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Fortean vs. Fartean Phenomena

(This contribution is from a new non-subscriber who wants to be known as "Uncle Lou." He is not Lucius Farish - Editor.)

Fortean Phenomena are known to include unexplained happenings in the physical world, but the subsection known as Fartean Phenomena has been examined less thoroughly. Interestingly, although the over-all category was named after Charles Fort, the subsection received its title in honor of one Melvin Fart, the first to investigate such goings on.

In a nutshell, the study of Fartean Phenomena is concerned with the investigation of unexplained odors and sounds. Many have smelled and heard these phenomena, but few have dared speculate on their philosophical (even spiritual) meaning. A few examples from Melvin Fart's diary will serve to punctuate the strangeness of these phenomena:

From The London Times, April 18, 1897: One Philip Puce-Timothy, East-end cobbler and raconteur, while traveling to Ulster for the purpose of acquiring a new shipment of pigskins and objects d'art, became suddenly aware (in his train compartment) of a series of low-frequency staccatto outbursts, followed within one minute by an aroma oddly reminiscent of cabbage soup. A young lady in the same compartment was seen to wrinkle her nose, whereupon Puce-Timothy inquired, "I say, but do you smell something quite out of place?" She nodded affirmatively, but the third passenger, a Russian count, denied any awareness of odd odors or noises.....

Melvin Fart recorded some 8,000 similar instances of odors and/or sounds of no apparent earthly origin, and after a time his name became attached to the phenomenon. To wit: One tended to remark, upon noticing an unpleasant odor, "I smell a Melvin." (In some circles, where persons were suspected of being in league with occult powers, the expression became: "Who Melvinned?")

Science, in its issue of July 14th, 1932, suggested the substitution of Fart's last name to honor this category of happenings, and the term has now fallen into quite common use. (Sadly, it is rarely capitalized in these disrespectful times.)

Related phenomena include the following, which are sometimes reported to occur in conjunction with the more common growling sounds and odors: (1) Bubbles which appear suddenly in the bathwater. (2) Strange tan or brown images or figures which appear in the underclothing (currently being catalogued and studied to determine whether they represent symbolic messages from another dimension.) (3) Hissing noises, often heard faintly, as if whispered voices were emanating from the furniture (in an apparently unknown tongue.) (4) Whistling or squeaking noises. (5) Occasional physical debility, taking the form of abdominal pains. (6) On two reported occasions, the medium who was receiving the Fart-message has been seen to produce a brief but observable "glowing fireball" issuing from beneath the rear of the suit jacket. In both instances, the medium was standing with his back to a short burning candle. (It should be mentioned that the noted author, researcher and man-about-town, John Keelhaul, has reported some 15,000 instances of hearing these hissing, whistling, squeaking and growling noises over the telephone!)

There are some who claim to be able to produce the Fart at will, and in fact several noted spirit mediums have produced various Fartean Phenomena as a major portion of their seances; but this is beyond the scope of this article. Serious students of the Fart believe Farts to be demonstrations of the reality of an ultraterrestrial dimension which,

from time to time, penetrates our own space-time continuum, perhaps through the operation of vile vortices. In fact, it has been conjectured that the Fart might itself be a vile vortex in miniature.

Just as the ingestion of hallucinogenic plants may lead to heightened awareness of psychic phenomena, it is said that certain foods, notably beans, might produce a mental or physical environment conducive to the production of Farts.

Letters to ye olde Editor:

Yonah Fartner (alias Yonah ibn A'haron) wrote an exclusive series of articles for the old SAUCER NEWS, in the late 1950's, tending to prove that Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament, was in reality a space being. Now retired from ufology, Yonah writes:

"I seem to be an authentic Unperson on the saucer scene. I wrote one of the first books in the field (1949), originated the theory of Extraterrestrialism (1953-1957), and was a founding member of the Permanent Organizing Committee of the Congress of Scientific Ufologists and co-author of its Code of Ethics (1965). The Loftin Memorial Award, having made the rounds of the faithful, finally caught up with me in Valley Forge, Pa. in 1974.

"I now understand that Mr. Allen J. Greenfield, a friend of many years' standing, objected to my selection as that year's nominee. As Mr. Greenfield has virtually omitted my name from his historical surveys ("Saucers & Saucerers"), I am not surprised. Merely 'mongered.' The time has come for me to tell the world how I feel about the proprietor of Owl-exandrian Ents., Inc:

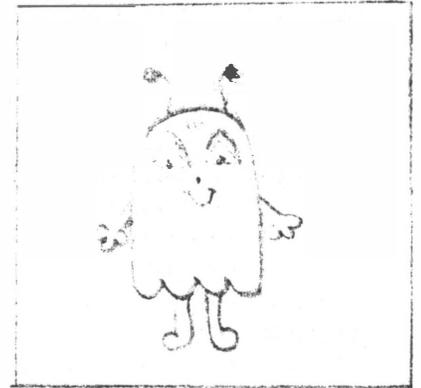
"I am, as an author, opposed to junk mail. I object to having my mail box stuffed with vacuous, multi-median dimwittedness, reflecting the Cro-Magnon mentality of a little rich boy who, while clipping his coupons, cannot accept the responsibility of Twentieth Century life. I would like to see Greenfield and his Stone Age friends wall themselves in, on a ranch in Western Australia; in fact, I'm tempted to start a collection to make it all possible.

