

"Humanity is now too clever to survive without wisdom."

–Ernst F. Schumacher, statistician and economist

1. UFO RESEARCH: HOW NUTS AND BOLTS GET IN THE WAY OF REALITY

Although the question of life beyond our planet has long engaged science, serious researchers do not usually refer to anything more specific than ‘extraterrestrial life’, to avoid the impression they expect to find much more than traces of micro-organisms. So, when the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in April 2020 published a roundup of the latest scientific findings in the search for life outside Earth, its title revealed more than the modest volume suggests at first sight.

In order to appreciate this revelation, it must be remembered that the first newspaper report of a man claiming to have met visitors from space appeared on 24 November 1952 in the *Phoenix Gazette* (Arizona), with many more such reports in the years that followed – in America and the rest of the world. Of course, these stories were soon debunked and while their originators enjoyed their moment of fame, they have since been relegated to the fringes of Ufology by those who knew how to conduct proper research based on verifiable data.

However, without the accounts of the ‘contactees’ of

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the 1950s the notion of human-like visitors from space stepping out of their craft and contacting people on Earth would probably not have been normalised or popularised to the extent that, 68 years of derision and ridicule later, an MIT publication on such an elusive phenomenon as life outside Earth would be unapologetically titled *Extraterrestrials*.

To be sure, as far as flying saucers or UFOs are concerned, “what people sometimes don’t get about science is that we often have phenomena that remain unexplained,” according to MIT astrophysicist Sara Seager in the *New York Times* in 2017.¹ Yet, it is precisely this attitude towards the phenomenon that was challenged about a decade earlier by two professors citing the “production of (un) knowledge about UFOs”, mostly conducted for the purpose of “ignoring UFOs, constituting them as objects only of ridicule and scorn”. In their 2008 paper ‘Sovereignty and the UFO’, International Security professor Alexander Wendt and Political Science professor Raymond Duvall went so far as to conclude there is “a prohibition in the authoritative public sphere on taking UFOs seriously, or ‘thou shalt not try very hard to find out what UFOs are’.”² The biggest mystery, according to their paper, is why both scientists and governments consider UFOs “not an ‘object’ at all, but a *non-object*, something not just unidentified but unseen and thus ignored”.

They were not the first to criticize government efforts. The infamous Project Blue Book was pointedly called “The Society for the Explanation of the Uninvestigated”³ when the US Air Force, after investigating over 12,000 reports of UFO sightings between 1952 and 1969, concluded that

there was no evidence that these represented anything out of the ordinary, let alone that they might be extraterrestrial craft. Referring to the methods used, astronomer J. Allan Hynek, who acted as a scientific advisor to the project, called one of its members “the master of the possible: possible balloon, possible aircraft, possible birds, which then became, by his own hand (and I argued with him violently at times) the probable”⁴, meaning that other avenues of research were deliberately left unexplored.

A string of recent newspaper reports, however, seems to indicate that the time of blanket government denial may finally have come to an end. For instance, in December 2017 the *New York Times* revealed that, despite repeated denial of any official interest in UFOs, the US Department of Defense had conducted a cataloguing of sightings recorded by military pilots from 2007 until 2012, when government funding dried up, as part of the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP).⁵

The *Times* report signalled a series of unusual official ‘leaks’ and reports that indicate a growing acknowledgement of government interest in what are now referred to as ‘unidentified aerial phenomena’, or UAPs, beginning in August 2017 with the declassification by the US Department of Defense of videos of UAP encounters by US Navy fighter jets based on the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, off the coast of San Diego, that were recorded between 2004 and 2014. And in May 2019, US Navy pilots told the *Times* that from the summer of 2014 until March 2015 they had reported observing objects, this time on the US east coast, that had no visible engine or infrared exhaust plumes and could reach altitudes of 10,000

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metres, and hypersonic speeds. Pilots Lt. Ryan Graves and Lt. Danny Accoin said they and three other Navy pilots first spotted the anomalous objects after their outdated radar system had been upgraded, but since 2014 they began to see the objects with the naked eye and recorded them on video with onboard cameras.⁶

Even more remarkable is the account of Joe Montaldo, who earned three degrees in Advanced Electronics and Avionics during his time in the US Navy. In a recent interview with a guest on the *UFO Undercover* podcast that he hosts, Mr Montaldo stated that the sighting from 2014 reminded him of something he had seen while he was stationed on the USS Nimitz himself. “We used to see these things that would come by the carriers, and they got good footage of these. They called them flat discs... They would come and would actually fly deck level, zip by, zip by. (...) And they got one of them that actually hovered on the edge, pretty sure it sat down on the landing, I mean the take-off end of the carrier. And I know they got video footage of it.”⁷

In response to a Freedom of Information Act inquiry the US Navy in September 2019 for the first time confirmed that it “considers the phenomena contained/depicted in those 3 [declassified] videos as unidentified”⁸ and on 27 April 2020 the Pentagon officially released the three videos that had been leaked since 2007.⁹ On 23 July 2020 the *Times* revealed that the programme, renamed as Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force, was continued after 2012 as part of the Office of Naval Intelligence¹⁰ and on 14 August CNN reported that, according to two defence officials, the Pentagon “is

forming a new task force to investigate UFOs that have been observed by US military aircraft”.¹¹

