

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

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**saucers -
fact
not
fiction**

by MORRIS K. JESSUP

How much substance is there to the attacks on Ufology? A distinguished researcher replies to recent critics.

A DEBUNKER is one who debunks—or, at least he is supposed to try—but very often it seems that a debunker has to spread himself too thin, just in order to keep on writing. Such seems to be the case of a somewhat frustrated and bemused character whose by-line reads, Lester del Rey, writing in the August 1957 issue of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE.

It may be that the only element, in the field of Ufology, worse than blind adoration and unadulterated *will-to-believe*, is the professional determination not to accept any evidence at all. The first seems misguided but sincere. The second reeks of phony arrogance and flippancy, and takes on the characteristics of winning arguments at the expense of seeking truth.

The antipathy of the Science Fiction hodgepodge toward Flying Saucers is both ludicrous and laughable. Flying Saucers, a part of a broad phenomenon more properly called UFO or Unidentified Flying Objects, have pulled an ephemeral rug from under a cult—a cult which has taken an erstwhile interesting and

While we do not agree with some of the statements in the above article, we are nevertheless happy to welcome Morris K. Jessup, explorer and UFOlogist, who makes a first appearance in these pages. He is the author of the recent THE EXPANDING CASE FOR UFO (Citadel).

productive field of literature and debauched it into a mono-molecular coating of pseudo-science painted onto a thick and murky base of cheap sex; and the whole smeared almost obscenely over an artificial background of imaginary and misunderstood space lore. (*Obviously not F. U.!—* Editor)

By simply demonstrating a factual condition more astounding than S-F, Ufology is essentially depriving S-F of almost everything except its morbid sexology. The screams you hear from time to time are those of anguish from the ensuing vacuum.

Of course, del Rey is partially correct—a would-be debunker has to be partly correct, some of the time. The mere fact that a well known Science Fiction club found it expedient to hold a symposium on Flying Saucers is doubly indicative: UFO's have hit S-F with an impact too solid to be ignored, and SF'ers have failed to understand that UFO's are... **FACT, NOT FICTION.**

No doubt but that L. Sprague de Camp (brought in as heavy artillery) is amongst the heaviest ordinance available to the retreating but embattled SF'ers, who are as die-hard as the dogmatized scientists. De Camp is a smart and learned man, as witnessed by his *magnum opus* of debunkery: *Lost Continents* (Gnome Press, N. Y.).

His mental adroitness is excelled only by his superb erudition and effulgent personality, but even a de Camp is hardly going to stem a tide which has had a steady, if unobtrusive, flow for several millenia and has reached flood-tide only within the past decade.

True, del Rey rubs salt into some sore spots, and we squirm a bit. His scathing sarcasm anent the (pseudo) "scientific" attitudes of Saucer Observers is not without some justification. Further dissecting would reveal that even more damage has been done by metaphysical skull-duggery and telegadding in sprightly hops from planet to planet. No wonder the SF'ers are jealous for, even at their clumsy worst, they hadn't the termerity to claim personal experiences of such appalling brazenness (except in extremely unfortunate examples such as the Shaver mystery.)

Del Rey makes the mistake of not distinguishing the voluminous smoke from the (sometimes meager) fire. Nor does he recognize the drastic dividing line between the conservatives in Ufology as opposed to the hoaxers, the pranksters and the dedicated deep-enders.

By influence and inuendo, del Rey tries to invoke a disbelief in ghosts to bolster up his tirade. Not only is the mention of ghosts impertinent in the discussion, but he

entirely overlooks the fact that ghosts are a scientifically recognized phenomenon. This may pass as an adroit maneuver, but only to very casual readers who haven't taken the time to study the literature of psychic research. Such an inversion of facts, for the purpose of merely winning arguments, is in about the same category of intellectual chicanery as Menzel's mendacious attempts at disproof by default, and by discussing, as a diversionary measure, everything in the world but the subject at hand. Yet, giving the devil his due, the teleporters and metaphysical hoaxers have undoubtedly given del Rey an opening. They have let down the guard of the Ufologists and have muddied the waters in a very serious manner.

His arguments are all of a negative, or default, character. We may as well say that I *might* have been born a Hottentot, but since I was not born a Hottentot I wasn't born at all. I'm reminded of an experience of an Astronomer friend of mine who was driving through traffic in a large city when he was whistled to a shuddering halt by a traffic cop. The cop said: "Why didn't you stop for that traffic light?" Friend said: "I did stop." Cop said: "Well, I didn't see you stop." And my Astronomer friend replied: "Well, within a block of this spot, I can find at least 500

who *didn't* see me stop, but right here in the seat with me is *one* who *did* see me stop." Throughout the hundreds of years in which Ufological data have been reported, pertinent phenomena have been vehemently denied by "experts" who were nowhere near the event. Their negative pooh-poohing has often been given greater weight than the definite and positive observations of intelligent, on-the-ground witnesses.

