

THE ROCK OF AGES PRINCIPLE : by Dr. Barry Downing

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As a member of the Board of the Fund for UFO Research, I was recently given access to a letter from a man in Sheffield, England, addressed to Budd Hopkins. The letter was classified by Hopkins as a "possible abduction" which had not yet been investigated.

The man said he and a friend were driving along a dark road one evening when they saw a "brightly-lit object" beside the road ahead. At this point he "was absolutely frozen with terror, for no reason." His friend had a similar reaction, but as they drew near they realized the object was only a tractor.

Long after the original experience, the man drove over the same stretch of road where he "was overcome with a sort of panic, and my eyes started to fill with tears." Having read Intruders, the man was now wondering "if you know of any cases where UFO's have effectively "disguised" themselves to the onlooker as

everyday objects (in this case a tractor)“;

DISGUISED UFOS

The issue of disguise is one of the most fundamental aspects of the UFO mystery, and should become one of the next major areas of UFO research.

Up until now, the disguise issue has been only on the fringe of research. But it has long been a major theme in John Keel’s work particularly in Trojan Horse and The Mothman Prophecies, with their speculations that UFO beings can mimic our culture, either with the Men in Black concept, or perhaps via unmarked helicopters that we hope are flown by the CIA.

The issue of disguise and deception also surfaces in Raymond Fowler’s The Andreasson Affair: Phase II,

Especially in regard to the strange phone calls Betty received, the helicopters pursuing her, and her vision of the door she was not allowed to tell about. Whitley Strieber was similarly concerned about disguise and the demonic in Transformation.

Most abductions, in fact, appear disguised by some type of memory suppression, which is how Budd Hopkins discovered the “missing time” principle. Jacques Vallee coined the term “metalogic” to describe his interpretation of the disguise-deception issue. I suspect that one reason why the disguise issue has not been dealt with more thoroughly is that the ET hypothesis continues to remain the most popular theory among most serious UFO researchers.

The ETH permits us to believe—perhaps hope—that UFO beings are mainly like ourselves, except that they have been traveling in space a little longer. But there is now a vast bank of data that suggests that UFOs can do things that simply outstrip our imagination, that UFOs come from a world in which things are not as they appear.

The issue of disguise—the metalogical—even shows up in just those places where we look hardest for nuts and bolts: in the Crash/Retrieval field. In the February 1989 issue of the Journal, for example, Leonard Stringfield reported the story of a crashed UFO about 30 feet in external diameter, and the size of a football field inside.

PERSONAL BELIEF

I realize that belief is a personal matter, but speaking for myself, I find the evidence that our government has had access to several crash retrievals very convincing; likewise, the evidence for multiple UFO abductions seems equally convincing. The problem is how to interpret the meaning of these aspects of the UFO phenomenon, particularly if UFOs can take on almost any disguise.

My impression is that UFO researchers are sharply divided over the disguise issue, in part because it has not been systematically addressed. We all know it is potentially part of the UFO problem, but we are not agreed as to how it should be assessed in our weighing of the data and in the formulation of hypotheses.

Part of the recent debate among Hopkins, [David] Jacobs and Vallee (February 1989 Journal), is that Hopkins and Vallee do not agree on the importance of the disguise issue, either in the process of gathering data, or as to evaluating it.

Perhaps to over simplify, Vallee is strongly committed to the disguise-deceptive nature of the UFO phenomenon, and therefore he is extremely skeptical that we can formulate any useful conclusions about what UFOs are, other than that they apparently control us, like “a rat pressing levers” (Dimensions, p. 280), and that they employ disguise and deception as part of the control system.

Because of his belief in the disguise issue, Vallee believes Hopkins and Jacobs are being too naïve in the process of gathering data via

hypnosis. Vallee believes the UFO phenomenon can feed us anything it so desires through the abduction process; furthermore, those using hypnosis can too easily contaminate the data with their own preconceptions.

Hopkins's answer to this charge is that the only time Vallee was truly scientific dates to his earliest work, *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*. Since then it has been all down hill, with Vallee getting more and more lost in subjectivism, from *Passport to Magonia* to *Messengers of Deception* to *Dimensions*.

I would not want to defend all of Vallee's work. He and I have corresponded privately, and we do not agree on how to address all the issues. But we do agree that the disguise-deception issue is fundamental to the evaluation process.

Budd Hopkins and I have also talked privately about the moral behavior of UFO beings. Hopkins has written an article, "What They're Doing to Us" (International UFO Reporter, September/October 1987), in which he expresses anger over what he calls "extraterrestrial indifference" to the deep psychic trauma caused by UFO abductions. I certainly cannot deny his right to his anger. He says they have a "flaw in their apparent power," in that they carry out their abduction experiments with such disregard for human suffering.