In their paper professors Wendt and Duvall, who state explicitly they do not presuppose an extraterrestrial origin of UFOs, say “our puzzle is not the familiar question of ufology, ‘What are UFOs?’ but, ‘Why are they dismissed by the authorities?’ Why is human ignorance not only unacknowledged, but so emphatically denied? In short, why a *taboo*?” They assert: “The question today is not ‘Are UFOs ETs?’ but ‘Is there enough evidence they *might* be to warrant systematic study?’ By demanding proof of ETs first, skeptics foreclose the question altogether.”¹²

Indeed, this persistent lack of transparency regarding the reality of unidentified objects or extraterrestrial visitors continued for many decades, with the likely ulterior motive of influencing the public’s perception of their true nature through controlled leaking of sparse information, probably mixed with misinformation. But the fact that the US Navy now allows sightings to be discussed, declassified the videos, and acknowledged that it does investigate sightings by military personnel, has resulted in a subject that was long considered too ‘fringe’ now filling the columns of the *New York Times* and *The Washington Post* with increasing regularity.

Another development that indicates the UFO taboo may finally be broken is the founding of the Five Continents UFO Forum, meant to bring about UFO disclosure through the United Nations. An earlier attempt in 1978 by then-Prime Minister of Grenada Eric Gairy to put the subject of UFOs on the UN’s agenda was abandoned after the Prime Minister had been overthrown

in a coup.¹³ The formation of the new international UFO research organisation was announced at a meeting of the Chinese UFO Association (CUA) in Chongqing at the weekend of 30 July 2018. The Five Continents Forum's preliminary meeting was held from 16-17 October 2018 at the Cosmos Hotel in Moscow and was reportedly funded by the Chinese government, with scholars and experts from 35 countries across five continents attending to discuss advancements in aeronautics, astronautics and extraterrestrial fields. The Forum's headquarters will be based in Heze City, in Shandong Province.¹⁴

As government and scientific research into unidentified aerial phenomena and extraterrestrial life is moving from denial towards a growing willingness to finally explore possibilities and hypotheses, there is a steady rise in 'serious' research in these areas.

On the one hand, we see research that focuses exclusively on what the current state of material science and technology allows for, such as summarized in the MIT book *Extraterrestrials*. Here, science journalist Wade Rouse provides an overview of "the question itself, why it remains unanswered, and how scientists are trying to answer it". For instance, he describes an updated version of the Drake Equation, to estimate the number of potential inhabited worlds in the Milky Way, not based on the likely number of communicative civilizations but rather on the list of potential detectable biosignature chemicals in the atmospheres of inhabited worlds.¹⁵

In a related effort, whose findings were reported in *The Astrophysical Journal* of 15 June 2020, scientists

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at the University of Nottingham found that there should be at least 36 Communicating Extra-Terrestrial Intelligent (CETI) civilizations within our galaxy, based on assumptions that derive from “the one situation in which intelligent, communicative life is known to exist – on our own planet”. Using “galactic star formation histories, metallicity distributions, and the likelihood of stars hosting Earth-like planets in their habitable zones, under specific assumptions which we describe as the Astrobiological Copernican Weak and Strong conditions”, the researchers conclude that the nearest incidence of intelligent civilizations far surpasses “our ability to detect it for the foreseeable future, and making interstellar communication impossible”.¹⁶

Unsurprisingly, a comprehensive search of a patch of the Southern sky by astronomers working at the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR) in Australia, equally yielded “not even a hint of alien technology” at low radio frequencies, according to a report on the *ScienceAlert* website in September 2020. One of the researchers concluded: “Since we can’t really assume how possible alien civilisations might utilise technology, we need to search in many different ways.”¹⁷

According to SETI Institute’s Jill Tarter, whose work was portrayed by Jodie Foster’s character in the film *Contact* (1997), a common misconception is that the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) and UFOs are in any way related. She says: “SETI uses the tools of the astronomer to attempt to find evidence of somebody else’s technology coming from a great distance. If we ever claim detection of a signal, we will provide evidence and

data that can be independently confirmed. UFOs – none of the above.”¹⁸

Notwithstanding Dr Tarter’s dismissal, there has been notable movement on the science front. Although there is no direct physical evidence for the extraterrestrial hypothesis for the UFO phenomenon, professors Wendt and Duvall maintain, “there is considerable *indirect* physical evidence for it, in the form of UFO anomalies that lack apparent conventional explanations – and for which ETs are therefore one possibility. (...) Such anomalies cannot be dismissed simply because they are only indirect evidence for ETs, since science relies heavily on such evidence, as in the recent discovery of over 300 extra-solar planets (and counting). For if UFO anomalies are not potentially ETs, what else are they?”¹⁹

In fact, in a paper from 2018 Dr Silvano Colombano at the NASA Ames Research Center, a SETI Institute partner, says: “It seems to me that SETI has ignored (at least officially) the potential relevance of UFO phenomena for three reasons: (1) The assumption of extremely low likelihood of interstellar travel, (2) The very high likelihood of hoaxes, mistaken perceptions or even psychotic events in UFO phenomena, and (3) The general avoidance of the subject by the scientific community.” In response, Dr Colombano proposes a more “aggressive” approach to the search for extraterrestrial life. Writing about advanced civilizations he says that, given that our current scientific methodologies have developed over only the last 500 years or so, “we might have a real problem in predicting technological evolution even for the next thousand years, let alone 6 million times that amount!”

