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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Nua Blather: Negative Capability

From: Dave Walsh <[dave@nua.ie](mailto:dave@nua.ie)>  
Date: Fri, 31 Jul 1998 16:22:19 +0100  
Fwd Date: Fri, 31 Jul 1998 23:55:18 -0400  
Subject: Nua Blather: Negative Capability

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NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER NUA BLATHER  
Weekly free email of Dogma Destruction,  
Fortean and High Weirdness

By Daev Walsh Email: [blather@nua.ie](mailto:blather@nua.ie)  
Web: <http://www.nua.ie/blather/>

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July 31 1998 Published By: Nua Limited Vol 2. No. 12  
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NEGATIVE CAPABILITY

#### EXPLAINING THE Z

Following Blather's blabbers about the mysterious July 10th \*Z\* in the sky (<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives2/issue2noll.html>), a cornucopia of diverse explanatory theories have reached HQ.

'There never was an explanation which didn't itself need to be explained.' - Charles Fort

Dr Carl Bradbury at the Atmospheric Physics Department at Manchester Institute of Science and Technology was in touch, and while he didn't himself witness the 'Mark of Zorro' he does have a theory -- and only a theory, mind -- to explain them: Mesospheric clouds.

'Mesospheric clouds around 83km [52 miles] (altitude take the form of either Polar Mesospheric Clouds (PMC) or Noctilucent Clouds (NLC), which can be observed during the summer in the latitude range 50-70N in the twilight arc of the Earth's shadow. These clouds are known to be comprised of water-ice crystals which form at the Mesopause (the top of the mesosphere) as a result of the extremely cold temperatures in that region. Usually this water reaches the mesosphere during the summer through the upward movement of solar heated air from the stratosphere over the poles. However, it is now thought by some that cometary fragments containing water are constantly entering the Earth's atmosphere, where they vaporise in the upper atmosphere (although there is still a big argument over this one). If the conditions were just right (clear sky, a substantial cometary fragment, and the right size of water droplet forming) it is possible that a vapour trail could appear as a thin noctilucent cloud. As you said yourself, such a trail would then be shifted by atmospheric circulation and form the letter Z.

'Of course, all this depends solely upon the time of the sighting. If

it occurred more than an hour after sunset it wouldn't be a noctilucent cloud as the cloud would be in the Earth's shadow. In which case its back to the drawing board.'

He later added:

'I'd like to stress that it's only a theory. Noctilucent clouds and Polar Mesospheric clouds are established phenomena, although you cannot see the former because the frozen cloud droplets are too small. There is still a bone of contention over the existence of a constant hail of cometary fragments - some scientists have attributed black spots and streaks in infra-red satellite images to the resulting water vapour trails (I had a reference here, but can't find it, sorry). I find it surprising that some people will not admit the possibility of such a phenomena, when we know that this is exactly the process by which the Earth gained all its water in the first place. I'm still a bit worried about the time though, 10:30 is still quite a long time after sun set. Although, thinking about it, at the equinoxes the sun takes 12 hours to cover the 180 degrees of sky. If we use the civil definition of "night" as beginning when the sun sinks 6 degrees below the horizon, then it will take 24 minutes to cover those 6 degrees. There is still an amount of twilight left even after this official time, so I dare say we could extend the period of twilight in the west for up to almost an hour. Ok, I've convinced myself. It is possible.

'Sorry about my reticence to commit myself fully to the hypothesis, but as a Fortean I feel it is my duty not to do so!'

David Moore from Astronomy Ireland was also in touch with Blather (<http://ireland.iol.ie/~ai/>). He did see the formation, and reckoned it was a "?" shape. Several of AI's members phoned in to report meteor sightings.

#### RUMOUR MILL

A little bird emailed Blather during the week with some seemingly well founded rumours. I shall refrain from identifying the avian informer for now, but the tale originates from an acquaintance who works at the Belfast docks. Quite recently, he was indulging in an after work drink with his friends, when a conversation was struck up about UFOs. Some of his fellow drinkers told of how a certain ufologist -- mentioned perhaps all too regularly in this column (he's even mentioned elsewhere in this issue) -- managed to sneak on board a US Navy Vessel with an unidentified accomplice. When stopped and challenged he told them his name and that he was "Ireland's Most Respected Ufologist", and that he was there because there 'might be something of interest to him on board'. The US Navy were quite \*amused\*, enough to keep "Ireland's Most Respected Ufologist" in the brig overnight. Looks like The Irish Independent article of Saturday July 11th has gone to his head. Of course, this is all hearsay and rumour, and Blather wouldn't claim any of it to be true. . . .

Another Blather co-conspirator wonders if 'can we look forward to ICUFOS storming Area 51? Burgling the Pentagon? Graham Birdsall, Tony Dodd and Tim Good in a Ninja assault on Whitehall? Cool...!'

#### GIVE AND TAKE

In \*On the Boyle\*, we quoted from bOING bOING magazine:

'\*The Sceptical Believer\* reckons that "despite his lisp, Greer is a charismatic, powerfully articulate man, probably one of the best public speakers I've ever heard. And I can definitely say that he's probably the best damn liar I ever heard and this possibly makes him, despite his politically correct trappings, the most dangerous of all UFO cult leaders."  
(<http://www.nua.ie/blather/archives2/issue2no10.html>)

And The Irish Independent:

'When Doherty asks about "alien abductions that involve experiments and coercive sex", Ansbros counters with "You get back what you put out..."'

The every enigmatic Brother Blue, B:.B:. of the Brotherhood of Galactic Science got in touch to tell us that

'One of our young Initiates -- upon reading these two Profound Sayings IN THE SAME ISSUE impetuously asked us, "So does that mean

if Doc Stevie gets oneathem strange probes shoved up his butt, he must've been putting out bullshit?"

'We scolded him severely, of course.'

OCCASIONAL QUOTE OF THE WEEK

'Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.'

- Poet John Keats, letter to George and Thomas Keats, 21 December 1817

NOTE

This Blatherskite will be unavailable for comment until August 20th, as he will be off in Norway on the GUST Expedition (<http://www.bahnhof.se/~wizard/gust/>). How and ever, Blather shall arrive in everyone's mailbox as usual. Please direct all technical queries (until August 20th) to [paul@nua.ie](mailto:paul@nua.ie)

Dave (daev) Walsh  
Friday, 31st July 1998

Feedback and comments to <[blather@nua.ie](mailto:blather@nua.ie)>

Have your say: <http://www.nua.ie/blather/blabber>

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MORE:  
<http://www.nua.ie/whatsnew/media/local3.html>

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Mary Gorman: <mailto:mary@nua.ie>  
Niall Swan: <mailto:nswan@nua.ie>

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