.*, of UFOs.

First, therefore, every effort should be made to list all the possible or rather thinkable explanations for the various kinds of UFOs so far reported. This calls for a large number of binary headings, such as, could they be "living entities" or are they "inanimate"; are they individuals or parts of larger composite entities; are they from our planet or from another in our solar system; from our solar system or another; our galaxy or another; our space-time continuum (universe) or another; and so

forth. Possibilities as to their composition and structure should also be listed. Then, the matter of their control should be considered, and this leads to the nature of any intelligences that might run them. Here we have to start with, on the one hand, the possibility of an all-pervading Power and continue to some form of nonintelligence, for some of them may, themselves, be lifeforms.

The range of possibility in all these respects, although, by logic, limitless, is nevertheless amendable to considerable subdivision and may even prove to be within manageable bounds, because the variety of objects in our Universe, from electron to galaxy is limited, and thus provides no such a ready-made framework, or set of pigeon-holes, to start with.

Secondly, all reports of UFOs should be carded, and cross-indexed. This can as yet be nothing more than a bibliographical exercise, but there are a number of serious-minded individuals and groups, (of sizes and importance ranging from lone individuals to the U.S. Airforce) who have attempted this. There are literally hundreds of thousands of such reports varying from paltry, unsubstantiated gossip to really terrifying incidents, resulting in the disappearance or deaths of numbers of people,

as, for example, military aircraft that have been seen to enter a cloud and never come out of it, which is both costly and alarming in time of war. Such a listing calls for a very careful recording of all pertinent data and a great mass of corollary facts that may not at the time appear to have anything to do with the incident. When this has been done, all kinds of UFOs—both those that can be explained as known phenomena, and those that cannot be so explained—ought to have pigeon-holes ready for their reception.

Thirdly, whatever can be done about catching, keeping, measuring, and weighing these things, should be done. In this field the general public can help, not only by making reports but also—like the gentleman in northern Ireland recently—by trying to capture a UFO and delivering it to some competent authority, despite ridicule and publicity. The press can help by censoring the facetious and giving the public the news on these matters, straight. Science can help by admitting that the phenomena are outside their particular provinces, but by encouraging the establishment of a new discipline to deal with them. Officialdom could bring the whole matter much closer to solution, or at least some understanding, by not

only making thorough investigations but by publishing all the facts about those cases which they cannot explain and simply filing the facts on those that they can. The Law could—but certainly will never be empowered to—further the whole business by prosecuting anybody who, under the guise of expert knowledge (which, of course, nobody has at present), tries to *explain away* anything that cannot be explained by them.

UFOs are, at present, an unpleasantness of an advanced order. Whether they exist or do not exist, they are almost constantly in the news, have cost us millions of dollars annually for some years, and get a lot of people unduly excited, thereby adding to the already excessive overload of tensions in this

uncertain new world. They appear on occasion even to have caused death. Like television, the beastly things appear to be here to stay, and it is high time that some serious minds were brought to bear upon them and the problem they are creating. This may call for an unexpected extension of psychology, or of astronomy or meteorology. It might do the same for biology because some might well be highly tenuous life-forms, indigenous to our upper atmosphere. It might prove to be nothing more than an exercise in bibliographical research, but needs, first of all, to be tackled *scientifically*.

What we need, in fact, is the immediate establishment of a respectable new science named Ufology.

YOU COULD NOT HIDE

I remember Zimbabwe. I remember the crack of the whips as the overseers—their bodies glistening with the same rank sweat as ours—cursed us and struck at us with whips that were as leaden as the foul air we breathed and struggled in. There was an urgency—an almost feverish urgency—in the way they cursed at our slowness, cursed at our clumsiness, cursed at those who collapsed and died, their bodies sagging in the dirt encrusted chains.

We slaves could afford to laugh in the midst of death, because we knew that even if we died, as die we undoubtedly would, these men with their blood-shot and haunted eyes would have cursed us and struck at us in vain.

No stone towers would be protection from the gleaming things in the sky. Nothing would protect these men and their masters, we whispered to each other around the fires in the evenings. You could not hide from these eyes of the Gods. . . .