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Nevertheless, he suggests, we should consider the UFO phenomenon worthy of study in the context of a system with very low signal-to-noise ratio, “with the possibility of challenging some of our assumptions and pointing to new possibilities for communication and discovery”.²⁰ Our challenge, then, is to establish a system with the highest possible signal-to-noise ratio, by collecting evidence from as wide a range of relevant disciplines that provide mutual corroboration.

The answer to the question “what are they?” – and subsidiary questions like “how fast did it go?”, “how large was it?”, “what is it made of?” and such more – are considered essential by ‘serious’ researchers to come to an acceptable understanding of, or explanation for, the UFO phenomenon. Faced with the obviously out-of-this-world capabilities of many sighted objects these are certainly valid questions whose answers would fascinate anyone with an interest in advanced technologies. Yet, enquiring into the physical aspects of a phenomenon that has proven so elusive, despite its persistence in the face of our advancing scientific methods, is itself based on assumptions that are challenged by a growing number of scientists.

In the Galileo Commission Report (2019) Dr Harald Walach provides an incisive analysis in this respect. He points out that “the basic assumption of modern science is that matter is the most fundamental entity in the Universe”²¹, and everything we see and experience is a product of matter. But the deeper physicists are able to see into the nature of matter, Dr Walach shows, the less material their findings get, and the more confirmation

they find of what previously were esoteric notions of reality. Matter turns out to be not as fundamental as the predominant scientific view would have us believe. When one claims, he says, that the universe originated when “matter emerged spontaneously out of an incredibly dense energy, which itself emerged out of ... immaterial informational blueprints” the very notion of ‘blueprints’ implies a deeper structure and level of reality from which the ‘blueprints’ originate.

He then proceeds to present evidence for his argument that consciousness does not emerge from a particularly fortunate amalgam of material particles, and is not dependent on brain activity, but plays its own causal role in the manifestation of what we call reality.²² Dr Walach provides various examples, like for instance what is known as Schrödinger’s entanglement theory, which says that if you act on a particle here, the action has an instant effect on a particle far away. Einstein referred to this effect as ‘spooky action at a distance’. Physicists have been able to test this theory, which is now accepted as reality.²³

In fact, according to professor of Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University David Tong in a talk in February 2017, “the very best theories we have of physics don’t rely on particles at all. (...) The fundamental building blocks of nature are fluid-like substances which are spread throughout the entire universe and ripple in strange and interesting ways. That’s the fundamental reality in which we live.”²⁴

Let us acknowledge here that, long predating the scientific discovery that there is no such thing as an ultimate building block of matter, it was Helena Petrovna

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Blavatsky who wrote in 1888: “It is on the doctrine of the illusive nature of matter, and the infinite divisibility of the atom, that the whole science of Occultism is built.”²⁵ With her work for the Theosophical Society, of which she was a co-founder, Mme Blavatsky laid the foundation for the reinstatement of the Ageless Wisdom teaching in modern times.

So the particles that physics considers the building blocks of life aren't really particles at all. They are waves in a sea of possibilities that are tied up in small bundles of energy. These discrete bundles, or ‘quanta’, are currently the smallest that our science is able to detect; how they behave, will behave or could behave belongs to the field of quantum mechanics, quantum physics, and quantum theory. In his recent book *The Intelligence of the Cosmos* professor Ervin Laszlo summarizes the latest findings in this regard: “The universe, as we now know, is not a domain of matter moving in passive space and indifferently flowing time; it is a sea of coherent vibrations.”²⁶

Another significant note to be made here is that in 1932 a teacher of metaphysics wrote in strikingly similar terms: “I am in the invisible ocean of vibrations or consciousness.” And later: “We must remember that consciousness is the sea of life within which all forms are living, regardless of what they may be.”²⁷ This teacher was George Adamski, the Polish American who was the first to speak out about his contact with a visitor from space in November 1952 (see page 1) and who became the subject of the most enduring character assassination attempt as a result.²⁸

According to Dr Walach, “The viability of materialism as a background philosophy of science is contingent

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on the success of a materialist theory of mind and consciousness.”²⁹ And consciousness, as his report shows, “is categorically different from all material systems we know”³⁰, which means that, while lacking fundamental particles to experiment with, the deeper ‘structure’ and ‘reality’ – the web of consciousness in which we are innately connected with everything – for now can only be accessed by humans through experience. In other words, the materialist scientific view is too limited to explain consciousness, and therefore reality.

