

# DIALOGUE

## FORUM

*Omni welcomes speculation, theories, commentary, dissent, and questions from readers in this open forum. We invite you to use this column to voice your hopes about the future and to contribute to the kind of informal dialogue that provokes thought and generates breakthroughs. Please note that we cannot return submissions and that the opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the magazine.*

### Look—Up in the Sky

My heartiest congratulations to Pamela Weintraub for her excellent interview with ufology's elder statesman, J. Allen Hynek [February 1985]. Never before has a mass-media publication synopsized the events, participants, theories, and opinions associated with this controversial subject so clearly and objectively. Weintraub, unlike many other journalists, obviously did her homework thoroughly before engaging Hynek in the interview. More important, Weintraub was fair. No snide remarks and no adversarial questions. Quite refreshing.

Tom Burch  
Poolesville, MD

Shame on you for pitting two experts in diverse areas of ufology against each other. Hynek's expertise in popularizing the UFO controversy's scientific aspects certainly has its place in the overall resolution of the matter. So, too, does my expertise in documenting, analyzing, and articulating the sociopolitical aspects—including the general issue of official UFO secrecy and the particular issue of so-called crash-landed and government-retrieved "saucer" occupants. But by inviting Hynek to assess my judgment in pursuing the various crashed-saucer accounts, *Omni* is merely exploiting the personality conflicts that already cloud this controversial field. Don't you think your readers deserve more?

Larry Bryant  
Director, Washington, DC, office  
Citizens Against UFO Secrecy  
Alexandria, VA

The interview with J. Allen Hynek was a breath of fresh air from one of the world's foremost experts on UFOs. Hynek seems

to vacillate, however, in his opinion regarding UFOs' existence and capabilities.

Case in point: While discussing the classic study on Betty and Barney Hill, he states that it is a physical impossibility for aliens to travel the equivalent of "one hundred sixty miles of playing cards" (each card representing the distance between the earth and the moon). At the same time, he proposes that an advanced civilization might have the ability to project a thought form that can produce a three-dimensional image on Earth. Do we simply discard one fantastic theory to accept another?

Carter Buschardt  
Dallas

In an essay on language published in 1946, George Orwell defined the word *phenomenon* as one of those pretentious words "used to dress up simple statements and give an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgments."

This explains why the bloated expression *UFO phenomenon* is so popular with flying-saucer advocates like J. Allen Hynek. Such an expression overshadows the simple

fact that nine out of ten UFO reports involve mistakes or hoaxes and that the few remaining reports have little in common except the quality of being "unsolved." So what? Many robberies and murders also remain unsolved, but only a primitive mind would ascribe all such crimes to a single, mysterious "lawbreaker phenomenon." UFO advocates do not realize that UFO sightings can be solved only as unrelated events, not as part of a larger "phenomenon."

David Schroth  
St. Louis

Hynek and a host of others are under the impression that given our current technology, it is unlikely, if not impossible, to traverse the vast distances between the stars.

If a supercivilization does exist, our unshakable foundation of physics might seem archaic to its members. Our understanding of physics could be completely correct but hopelessly incomplete.

What does it portend that these aliens have not contacted governments on Earth? It probably means they're not interested. What makes us think that television, lasers, and nuclear weapons make us number one on the contact hit parade?

Shawn Bobbitt  
Martinez, CA

I must remark on J. Allen Hynek's statements about my hypothesis that UFO abductees are reliving their birth trauma.

Perhaps being an English teacher, I have a fatal flaw: a desire for consistency in essays and profession of views. Some quotes from Hynek's interview will illustrate my point. "I was a thorough skeptic." "It must be nonsense, therefore it is nonsense." "Ridicule is not part of the scientific method." "In science you do not discard data just because you don't like them." "This is just speculation of the wildest sort." "I don't think babies . . . would remember that sort of stuff."

Hynek has been repeating himself for nearly a decade, and without some new bit of scientific infusion, his newfound phoenix will remain earthbound.

Alvin Lawson  
Garden Grove, CA

