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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Questions for Abductees

From: **Peregrine Mendoza** <101653.2205@compuserve.com> [Peter Brookesmith]  
Date: Tue, 28 Oct 1997 09:02:58 -0500  
Fwd Date: Tue, 28 Oct 1997 16:39:51 -0500  
Subject: Re: Questions for Abductees

The Duke of Mendoza presents his compliments.

>From: Greg Sandow <gsandow@prodigy.net>  
>To: "'UFO UpDates - Toronto'" <updates@globalserve.net>  
>Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: Questions for Abductees  
>Date: Mon, 27 Oct 1997 17:43:42 -0500

>And so here, Peter, there's a wonderful hidden assumption in your  
>argument. You talk about the hypotheses we'd have to accept to  
>make the ETH viable. One of them is an extremely basic point --  
>that life exists elsewhere, something that, as yet, has not been  
>conclusively demonstrated. Thus, you argue, one makes an  
>intellectual leap in concluding that UFO sightings can be  
>attributed to visitors from beyond. But, Peter, that's only true  
>if we tacitly assume that life should be presumed not to exist  
>until it's been found.

Greg, you are awfully good at rootling under the elaborately  
(some might say extravagantly) patterned Persian carpet of my  
thoughts and finding little heaps of dust that you think I have  
swept there and that you label "hidden assumptions". There is, I  
assure you, no such tacit assumption in what I say or think, nor  
is it necessary. You may presume alien life to exist and still an  
ET origin for any given UFO sighting will remain a long way down  
the list of possible explanations to be eliminated before  
fastening on it.

We \*know\* telephones, faulty electrical connexions, the CIA and  
phone tapping technology (and the will to use it) exist. When I  
speak to the Sasquatch of San Antone on the phone there are  
frequent crackles on the line and the sound breaks up from his  
end. What causes this? Do we immediately assume the CIA is  
listening in, or do we first investigate the possibility of a  
slight technical hitch with the Beast of the Olmos Basin's kit?  
How many hurdles does the CIA solution have to jump - including  
"Why the CIA and not the FBI?" and "Why are they bugging Dennis  
with old & noisy equipment?" - before we decide they're the  
culprits? Likewise with terrestrial vs ET explanations for  
UFOs - even if we \*knew\* ET was scuffling around out there.

>Why should we assume that? As I said earlier, we can study  
>perception, and come up with at least rough estimates of how  
>often people misperceive things. So how can you come up with a  
>rough estimate of the likelihood of alien visits? You can't.

No of course you can't, but then you'd be daft to try to conflate  
two different sets of reasoning & data like this. You're heading  
straight for a false syllogism - and a false \*straw\* syllogism to

boot. What the data on misperceptions tells you is that about 95% of UFOs can be translated into IFOs or even NonFOs. That alone by the usual scientific rule of thumb ( $p=0.05$ ) would be enough to say the remainder is acceptable noise. If you then proceed on the basis that the remaining 5% of perceived objects is not noise, you move away from the question of (mis)perception and into another realm of data and argument. For example you may want to point out that it doesn't automatically follow that a genuine UFO is ipso facto an ET UFO.

[snip]

>Somebody else  
>could just as reasonably -- or, really, just as unreasonably --  
>assume that alien visits are extremely likely, and therefore  
>invoke Occam's Razor to suggest that UFO sightings are caused by  
>aliens. The reasoning is equally silly on both sides, and equally  
>prejudiced.

This is crackers and confused, but it's possible that a lack of clarity on my part, in the first place, has contributed to that. Occam's razor is to do with the number of assumptions, hypotheses, entities, what you will, required to explain a given phenomenon. Whether \*or not\* ET is out there, you multiply hypotheses inevitably and inexorably if you want to argue that even one of all the teeming millions of genuinely UFOs reported is ET. The likelihood of there being any ETs at all is a separate discussion, but it is, of course, an arm of a pincer movement. This doesn't crack or annihilate the ETH, but it puts it under enormous pressure - pressure it does not even remotely receive from the average UFO buff or even some top-of-the-heap UFO buffs whom we all know and love.

I have yet to perceive this circle you keep on about. But then you seem to think too that we are dealing with "a complete unknown" when we're not (see Mike Davies, PLEASE).

>[more snip]

>Davies' reply was amazing. He modestly  
>noted that future science will, of course, invalidate many  
>assumptions we now hold dear, but that, nevertheless, it would  
>not be "science" to abandon these assumptions in our present  
>thinking!

What else could he possibly have said? All this means is that a scientist can work only with the materials to hand. Or: as far as we know, hyperspace drives (etc) are fantasy. Davies is merely stating the blindingly obvious. I might point out in passing that a wormhole, at least, doesn't violate what we understand to be the laws of nature, but are (for now) prohibitively expensive to create from scratch. And speaking for myself, should I have the misfortune to live a thousand years, I'd be no more surprised to find that  $c$  really is  $c$  at the end of that time than I would to find a teleportation booth on every street corner. Similarly, much as I should also like one day to exploit the erotic potential of a domestic anti-gravity machine, for the time being I'll just have to make do with the trusty herring barrel. I could be persuaded to swap it for a vat of live eels in molasses, though, if anyone's got one going.

As ever, best wishes, Greg  
Polygamy D. Morepork  
Star Gazer

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