Even in 1956 US contactee Howard Menger was told by a visitor from space whom he referred to as a “profound space teacher” that, although science is necessary for making progress in all aspects of life, it is now “actually limiting itself, and the progress of your populace, by sanctioning that which it is able to prove only through objective reality, rather than subjective reality as such, related to truth. A scientist observes visually in the course of a particular experiment an occurrence which did take place before his eyes, but, because he did not know how or why it happened, he rejects it, and it is not ‘scientific’ fact until he find the answer within the scope of accepted scientific theory.”³¹

What if consciousness is not some peculiar brain activity, but is instead a quality inherent in all matter, asks philosopher Philip Goff in an interview with *Scientific American*: “Yes, physical science has been incredibly successful. But it’s been successful precisely because it was designed to exclude consciousness. If Galileo were to time travel to the present day and hear about this problem of explaining consciousness in the terms of physical science,

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he'd say, 'Of course, you can't do that. I designed physical science to deal with *quantities*, not *qualities*.' ”³²

Even Isaac Newton, whose *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* is often cited as the source of the mechanistic view of the solar system, in its final paragraph referred to “something concerning a certain most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies”, which causes particles to be attracted or repelled to make up all the various discrete forms. “But these are things that cannot be explained in few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments which is required to an accurate determination and demonstration of the laws by which this electric and elastic spirit operates.”³³

In other words, we need alternative ways of approaching and understanding reality than merely reducing it to its material components for analysis. And this is precisely where the current approach summarized by Dr Roush in his survey *Extraterrestrials* falls short – it leaves out an aspect of reality that the best minds in quantum science say is more fundamental than our material reality.

Dr Colombano already suggested we look in more directions in our search for extraterrestrial life, by engaging physicists in “speculative physics”, technologists in futuristic exploration of how technology might evolve, and sociologists in speculation about what kinds of societies we might expect from such developments.³⁴

Just looking at the latest findings from science itself, life seems rather more abundant than it is generally given credit for. For instance, based on recent research astrobiologists have shown that “if the origin of life can occur rather easily, we should live in a cosmic zoo, as the

innovations necessary to lead to complex life will occur with high probability given sufficient time and habitat. On the other hand, if the origin of life is rare, then we might live in a rather empty universe.”³⁵

Separate findings indicate that life is more likely the rule than the exception in the universe. 3.7 Billion-year-old fossils of microorganisms indicate that life originated more than four billion years ago in the Hadean eon, before the earliest rocks were formed, while Earth itself only formed 0.9 billion years prior. Dr Abigail Allwood, of NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, concluded: “Give life half an opportunity and it’ll run with it. Our understanding of the nature of life in the Universe is shaped by how long it took for Earth to establish the planetary conditions for life. If life could find a foothold here, and leave such an imprint that vestiges exist even though only a minuscule sliver of metamorphic rock is all that remains from that time, then life is not a fussy, reluctant and unlikely thing.”³⁶

Dr Allwood’s conclusion recently found support in a research paper by David Kipping, assistant professor in Columbia University’s Department of Astronomy, who used a statistical technique to shed light on how complex extraterrestrial life might evolve on other worlds. While he says his analysis cannot provide certainties or guarantees, “the case for a universe teeming with life emerges as the favored bet.”³⁷

As the possibility of extraterrestrial visitors is slowly – ever so slowly – gaining acceptance, scientific evidence supporting the notion that life is not confined to planet Earth seems to be mounting more noticeably. But, as physicist Enrico Fermi’s Paradox states: If probability tells

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us there should be millions of civilizations in the Universe, why haven't we found any of them?

On 17 June 2012, when the International Space Station was passing over the People's Republic of China, a teleconference was set up between China's CCTV (Central China Television) channel and the crew of the Russian segment of the ISS, Gennady Padalka, Sergey Revin and Oleg Kononenko. The cosmonauts communicated with Chinese television viewers and answered numerous questions from the public. Particularly interesting was the discussion on the possibility of meeting extraterrestrial beings, when cosmonaut Padalka replied that "in the Universe humanity cannot be alone, sooner or later we will meet brothers in mind". He also reminded CCTV viewers of the existence of a detailed United Nations instruction in case of first contact.³⁸

Writing about the high expectations of finding life elsewhere in the early days of the space age, George Adamski said: "While we may not be allowed to go into space with a warlike or hostile intent, we will be helped out far enough to see for ourselves that life as we know it exists elsewhere in the system. Let us hope the public is allowed to hear what the first men into outer space report back to earth."³⁹

Although downplayed or derided, the stories of astronauts who have gone on the record about having witnessed unearthly craft are well-known and include the names of Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell⁴⁰, Gemini 5 astronaut Gordon Cooper⁴¹, Mercury 7 astronaut Deke Slayton⁴², and Brian O'Leary, who was one of eleven

candidates for a possible mission to Mars in 1967, and went on to become a respected professor of Physics at Princeton University. Shortly before his passing in 2012 he said in an interview: “There is abundant evidence that we are being contacted. Civilizations have been monitoring us for a very long time and that their appearance is bizarre from any type of traditional materialistic western point of view.”⁴³ Strikingly, a very similar view was shared by former deputy director of the Bulgarian Space Research Institute Lachezar Filipov in 2009, who stated: “Aliens are currently all around us, and are watching us all the time. They are not hostile towards us, rather, they want to help us but we have not grown enough to establish direct contact with them.”⁴⁴ In keeping with the ‘scientific’ taboo on the subject, he was subsequently stripped of his academic positions.

