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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs

From: **Geoff Price** <[Geoff@CalibanMW.com](mailto:Geoff@CalibanMW.com)>  
Date: Wed, 10 Jun 1998 17:56:59 -0700  
Fwd Date: Thu, 11 Jun 1998 20:37:07 -0400  
Subject: Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs

>From: [RobIrving@aol.com](mailto:RobIrving@aol.com)  
>Date: Mon, 8 Jun 1998 23:40:29 EDT  
>To: [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
>Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Occam's Razor and UFOs

[...]

>Off the cuff... responsible ufology would be to cast a suspicious  
>eye on populist ufology, to perhaps create some distance from it.

To my eyes, responsible "ufologists" routinely do more than cast  
one suspiciously, they positively roll them with some frequency.

Yet it never seems to bze enough. I find, in discussion, that  
when pressed for specific points of criticism UFO skeptics often  
return to the point that UFO proponents "fail to distance  
themselves" from the looneys -- "if you purged the kooks and  
nuts you'd get more respect" etc etc. Honestly now, how many  
times have all of us -- even those of you repeating it now --  
heard this refrain?

It always becomes an issue of practicality to me. I assume  
things are similar in the UK, but certainly here in the US there  
are considerable protections in place that prevent, say, a  
responsible ufologist from spontaneously shutting down the Art  
Bell program on the grounds that it reflects poorly on a topic  
in which the ufologist might have a more sober interest.

I can imagine some end-runs around these regrettable legal  
protections -- mail bombs, dark-tinted Subarus and mysterious  
disappearances, etc. -- but my gut feeling is that such things  
would only fuel some of the ET cover-up paranoia out there.

Other ideas?

>Then you'd have to get used to being classified a sceptic, with a  
>'k', as opposed to a believer, and to enjoy many idle hours,  
>days, months, years, even decades in Rimmer's case, educating  
>those who never seem able to grasp the full concept of  
>scepticism.

One can only slack-jawedly admire such heroic efforts of  
advocacy in the face of the widespread and American-spawned  
collapse of classical Western rationalism.

>> Where does "populist" ufology fit in what I was talking about?

>Maybe I've been mixing with the wrong company, but I referred to  
>the loudest, the ones with the boldest claims, those that reach  
>the biggest audience, who create the mythologies that you say  
>could prove so beneficial to science in the long run.

>Like it or not, rather like the apathetic downtrodden, all the  
>time no mutually agreed standard of evidence exists you are stuck  
>with the likes of Hessemann, Greer, Simms and Leir, etc., as  
>representing the ETH, as much as anyone.

Such people never even use the term "ETH", in my experience.  
They speak of ET reality, ET cover-ups, and alien implants. It  
seems frankly bizarre and quite arbitrary to declare them the  
representatives of the ETH. Some clearer use of terminology  
might help here.

[...]

>> In any case, if Hynek and McDonald couldn't pull  
>> the scientific community into the debate, what luck are  
>> scientific ufologists now likely to have?)

>With sufficient and clearly presented evidence I can't see much  
>of a problem. What exactly is the problem, in your opinion? I  
>personally don't accept the line that scientists are too worried  
>about reputation to involve themselves in ufology - that argument  
>doesn't hold water.

Agreed.

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