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## Introduction

It had to happen.

For over forty years the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects has mystified hundreds of thousands of sincere witnesses, yet the scientific establishment has refused to study it and stubbornly continues to deny the very existence of the mystery. The governments of the major nations have assembled countless dossiers about the subject. In the course of military and intelligence data gathering, many remarkable facts have been accumulated, as we know from the few tidbits the U.S. government has been forced to release under the Freedom of Information Act. Yet officials have never seen fit to declassify most of the files. So a market has been created for the hoaxers, the charlatans, those who are in the business of selling dreams and delusions.

Never mind that the few dedicated investigators who have patiently analyzed the sightings recognize that we are still far from a solution to the mystery; eager believers have fabricated fanciful explanations out of whole cloth to provide belief and dogma where knowledge was lacking.

As I have shown in Dimensions and Confrontations, there is indeed a genuine UFO phenomenon and it constitutes one of the many mysteries that nature offers us. In my view it represents an opportunity to practice some good science and to become aware of levels of consciousness we had not previously recognized. But the current proliferation of spurious material that confuses the real issues bothers me. It should be analyzed and exposed for what it is: at best, a dangerous delusion, the germ of new cults that would extinguish the light of reason and free inquiry; at worst, an attempt to draw attention away from the real nature of the UFO phenomenon, a deliberate effort to drive serious research into the quicksands of speculation.

Not only have individual visionaries come forward with the definitive revelation that UFOs came from Venus, Clarion, Hoova, Zeta Reticuli, or hundreds of other places, but an entire cottage industry has grown around groups dedicated to the "study" of fantasies channeled by our kind space brothers from such unlikely places as UMMO or the Pleiades. Organizations with mysterious sources of money are now springing up with dozens of local chapters all over the United States and Canada, and indeed, all over the world. They hypnotize witnesses. They hold seminars and conferences; they edit expensive books and videotapes; some even run their own presses. Their activity blurs the real nature of the phenomenon and complicates its study. It adds another factor of confusion to the bewilderment of sincere witnesses who wonder what they have seen and who are looking for a helping hand.

Things would not be so bad if the only hoaxers came from the lunatic fringe. Every field of endeavor has such borderline fanatics, even well-established and dignified disciplines like physics, with its entourage of perpetual motion inventors, astronomy with its retinue of hollowearthers, and medicine with its proliferation of quacks.

But there is more.

Those who spend time in the field analyzing traces left by the UFO phenomenon, interviewing witnesses, and assembling a study of the underlying patterns, have now stumbled on evidence of a quite different sort: some of the most remarkable sightings are actually complex hoaxes that have been carefully engineered for our benefit. The witnesses are merely the victims and the instruments rather than the authors of the hoax.

Who is perpetrating such deliberate fabrications and what is their goal? There is no single answer to this question because there is no single source to human fantasy, no single reason for the deviousness of those military or civilian agencies that are spending our money to conduct secret psychological experiments as the mind control projects of the Sixties and Seventies have abundantly demonstrated.

So, as I kept digging into a mass of information that had been generally avoided, it is not surprising that my research

should have taken me toward some unexpected quarters. Some cases, it turns out, involved private groups with fantastic delusions and an insane compulsion to spread them to a larger segment of the public. Others were found to have been engineered by government agencies engaged in psychological warfare exercises on which they declined comment, conveniently burying them behind the curtain of classified intelligence. This bears emphasizing: some UFO sightings are covert experiments in the manipulation of the belief systems of the public. And some cases simply did not happen. The stories about them, numerous rumors of crashed saucers and burned aliens, were not so much the result of delusions as the product of deception: rumors deliberately planted in the eager minds of gullible believers to hide more real facts about which it was felt that the public and the scientific community had no "need to know."

In previous works I have argued that ufology was, among other things, "folklore in the making", and that it ought to be studied as such. I was referring to the accumulation of stories about contact with aliens, a new form of mythology that formed a striking parallel to the intercourse with angels, demons, and elves in earlier ages. But the stories that are spreading now go way beyond anything in ordinary folklore. We are told that aliens have crashed on earth in their flying machines, that bodies have been recovered and autopsies performed.