In January 2020 the chorus of pilots and astronauts – professions not known for their susceptibility to figments of the imagination – who have spoken out about their experience with or conviction of the reality of extraterrestrial visitors added another member in Dr Helen Sharman, the first British astronaut in space. In an interview with *The Observer* Dr Sharman said: “Aliens exist, there’s no two ways about it. There are so many billions of stars out there in the universe that there must be all sorts of forms of life. Will they be like you and me, made up of carbon and nitrogen? Maybe not. It’s possible they’re right here right now and we simply can’t see them.”⁴⁵

Regarding the question “If we’re not alone, where are they?” it is interesting that Dr Sharman raises the possibility that “we simply can’t see them”. As I pointed

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out elsewhere, based on its calculations of the mass of the Universe astrophysics itself admits that it doesn't know what more than 90 per cent of the cosmos consists of.⁴⁶ For decades it has hypothesized 'dark matter' and 'dark energy' to explain this 'missing' mass of the Universe. Coincidentally, dark matter was first theorized by Swiss astronomer Fritz Zwicky who worked at the Palomar Observatory and, though sceptical, visited George Adamski at the Palomar Gardens Cafe three times, but publicly ridiculed him.⁴⁷

So what would we find if a broader approach to our search for proof of extraterrestrial life or visitors included sources that have thus far been dismissed by materialist science? As the findings of quantum scientists are finally catching up with the esoteric wisdom teachings, the latter may help fill in the astrophysical knowledge gap.

For example, the teachings tell us that above the solid, liquid and gaseous physical levels of matter that fall within our range of vision, there are four further planes of matter where the subatomic particles consist of light, as they vibrate at higher frequencies than those on the lowest three planes.⁴⁸ And already, mainstream astronomy is edging closer to this esoteric distinction between planes of dense and subtle matter, with findings being reported which "suggest that dark matter is another kind of subatomic particle, possibly forming a parallel universe of 'supersymmetry' filled with supersymmetrical matter that behaves like an invisible mirror-image of ordinary matter."⁴⁹ In fact, if we are ready to look beyond the strictly materialist scientific practices, and look in more directions as advocated by Dr Colombano, tentative

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evidence for the existence of higher planes of (subtle) matter may perhaps already be found in the pioneering work of Wilhelm Reich MD, who discovered what he called 'orgone radiation'; Semyon Kirlian, who developed the technique to photograph human auras; and Rupert Sheldrake PhD, who proposed and experimented with the hypothesis of formative causation, which suggests a kind of memory bank from where Nature retrieves its blueprints for the physical forms of species.

If life does not depend exclusively on carbon-based dense-physical forms to manifest, these findings would make the claims of the 1950s flying saucer contactees that they were contacted by visitors from space seem not so outlandish after all. Indeed, one of the teachers of the wisdom philosophy wrote in the early 1880s: "Our planet (like all those we see) is adapted to the peculiar state of its human stock, that state which enables us to see with our naked eye the sidereal bodies which are co-essential with our terrene plane and substance, just as their respective inhabitants, the Jovians, Martians, and others, can perceive our little world; because our planes of consciousness, differing as they do in degree, but being the same in kind, are on the same layer of differentiated matter..."⁵⁰

Another wisdom teacher, writing in 1925, specified that the etheric planes of matter "are but gradations of physical plane matter of a rarer and more refined kind, but physical nevertheless" and names them, from the highest to the lowest plane, as (1) atomic matter, (2) sub-atomic matter, (3) super-etheric matter, and (4) simply etheric matter. This fourth plane, he says, is the only one that scientists have recognised and investigated.⁵¹

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Therefore, considering that the esoteric wisdom tradition states that life on other planets in our system doesn't precipitate down from these subtle planes of matter onto the dense physical planes as it does at this stage in the evolution of our planet, it wouldn't require a leap of faith to see that visitors could also hail from within our own solar system. Or that, when extraterrestrial craft or visitors allow themselves to be seen by us, they temporarily lower the rate of vibration of their composing elements from the subtle physical into the dense physical, so as to fall within our range of vision. And thus far, this seems to be the only viable response to the Fermi Paradox.

Science, at least the more enlightened variety that is not stuck in the rut of dense-physical reductionism, increasingly indicates that to grasp the reality or the significance of the UFO phenomenon our focus should not be on the technology, but on that of which the technology is a manifestation. So it is only fitting that over the last decade or so another strand of 'serious' research has gained much in stature and visibility, which holds that 'consciousness' is a distinct factor to be included in UFO and extraterrestrial intelligence research.