In several different headquarters in Washington, D.C., Government and Civilian alike, there is a steadily growing documentation of encounters of aircraft with UFO; not necessarily collisions, but tangible enough to constitute proof. In denying the evidence of *all* observers, del Rey would deny the use of eye-witness evidence in courts of law, or in any scientific work not reproducible by experimentation... If observational data is to be excluded, the whole science of Astronomy should be rejected as unprovable because we cannot reproduce extra-galactic nebulae at will.

Del Rey's bland assumption that the Flying Saucers must expend tremendous amounts of energy to get here is spacious and gratuitous. Such a statement is inconsistent with his own contentions as to their nature and origin. Until we know their origin and their sources of power and

propulsion, such statements are worse than idle speculation. The UFO may well be indigenous to the Earth-Moon system, and their power may be as cheap and ubiquitous as the wind which propels sailing ships. Why does *he* insist on theorizing, while scolding the Ufologist for the same indulgence?

He makes some left-handed remarks about the "theories" of Ufologists. All theories are debatable when taken in the sense of being hypotheses, and certainly hypotheses in such an embryonic field as Ufology are extremely debatable. But—to infer that sightings are theories is to deliberately confuse the issue. When a man says that he saw something, he is not hypothecating...he is reporting.

One of the best examples of such confusion and maladjusted logic comes from the recalcitrant Astronomers, themselves. During the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries, there were dozens of observations of spherical objects moving across the visible disc of the Sun. They were seen, clocked, measured and documented by professionals, amateurs and laymen. They were real enough for the very top echelon of mathematical astronomers to take them seriously; to consider them as planets; and to calculate orbits for them, supposedly lying inside the Orbit of Mercury. Yet—there are no major planets

within the orbit of Mercury. The caustic and brilliantly analytical astronomer, C.H.F. Peters, took the data and demolished the idea of an intra-Mercurial planet with devastating clarity. Then he made the classic mistake that is perpetuated by the Menzels, the de Camps and the del Reys; he dogmatically said, in effect, "Since there are no intra-Mercurial planets, then no valid observations were made and all of these dozens of trained observers are either lying or, at least, unreliable. Nothing could have been seen because there was nothing there to be seen." In the early 19th Century, the same volley of fire was turned on meteorites, with as much justification, and you know what has followed. The facts are, clearly, that many an Astronomer of honesty and ability saw UFO passing across the Sun and reported his sightings. The brash calculation of orbits was theory, based on the mistaken hypothesis that the observed discs or spheres were planets comparable to such globes as Mercury and Mars. The hypothesis was finally proven invalid, but the sightings, like UFO sightings of today, remain as concrete evidence, too prolific and well documented to be doubted. Nothing but dirigible UFO, operating in space, can explain their existence. Orbits are theoretical, but observed bodies make data.

So, let's be tolerant with the hypotheses of the Ufologists. Theorizing is a more or less harmless indoor sport. Observations, when honest, are UFO of another tint. Astronomy is entirely based on observation and the early days of that science, in all its phases, were days of controversy. Yet, the observations of astronomy still stand. Those of the hypothesized planet, Vulcan, are as valid today as they were a hundred years or so ago. Those observations are as valid as observations of those classes of celestial phenomena which are repetitive or periodic. They were rejected to a considerable degree because they were not cyclic or periodic, for Astronomy is intolerant of non-repetitive phenomena.

In brief, the field of Ufology cannot be fairly judged on the basis of the hypotheses, often called theories, which spring from it.

PERHAPS the greatest damage to Ufology has been done by its best friends, who continually attempt "explanations." Some of the best writers fall into this trap, and perhaps I am also guilty even though I try to make clear that I am merely offering possibilities for consideration. Ufology is still in the observational stages. Explanations of the nature of UFO, their intelligent direction or control, and their mode of

power and propulsion should await a more careful tabulation of data and its segregation into suitable categories. In this we must agree with del Rey.

Yet, such is the nature of our citizenry that most of us demand something sensational if we are to maintain interest. Our public press sees to that. Without the hoaxers and pranksters, public interest might have died long ago...died back to the state of indifference which existed prior to 1947 and Kenneth Arnold. Certainly, Government, Press and Science Fiction did their joint best to smother the interest.