The first part of this book, entitled "Alien Retrievals," describes the array of such stories that have proliferated in the last ten years. Accounts no longer come from drunken prospectors in the desert or from con men trying to make a fast buck. I have listened to a general who headed up an agency of the U.S. Air Force and who told me about his own contact. I have had dinner with an ex-CIA pilot who assured me the aliens were actually here, alive and in large numbers, working secretly with our scientists. And another man, a former Naval Intelligence officer, assured me he had once been assigned the mission to brief three admirals on the nature of the secret treaty that linked the U.S. government to these aliens, who lived inside our most secret military bases. He could locate the bases, and claimed he could identify people who had seen these so-called aliens—but he never came through with their names. In Las Vegas I met with Robert Lazar, who assured me that he had actually worked on a Navy Intelligence project to reverse-engineer the propulsion system of nine flying saucers held in secret hangars. But Robert Lazar also told me of his strange memory lapses, of the peculiar liquid he was made to drink.. ..

In Part Two, entitled "The Hall of Mirrors," I will take you a step further into the tangled jungle of ufology's dark side. We will review the results of some investigations into cases that were front page material when they first became public, yet where the actual truth has never been brought to light.

Revelations is an attempt to clear the underbrush of an interesting scientific field that is cluttered with the weeds and the vines of human fantasy and with the poisonous flowers of unbalanced minds. But it is also an experiment in truth-seeking; like *Confrontations*, it is something of a scientific detective story, an intellectual exercise in counterintelligence. Some of my readers may object that the delusions in question are of limited scope and only cause harm to a small community of zealots who are ready and willing to believe anything that seems to coincide with their own fantasies. Why not leave them to their crazy fate? My answer is that we have to eliminate these spurious rumors if we hope to identify the real UFO phenomenon and perhaps to meet genuine aliens some day. And the harm they cause is very real, very tragic indeed: it is because of such rumors that astronomer Morris Jessup committed suicide and that countless other researchers have wasted valuable time and jeopardized their careers in the pursuit of mirages.

In Part Three, entitled "The Cobweb Correlation," I have tried to show that the fast-growing belief in alien contact may well contain the germ of more dangerous developments. The fact that the genuine UFO cases have been ignored by professional scientists, and that even the great mythologists of our time like Joseph Campbell have remained utterly blind to them, makes the phenomenon, with all its wonderful physical and psychic complexity, a convenient medium that can be sculpted with complete impunity by the manufacturers of alternative theologies and the professional manipulators of the human mind.

All that can be said today about the genuine UFO phenomenon is that it involves human consciousness as well as physical effects in its manifestations. The study of such enigmas is what science is all about. But the line between belief in the reality of that phenomenon and the fascination with those who claim to control it, or to be in intimate contact with it, is very fine indeed. This book demonstrates how this fine line has repeatedly been crossed and what the consequences of the resulting delusions could be. More importantly, the UFO mystery holds a mirror to our own fantasies, it expresses our secret longings for a wisdom that might come down from the stars in new, improved, easy-to-use packaging, to

reveal the secrets of life and tell us, at long last, who we are. In return, of course, for a modest fee, an easily affordable spiritual, social, and political investment.

Why is it that in this process we are always told that we have to relinquish the right to interrogate the higher entities we worship? Why are we afraid to ask them who they are, and to demand what makes them so interested in teaching us, in frightening us, or in enlisting our help in the great cosmic saga of their allegedly higher endeavors? In the process of such interrogation we might well discover the ultimate horror, as in the poem by Borges quoted at the beginning of this book: there may be no higher entities lurking in the maze after all, and no little grayish aliens with bug eyes in the morgues of the Pentagon. In the final analysis the labyrinth of our expectations may be empty, and it may require a completely different approach to solve the problem of detecting and communicating with the other forms of consciousness that probably fill the universe, and with the UFO phenomenon itself. How could we shed the dreams and start on the real journey at last? How could we ever recognize Them if we keep being snared by humanity's folly, if we keep falling into the trap of our own delusions, and if, in the pursuit of our own preconceived theories, we rush to believe in every false revelation that comes along?

Oscar Wilde once observed that an aesthetic truth was such that its opposite was equally true. Perhaps the truths about alien contact, like those of the metaphysical kind, are the truths of masks.

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