For her book *American Cosmic* Dr Diana Pasulka, professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina, interviewed well-known and prominent scientists, professionals, and hi-tech entrepreneurs to show that the belief in UFOs is not limited to a fringe audience. She examines the mechanisms that lie behind people's interpretation of unexplainable experiences, based on her contention that "widespread belief in aliens is due to

a number of factors including their ubiquity in modern media like The X-Files...”

Equating people’s experiences with a new belief, she writes: “The infrastructure of technology has spawned new forms of religion and religiosity, and belief in UFOs has emerged as one such new form of religious belief.”⁵² Given the examples and people that she quotes, Dr Pasulka’s understanding of consciousness still seems to have a material foundation, with consciousness emerging from or dependent on technology, for instance when she cites UFO ‘authority’ Jacques Vallee: “Consciousness could be defined as the process by which informational associations are retrieved and traversed.”⁵³

Ignoring the question what, then, would be the *source* of the ‘information’ or the *agent* of the ‘association’, Dr Pasulka unwittingly falls into the old materialist trap, which even a more comprehensive definition of ‘religion’ might have helped her avoid. Instead of merely distinguishing between functional aspects of religion such as rituals and what she calls “the sacred element” in her book⁵⁴, if we abstract the essence from the particulars of the various world religions we find they all share the same three tenets: the cyclical coming or return of a Teacher (Messiah, Second Coming, fifth Buddha, tenth incarnation of Vishnu, twelfth Mahdi) who brings a new revelation about the source (a personal God) and evolution (return to God) of consciousness, which needs to be given expression in the establishment of right human relations (the Golden Rule).⁵⁵

In essence, therefore, religion, stripped of centuries of man-made dogma, is not a belief, but a technique to reconnect (or, in original Latin, *religare*) with the Source of

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life and consciousness. It can be no accident that *yogam*, the Sanskrit root of the word yoga, also means to reconnect. In fact, Margit Mustapa, a little-known contactee from Finland who emigrated to the US in 1947, was told by her contact from space: “Religion means for us a unified process of radioactivity, which is telepathy between man and God.”⁵⁶

While Dr Pasulka does refer to those who claim to have experienced some form of contact with non-humans as ‘contactees’, nowhere does she acknowledge the fact that the notion of extraterrestrials visiting Earth was initially normalized by the abundance of accounts and experiences of contactees around the world in the 1950s.

A major effort with a clear focus on the consciousness aspect of contact was conducted by the Foundation for Research into Extraterrestrial and Extraordinary Experiences (FREE). Co-founded by the late Apollo 14 astronaut Dr Edgar Mitchell, FREE conducted three surveys involving thousands of ‘contact experiencers’ from over 100 countries. The findings from their qualitative and quantitative research were published in the 2018 report *Beyond UFOs: The Science of Consciousness and Contact with Non Human Intelligence*. And although the 780-page FREE report does look into a few of the original contact cases, its focus is almost exclusively on the accounts of later ‘experiencers’.

However, now that consciousness research advances and expands our understanding of reality, George Adamski’s accounts and those of the other 1950s contactees can no longer be dismissed off-hand and should not be ignored. These original accounts of contact became public before the contact narrative was contaminated by

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tales of abduction, mutilation, and other fear-inducing atrocities in order to confuse and frighten the public who showed great interest in the original message of peace and international cooperation in the midst of the Cold War. Therefore, qualitative research and a critical synthesis of the correspondences among these sources provide an indispensable touchstone to scrutinize later claims of contact for possible contamination. This is all the more important given the long-standing confusion in the field since it was infected with misinformation. As I have shown elsewhere, in addition to contact with extraterrestrial visitors, without proper discernment claims of contact could well relate to other phenomena, like astral entities, mediumistic channellings, out-of-body experiences, drug-induced staged experiences, figments of people's overactive imagination, et cetera.⁵⁷

Yet, ignoring the tell-tale characteristics of original contact experiences, FREE's research lumps all these together under the label of contact with "non-human intelligence". But without the necessary discernment they would more aptly be called experiences of non-corporeal or "non-local" consciousness. According to Harald Walach non-locality may be described as "connections between domains of space and time, or between conscious minds across space and time, that do not rely on known signals or occur without signal transfer"⁵⁸, e.g. near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, telepathy, channelling, et cetera, which could involve human, astral, super-human, or extraterrestrial consciousness.