Del Rey has another point of course, when he says that Ufology should weed out the trash and present the remainder in some intelligible form. This is what is being attempted by many agencies; but before weeding-out can be done, it is necessary to assemble and classify all data and all reports. Out-of-hand rejection is not a legitimate way of going about the task, and would smack too much of just the type of unreasoning dogma to which the Ufologist objects. Some culling will eventually have to be done.

During the past three years or so, there *has* been somewhat of an exodus of the deep-enders from Ufology. Starting rather early in 1956, on the other hand, there has been a revival of interest

among professional and educated people, who have either seen UFO phenomena or have what they consider to be reliable evidence. This sane and serious interest is reaching substantial proportions; and it is spontaneous, for there has been no build-up in the press or on radio and TV. Any lecturer in Ufology will confirm this.

Evidence for the UFO is all of a positive nature, be it direct observation or merely supporting conditions or events. The objections of the dogmaticists, however, are purely negative and contain no evidence at all. The objectors who have neither observation nor experience merely say that UFO phenomena could not happen and therefore didn't—the same attitude taken by C.H.F. Peters regarding the observations which were purported to be of an intra-Mercurial planet.

THE PRESENT status of Ufology is this:

There is serious interest in space phenomena, among a large sector of our population and, significantly enough, it is quite noticeable among ministers, lawyers, doctors and successful commercial people. These groups are taking an objective and open-minded view of a puzzling phenomenon. Serious and determined investigators are at work all over the country, and a large majority of them are

working intelligently and at the same time trying to eliminate "fringe" elements from UFO reports and writing. Such organizations include CSI (Civilian Saucer Intelligence) of New York and NICAP (National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena) in Washington, D.C. Many individuals are also working with disciplined enthusiasm, among whom are Max Miller in Los Angeles, Bryant and Helen Reeve in Cleveland, Norman Bean and Norbert Garriety in Miami, and the well known news commentator, Frank Edwards, in Indianapolis. The Government's interest is expanding, rather than declining, and many government intelligence agencies and research groups are looking for UFO answers although most of this activity is going on very quietly. The objective writers in the field of Ufology, such as Ruppelt and Keyhoe, are pushing Ufology as the door to a new concept of our cosmic environment. Scientists and professors are joining ministers and lawyers in affirming the basic observations and the importance of Ufology. Such people are not dogmatic and few of them are crusaders: they do, however, admit the reality of a phenomenon, or group of phenomena, which they do not yet understand.

Offsetting these workers, however, there are still a considerable number of dedicated

enthusiasts who insist on attributing elements of divinity to types of space beings and space people whose existence has not been demonstrated in any obvious manner—much less proved. These attitudes, speculations and beliefs are based largely on metaphysical revelation, or communications through extra-sensory (ESP) channels, and some claim communication via electronic devices of various sorts. Some of them may be true or valid. Many are well intentioned. However, it is seldom, if ever, that any two of the proponents of divinity for space beings come up with the same descriptions or reports, in spite of each individual's claims that he or she is an especially appointed representative or mouthpiece for a space man. The stories of teleportation to other planets do not ring true, and many believe that such tales are the result of S-F influence which may have contaminated the otherwise pristine purity of Ufology.

The advocates of divinity for space people, do however have some background and precedent for their beliefs. The Holy Bible, especially in the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses and the New Testament, appears to be a long and specific chronicle of what we may call extraterrestrial guidance or extraterrestrial intervention. References to space people, UFO and related

phenomena are legion in the Bible, and it is only natural that a religious nation such as ours should overshadow space characters and events with a cloak of divinity. The dividing line between true divinity and the merely superior traits of space beings is a vague and hazy border which is obviously not very well understood by the more religious devotees of the Flying Saucers.

As Ivan Sanderson pointed out with scintillating barbs of iridescent metaphor, in the February 1957 issue of FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, the Holy Bible is one of the best sources of information on UFO, disrespectfully known in vulgar terms as Flying Saucers. Among other documentation, including the hoary records of the ancient Chinese and the meticulous empagination of the Romans, we must impugn the Holy Bible if we set out to deny all of the multitudinous evidence of UFO on, above or around the Earth, as Sanderson has so vigorously asserted.