"Obviously, Mr. Greenfield is not entirely happy with his ethnic and philosophical heritage as a Jew. Perhaps as a consequence he is no longer able to accept my uncompromising ethnicity. This does not, however, excuse the common requirements of civility and good taste.

"If Allen doesn't think I deserve a page of my own in the history of American ufology, I am sure that the rest of us may indeed dispense with him and his views in any future history of our movement."

Lama Robert Dickhoff writes: "Your 'Saucer Screws' goofed when you held my color photo of a Mothership up to ridicule. The Ground Saucer Watch needs a more sophisticated computer, which does not record thumbprints, when it should be recording zebra stripes covering a spacecraft, as photographed by Dickhoff the Lama, on the fourth of July, 1976. What I recorded with an inexpensive camera and color film was outright spectacular. The thumbprint thesis is absurd, since whosoever made such a print covering a giant Spacecraft must have been a being of such dimension to dwarf King Kong & Sasquatch. Such a gigantic Being just does not exist, not even in endless Space out there! My psychic daughter Xandra carries herself with the notion that the Ground Saucer Watch should remain grounded, since they are out to ruin her father's good reputation as a saucer researcher for some 30 years, with this insult to his intelligence. Only you and George Fox have a print of the sighting. The one mailed to the National Enquirer was returned saying that they could not make it out - minus sarcasm on their part. Neither was a blank check enclosed to get the negative for the aforesaid sighting print. Such insolence is worthy of such as Gene Steinberg, but as for you, it is a surprise!

"Tell J. Oberg to get a typewriter and a secretary (female) who can type! His doodles on paper are an insult to the paper and hard to decipher by a rational mentality!....."



ABOVE: Drawing of a rock-like inhabitant of Mars, as described in "Saucer Screws." Drawing is by our "Saucer Phews" Staff Artist - Betty Moseley, (Age 13.)

Steve Barnett writes: "I was wondering when I was going to be mentioned in your publication, and I can't think of one I'd rather be in than one with the provocative name, 'Saucer Screws.' I was, however, a bit disappointed in the lack of hard core porno in that newsletter. You should have run an article on the sex life of Venusians or saucer buffs anyway. How about doing an article on the sex life of Ray Palmer?....."

But how do we know that Ray Palmer even has a sex life? - Editor.

Ted Zilch writes: "Your 'Saucer Screws' edition proves Hynek is wrong when he says, 'Well, it wasn't a nuts & bolts UFO, but it was real to them.' Maybe your zine didn't present much evidence of bolts - but it certainly proved there are plenty of nuts around.

"Captain Oberg's letter certainly proves that all anti-ufologists aren't crackpots. It might also be an indication of why the Russians are currently more active in space than NASA. One thing I've noticed about Oberg, Klass, and Sheaffer is that they seem to have the ability to sit at a desk and solve all sorts of scientific mysteries. Of course, certain officers at Project Blue Book claimed to have the same mystical powers. (Granted that Klass does do some on-the-spot investigating.)

"It seems to me that the anti-ufologists are wasting their time. After all, UFO believers are convinced that Klass et al are working for the CIA, and ignore whatever they say. The rest of the people are either agnostic or apathetic. Therefore, I suggest that Klass, Oberg, and Sheaffer apply their great 'solving' expertise to unsolved crimes. Consider that there are hundreds of unsolved crimes - including murders - every year. Thousands of un-caught criminals are running loose. With Klass's, Oberg's, and Sheaffer's fantastic ability to solve things - albeit the wrong solution - the police ledgers could be cleared of unsolved crimes within a few months. So what, if a number of people were charged and convicted of something they hadn't done. What really matters is that these crimes be solved, and someone is put into jail. Confidence in our police forces would be restored, and the people would sleep easier at night, knowing that there is nothing going on that our valiant law enforcers can't deal with and solve."

UFO researcher Brent Raynes writes: "I want to thank you for the copies of your various freebee editions, containing much thought-provoking (and chokking) material. I certainly encourage you to keep the faith, preserve the ufological fellowship, and continue churning and burning on your 'Saucer S-----s.' All too often we ufologists are split up by various unnecessary barriers. Open forum newsletters like yours perform a needed service. With your knowledge and experience, you are the right man for the job, I'm sure; and you can rest assured in the wisdom that things are and will be as fate will so dictate."

UFO contactee Jennings Frederick writes: "I recently gave Gray Barker a call about an encounter which has bothered me for quite a hell of awhile. It seems that I was taken aboard a saucer as big as a football field. The entity said his name was 'Zarcon', and he said that he and his people were from 'Triangus Terri Elipson.' I was taken aboard the craft for a physical examination by the occupants (although I only saw one.)

"The National Enquirer may cover my encounters soon, in their forthcoming issues. However, I wish it understood that I am not in this for the publicity aspect! I want the truth told, and I could care less about people laughing at me or calling me a crank. God only knows I've had my share of this.....But what I really want is to be regressed by hypnotic sessions, and the whole subconscious facts brought out into the light.....

"For any of your readers (pro and con ufologists) who would like to examine my 'Zarcon' report and encounter, they can send me 60¢ plus postage and a self-addressed envelope, for xerox copies. All other copies of records are 20¢ per sheet plus 10¢ postage and/or self-addressed envelope."

Mr. Frederick's address is: Route #1, Box 126, Rivesville, W. Va. 26588. - Editor.