When Dr Walach writes about post-materialist science that "Consciousness has to be taken seriously in its own

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right and not only as a potential emergent of a complex neuronal system”⁵⁹, his evidence-based postulate confirms what Madame Blavatsky wrote almost 150 years prior: “Theosophists (...) are the first to recognize the intrinsic value of science. But when its high priests resolve consciousness into a secretion from the grey matter of the brain, and everything else in Nature into a mode of motion, we protest against the [scientific] doctrine as being unphilosophical, self-contradictory, and simply absurd, from a scientific point of view...”⁶⁰

Physicist David Bohm (1917-1992) was one of the first scientists to predict the non-locality of consciousness or, simply put, the interconnectedness of the Universe. But, in striking coincidence with the fate of the message that the contactees were asked to share with the world, Bohm’s progressive ideas were considered a threat to the scientific establishment who at that time were focused only on the atomic bomb.⁶¹

In the conclusion to the FREE report, the authors write: “A discipline of human endeavor based on research of such personal CEs [contact experiences], which have been largely ignored by the scientific, psychiatric, and parapsychological communities, and by ufology and abduction researchers, may present a new paradigm of human transformation and transcendence which may eventually evolve towards a greater understanding of ourselves in the universe, consciousness, and possibly even reality itself.”⁶²

Being the first to posit the notion of the supremacy of consciousness over matter, and the evolution of consciousness as the drive behind the manifestation of life, however, Blavatsky’s work presents precisely the “new

paradigm of human transformation and transcendence” that Dr Klimo and his fellow authors are anticipating.

And although the FREE researchers rightly note that most researchers have ignored contact experiences, they in turn make the same mistake by ignoring the wisdom teachings, despite Jon Klimo, one of the authors, referencing the work of H.P. Blavatsky, Alice Bailey, and Benjamin Creme in his earlier book *Channeling. Investigations on Receiving Information from Paranormal Sources* (1987). Even if the method by which they received their information isn’t understood, the fact that the basic tenets of their work are finding more and more confirmation in systems science and quantum research sets it apart from mediumistic messages. However, like most academicians, here too Dr Klimo fails to distinguish between mental telepathy – the deliberate, conscious communication between two minds on the mental plane – and the random channeling of astral thoughtforms, thereby foregoing a solid criterion for a useful categorization of the different types of experience in FREE’s research or for filtering out irrelevant data.

Another reason for leaving out the esoteric teachings on consciousness may be that Madame Blavatsky was just as strongly vilified and denounced in her day as were George Adamski and the other contactees of the initial ‘flying saucer’ era. But just as proper scrutiny of the allegations against him clears Adamski of fraud and deception⁶³, so the Society for Psychical Research who labelled Blavatsky a fraud in an 1885 report, retracted their condemnation a full century later.⁶⁴

“Intelligent civilizations would be based on carbon life”

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and “We have not been, and are not being... visited” are just some of the most widely held assumptions that Dr Colombano challenges in his paper. He says: “In the very large amount of ‘noise’ in UFO reporting there may be ‘signals’, however small, that indicate some phenomena that cannot be explained or denied.”⁶⁵ While he does not explicitly mention quantum theory or consciousness studies as directions to include in the search for intelligent extraterrestrial life, the latest research presented here provides ample reason why these should be taken into account.

During a talk in Belgium in May 1963, George Adamski already implied that a broader approach to UFO research was essential, when he said: “All they are doing is reporting sightings. You have a sighting, you report it, they put it out, that’s all. That is not the purpose. We got to do more than that. And so they are not getting anywhere, except confusion; but the truth really is that the officials know a lot more.”⁶⁶ And since governments have kept their knowledge and contacts secret, we should begin by including the information from the contactees to allow a broader perception to be formed, rather than having it obscured by the disinformation that was meant to discredit them.

Filtering out much of the ‘noise’ by looking for corroborations across accounts and from other disciplines, including the wisdom teaching, my previous books show that much may be learned about the reality of extraterrestrial visitors from these accounts of the original contactees.

At the forefront of science, professor Laszlo confirms that nature, the world, or reality is not a construction of discrete bits and pieces of matter that have been put together

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as some mechanism, and that we could take apart and put back together in a different way: “If you look at it in that way you’ll end up by destroying that unity which is their nature. (...) There is this factor in nature, which means that every living, surviving species is somehow built into its environment. (...) only humans, in the scope of the last 100-150 years or so, have managed to be outside of this system, not aligning ourselves in it, or with it, and acting only in view of our own immediate perceived interest and we are compensating for that by technology. But in the process, we are destroying our environment, the natural balances in the environment, and we’re also overloading the system in terms of number and energy and resources, resource claims, and so on.”⁶⁷

Four years later, in June 2020, professor Laszlo’s warning is echoed in a call for urgent action coordinated with the UN’s World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, in the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report *Covid-19: Urgent Call to Protect People and Nature*: “COVID-19 is a devastating wake-up call that humanity’s broken relationship with nature affects not only the wildlife and natural ecosystems whose habitats are being destroyed, but also threatens human health. By continuing to damage natural habitats, humans risk incurring the terrible costs of new zoonotic diseases, as well as increased exposure to other threats such as climate change.”⁶⁸

Like many, Gus Speth, an environmental lawyer and US government advisor under presidents Carter and Clinton, used to think that top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate

change: “I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a cultural and spiritual transformation. And we scientists don’t know how to do that.”⁶⁹

In the announcement for an online lecture for the British Royal Institution on 16 June 2020 astrophysicist Martin Rees unintentionally provides a case in point. He first acknowledges that humanity “has reached a critical moment. Our world is unsettled and rapidly changing, and we face existential risks over the next century” as “the future of humanity is bound to the future of science”. But apparently oblivious to the advances in systems science and quantum research, his talk explored how this future “hinges on how successfully we harness technological advances to address our challenges”⁷⁰, rather than how we base our technological advances on the awareness that life is one and interconnected.