Now, there have been a very few thick-skinned individuals who have said that the Holy Bible was fiction, and there have been sacrilegious blatherers who claimed it was science-fiction, but, after a careful study of such portions of the Bible as the Pentateuch, or Books of Moses, I am convinced that our Bible is valid historical documentation. *The*

Bible is History! Its writers had the good grace to steer away from hypothesis, or what Mr. del Rey calls theory. Moses, a man of the most advanced wisdom and learning, chose to accept space visitations at their face value, without wasting too much time "explaining" that which he saw but did not comprehend or understand. Like Ufologists of today, the scribes recorded what they saw, with a minimum of description. Unlike many of our Ufological experts, however, they accepted the manifestations of UFO as commonplace and avoided "explanations" and the ensuing controversies. Yet, again like some of our present-day claimants, the Biblical scribes asserted that they communicated with space entities, rode in UFO, received ESP communications; saw and participated in the miracles of aportation, teleportation, and disappearances; listened en masse to voices of space beings emanating from cloud-vehicles, contacted the beings and saw their vehicles. Space beings walked among them, scarcely distinguishable from earth-men. All of this is recorded in our Holy Bible with the casualness of everyday living. The cloud in which "Yahweh" moved about was most obviously a UFO, and it was such a common, everyday part of Israelite life that no scribe felt any compulsion to give it minute de-

scription or to hypothesize on its origin, motive power, nature or purpose. In every respect, reports of UFO today resemble those of Biblical history some 3500 to 6000 years ago.

Melchizedec: "...without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the son of God...", was patently a space man. (Hebrews 7:3). We need not rehash the already hackneyed examples such as Ezekiel's wheel or the "power-blast" that carried Elijah away; or the model of a UFO in the courtyard of Solomon's temple. We need not reiterate the story about the fleet of UFO that visited Pharaoh at about the time (according to Egyptian chronicles) of the plagues and the Exodus.

These biblical accounts of space craft, space people, and UFO in general, differ only in terminology from the reports of today. Deny them and you have to deny the authenticity of the Bible. Such a denial may be justified by scholars who make an adequate study of the scriptures, but it takes a hardy soul to call the Bible fiction in opposition to the determined belief of the Western World that the Bible is divine truth from cover to cover.

The "glory" of the Lord, for instance, was a bright and extensive effulgence which

was flexible and adaptable enough to fill a room, a temple, or cover a mountain top. Whether or not it could be called a Flying Saucer, it was an UFO, and seems to have been similar to the orange discs of light, or pure energy, so commonly reported today and for hundreds of years in the past.

The "cloud" that clung to the tabernacle of the Israelites, which led them out of Egypt and which guided them round about the Middle East, was clearly an UFO. Specifically, we are told time and again that the Lord rode in this "cloud." Repeatedly the "Lord" spoke from the cloud-vehicle, or used it as a medium of telecommunication. The "cloud" behaved intelligently, as do UFO of today. There are organic appearing clouds in today's skies—I have seen some of them.

WHILE this was being written, there have been several reliable reports of sightings in the Washington D.C., area. A government scientist, a Ph. D., has had two sightings. The first was a spherical object playing tag with one of our best jet planes, over Washington. Its speed was several times that of the jet. His second sighting, on August 5th, 1957, consisted of a formation of seven glowing objects in V-formation, moving northward over Alexandria and Washington. They

looked much like the eight objects seen by William Nash, airline pilot, over Virginia a few years ago. They also looked somewhat like the V-formation of cloud-like objects seen in space, near a great comet, by Astronomer Barnard in 1882. This formation was independently reported by observers from Alexandria, Virginia and in Maryland from Silver Spring, Hagerstown and Baltimore. Are we still to call this mass hallucination?

Shortly prior to that an engagement between two jets and a UFO took place in Illinois, according to Frank Edwards; and both players and spectators at a ball-game stopped to watch the show. Mass hallucination?

Is it coincidence, only, that there was a considerable "flap" of sightings on the West Coast, on the same evening as the Washington-Alexandria-Maryland sightings—a four-hour difference in time making it possible for the objects to be in the two places at about the same clock and sun time?

In today's mail I received an authenticated report of two large chunks of ice falling in the same place—several minutes apart. Not the size or kind carried by airplanes, or formed on plane wings; and *falling in the same spot, minutes apart* is not characteristic of something dropped from a plane, even if a plane

had been observed. In such a case you have perhaps three alternatives: (1) meteoritic ice from space, (2) ice from a fixed source overhead (a la C. Fort), or (3) ice dropped from a hovering UFO. Take your pick—the choice is gratis.

To conclude:

Nobody is mad at Lester del Rey. Everyone to his own

judgment; but judging a Ufologist's hypotheses is one thing, and judging the validity of his observations is quite another. Maybe UFO are not Lester's saucer of tea, just now, but sooner or later a light may break over him and when it does we will welcome him to Ufology in spite of the taint of S-F which now makes his tea a bit murky.

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