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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs

From: John Rimmer <[johnr@magonia.demon.co.uk](mailto:johnr@magonia.demon.co.uk)>  
Date: Mon, 8 Jun 1998 11:47:57 +0100  
Fwd Date: Mon, 08 Jun 1998 21:40:33 -0400  
Subject: Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs

>From: "Greg Sandow" <[gsandow@prodigy.net](mailto:gsandow@prodigy.net)>  
>To: "'UFO UpDates - Toronto'" <[updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)>  
>Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs  
>Date: Sat, 6 Jun 1998 18:45:41 -0400

>Anyhow, this IS an interesting line of thought. Rather than toss  
>out combative bon mots (John Rimmer, this means you),

Wow, bon mots, that must be the result of being an English major! Sorry to disappoint Jerry Clark, who always uses this against me, but I'm \*not\* an English major, I'm not any sort of major (or colonel, for that matter). In the North of England tradition of gritty realism I was educated at the School of Hard-Knocks and the University of Life!

>why don't  
>we roll up our sleeves and -- following Rob's very helpful lead  
>-- specify what testable predictions each UFO hypothesis might  
>suggest?

Quite right. The problem with the ETH is that it is impossible to formulate a testable hypothesis and make predictions about it, for two reasons. Firstly, it is not really a hypothesis at all. To be able to test it we would need at least some idea of what the aliens are, and what they can and cannot do. And secondly there is no way of \*disproving\* it, which is essential for any scientific prediction.

Saying of the UFO phenomenon "it's aliens", is no more scientific than saying "it's demons" or "it's magic" or "it's the tooth-fairy". As we have no idea what extraterrestrials are, or what they can or cannot do, they can be used to "explain" absolutely anything:

- \* Aliens behave irrationally - well they would do wouldn't they, they're aliens.
- \* Aliens behave rationally - just proves they're scientific space explorers, boldly going...
- \* Aliens abduct people through solid walls - they're thousands of years ahead of us technologically and have absolute control over space, time and matter.
- \* Alien space craft keep crashing - well nobody's perfect!

I have been asking ETH proponents to come up with one case which they would stand up as evidence for ET intervention on earth.

They seem reluctant to do this, and in a way it wouldn't matter if they did. Because if any one case is explained conventionally there is always another which can be pulled out until eventually they arrive at one where the documentation is inaccessible or incomplete, and it's impossible to come to any conclusion about it. This then becomes part of the "vast weight of evidence amassed over fifty years", and the whole thing begins again.

So maybe I should stop banging my head against a brick wall trying to get ETH proponents to come up with the legendary "one good case" and ask instead, how can anyone \*disprove\* the ETH? That really is what determines whether its a scientific hypothesis or a load of armwaving.

You ask about predictions for other hypotheses. Well I think as far as the Psychosocial Hypothesis is concerned one has already been made, and is in the process of being proven.

If the PH is valid it implies that the UFO is most widespread in countries which share social and economic conditions, and have similar cultural values. As the UFO phenomenon seems most widespread in the USA we would expect it to be experienced most often in similar societies. This does seem to be the case. The countries with the greatest number of UFO reports, and public interest in ufology, besides the USA are either those which share its cultural and social background, e.g. the UK, Western Europe, Canada; or those which have wide exposure to US cultural and social values, e.g. Central and South America (and no, Jerry, this isn't some sort of Ameriphobia, I actually quite \*like\* most American social and cultural values).

We would expect the UFO phenomena to be least widespread in those societies which either do not share this social background, or are actually hostile to it, e.g. the Islamic countries, most of Africa, Asia (except Japan), and this is indeed the case. This is not, of course, to say that no UFO reports at all come from those countries.

We predicted that with the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the increasing penetration of western (predominantly US) culture into the former Soviet Bloc countries, we would see a rise in the level of UFO-related activity in those countries, and this does seem to be happening. Hungary, which even before 1989 was most open to the West, has developed its own crop-circle culture. We are beginning to see more reports and film from the Czech Republic for example, and elsewhere. And this is not simply a factor of the freeing of press and other media in those countries - even in the Communist era there seemed to be no serious block to reports coming out of Eastern Europe. In the Communist era the Eastern European country which seemed to have the most UFO reports was Romania, which at the time was seen as breaking from the Soviet Bloc.

Even within the US and Western Europe we see major differences in the way the UFO phenomenon manifests itself, which would not be the case if it was caused by a single, i.e. extraterrestrial, source. Abductions are very few and far between on Continental Europe, more widespread in the UK, but nothing like as many per head of population as in the USA. Even our aliens are different, with fewer Greys and more Nordics (and try and tell me there's no racial element involved in that!). Even the postings on these Updates demonstrate the cultural differences, with British people seldom if ever commenting on Roswell, MJ12, Cydonia, etc, tending to be more interested in flying triangles, which you guys seem to have dropped a while ago!

I'll tell you what would disprove the Psychosocial Hypothesis: a decent sized UFO wave, with abductions, in North Africa or the Middle East, within the next few years. When that happens I'll start watching the skies!

Good Hunting

--

John Rimmer

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