The facts about the impending threats to planet Earth, in whose manifestation humanity is the first stage of individual self-consciousness, more than anything else, should make it clear that the current materialist-based approach to reality has set us on the path of self-destruction, and we urgently need to take a broader view to understand how our world, our lives, our consciousness and our destiny are intricately connected, and therefore depend on correctly relating to each other and our surroundings.

Modern transport, information and communications technology, and scientific discoveries have changed our experience of the physical world to that of an interconnected global community. Our political, economic, financial, and social structures, however, still reflect a worldview based

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on division and competition for territory, power and wealth. This chasm represents the crisis of consciousness that humanity is currently facing, which is reflected in unprecedented levels of inequality and social injustice, globally and domestically, with all the associated dangers of self-destruction. For this reason, George Adamski was told – as were many other contactees in similar terms: “Now that your scientific knowledge has so far outstripped your social and human progress, the gap between *must* be filled with urgent haste.”⁷¹

Historian Arnold Toynbee called this the morality gap: “Technology gives us material power – the greater our material power, the greater our need for the spiritual insight and virtue to use power for good and not for evil. The ‘morality gap’ means that (...) we have never been adequate spiritually for handling our material power. Today it is greater than ever.”⁷²

Moral philosopher Toby Ord thinks humanity “is in its adolescence, and like a teenager that has the physical strength of an adult but lacks foresight and patience, we are a danger to ourselves until we mature.” In his interview with *The Observer* about the Covid-19 crisis, he recommends that “we slow the pace of technological development so as to allow our understanding of its implications to catch up and to build a more advanced moral appreciation of our plight.”⁷³

All things considered, therefore, the proverbial nuts and bolts and how they are put together are only the technological manifestation of a particular level of understanding of the physical world – a particular level

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of consciousness at any given time. The discovery of fire, agriculture, steam engine, rocket science, et cetera are all expressions of humanity's awareness, understanding, and experience of the world we lived in at that time. So, when we limit our search to the 'nuts and bolts', the material or technological aspect of the UFO phenomenon or extraterrestrial life, we approach the subject from the wrong end of the stick, from the effects instead of the cause end of the stick.

Wilbert Smith was a Canadian engineer and contactee, who had earned an M.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering and held several patents, but also had a deep interest in philosophy and religion. In *The New Science*, which he wrote in the final years of his life, he ponders the relationship between reality and awareness (consciousness): "...we do know, or we think that we know, that Reality does exist and we are aware of it. But we do not know how far beyond us the Awareness extends, and we must either postpone this determination pending a better understanding or accept the statements by other entities who are presumably more advanced than we are that Awareness is universal and extends throughout all Reality..." And, "as our understanding increases, we are able to devise ways and means for extending our senses both in range and scope, which in turn leads to better understanding. But we must always remember in thus extending our senses to *distinguish between the language of the observation and its translation into the language of our senses, lest we miss the phenomenon while inspecting its effect.*"⁷⁴ [emphasis added]

In other words, we need to see that understanding life and the world is about *our* understanding of life and

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the world. This consciousness cannot be understood by physical experiments and, as Dr Walach suggests, “the basic intuition of reality itself might actually transcend classical, binary logic”⁷⁵, for which he cites various examples of scientific discoveries that were arrived at through such “radical introspection”. Einstein said of this process: “There comes a time when the mind takes a higher plane of knowledge but can never prove how it got there. All great discoveries have involved such a leap. The important thing is not to stop questioning.”⁷⁶ George Adamski seems to refer to a similar process when he writes: “Some of us attain this state by studying sincerely and truthfully, while to others it is a natural thing to do without any study. This latter seems to be the case with me. Things just simply come to me and I am able to stay with them until the full revelation has been completed. (...) I still do not deserve any credit since all this knowledge belongs to all the universe and not to anyone in particular. The ONLY credit that ANY form may deserve is that it becomes a willing form through which such revelations may come, whereby others may advance.”⁷⁷

Hence, in order to increase our understanding of life, the world we live in, and the universe, we need to acknowledge that life is about the *evolution of consciousness itself*, the growing awareness of the underlying oneness of life and the interconnectedness of its composing elements, so that our advancing scientific insights and technological knowledge may serve the common good of all members of humanity and the planet alike.

Quantum theory, consciousness research, and systems science now reveal Mme Blavatsky and George Adamski

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as pioneers in their respective fields and we cannot ignore their trailblazing efforts without perpetuating the prevalent confusion and misunderstanding about the nature and origin of UFOs and the reason for the extraterrestrial visitations.

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