The reason why such a discussion should occur between Hopkins and myself is because I have long argued for the "God Hypothesis," and from Hopkins's point of view it seems un-God-like to abduct people and terrorize them. For Hopkins, a truly moral God would not relate to planet Earth like the UFO reality apparently does.

ROCK
OF AGES

The issue of disguise, deception and UFO morality leads me to suggest that current UFO research consider what in theology I call "The Rock of Ages Principle." The root of this principle derives from Exodus, Chapter 33.

The background is that Moses has met God at the burning bush, has gone with God through Passover and the Red Sea, has met God at Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, and despite all this, Moses does not yet feel he has really seen God. Moses says to God, "show me thy glory." And God responds, "you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live."

Nevertheless, God develops a compromise plan. "I will put you in a cleft of the rock," he says, "and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by." From this story comes the old hymn, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me."

God is too powerful for any human to see full face on. What does this mean? Is God an energy system like the sun— if we get too close, we will be baked? Or is God a psychological power which is so great and complex that in His presence we lose our identity, like a child brought up in the presence of an over-bearing parent? The text does not say.

From this concept comes the explanation of the hidden nature of God. God stays hidden out of love for us. If he came into the open, we would expire. Yet, if he stays completely hidden, we find ourselves godless. The compromise is disguised revelation. Moses sees a burning bush (not a tractor)— harmless enough. Closer inspection reveals the presence of God.

"Chosen people" (like Andreasson and Strieber?) are targeted for revelation as a means of protecting the larger society. The people at Mt. Sinai say to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear, but let not God speak to us, lest we die." (Ex. 20:19)

Jesus speaks in parables to disguise his revelation (Matthew 13:13), and there are elements of disguise in the resurrection appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), as well as to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35).

The revelation of the apparent voice of God to Betty Andreasson came from behind a large eagle-like bird. She was protected from the full power of the divine. Yet even with that protection, she went through tremendous anxiety and pain.

GOOD
OR EVIL?

One reason why all of the above matters is that we may be approaching a time when we have to decide whether UFOs are good or evil. And how we evaluate the disguise-morality issue has an important relation to our conclusion.

I say we may be approaching a time when we have to decide, because there are rumors from John Lear and others that our government is deeply involved with UFOs, perhaps in direct contact. According to these rumors, at the beginning UFOs gave us technological assistance, but lately they are carrying out "experiments" with humans that are getting out of hand. Suppose the government goes "public" and cries "Help!" President Reagan theorized about UFO bad guys that could conceivably unite the world. How would we react if the government actually announced the reality of such a scenario?

Budd Hopkins would agree that UFOs are immoral: John Keel though miles from Hopkins in methodology, would also agree with the bad-guy analysis; Christian fundamentalists already claim that UFOs are in league with the devil. If the government came forth and identified "the enemy," much of the UFO and religious communities would undoubtedly flock to their viewpoint.

Suppose, however, that we adopt the view that UFOs are a reality so superior to humans, so powerful and complex, that it would destroy the human race if it came in direct contact with civilization as a whole. (Remember what whites did to Native Americans?)

Yet what might UFOs do if they wanted to help us? They might do something to cause the governments of the world to change their nuclear weapons policy. Lawrence Fawcett and Barry Greenwood, in *Clear Intent*, as well as Bob Jacobs in the January 1989 issue of the *Journal*, suggest that UFOs have already intervened in our global military situation, which implies that their occupants may not be as morally uncaring as Hopkins has suggested.

How could this interaction with our government have been carried out without destroying the government's ego structure? One way might be for UFOs to disguise themselves. "We're friendly people, just like you," they could claim, "except that we happen to be from another planet."

As I read Leonard Stringfield's two part series on "UFO Crash/Retrievals," I did not necessarily doubt his data. Instead, I found myself thinking that his report sounded more like a wreck on the Los Angeles Freeway than the story of advanced space vehicles from another world. Why are Boeing 747's safer to fly than UFOs? I found myself suspecting that all UFO crashes may be staged, as part of the overall disguise.

Whitley Strieber reports in Transformation that the Visitors showed him a drawer full of apparently dead bodies, from which he concluded that they only used bodies "as we use scuba gear to penetrate the depth of the sea" (p. 40). The observation suggests that crashed UFOs, along with the dead bodies left behind, may not be proof that they are mortal, after all.

Up until now, UFO research has occasionally reacted by denying strange evidence: right angle turns are impossible; abductions are impossible; government involvement, and UFO crashes are impossible, and so on. We now know it is all possible. But we also have to take the next step.

We have to be willing to suppose that every piece of UFO evidence could be some form of a disguise—not as a tractor, perhaps—but nevertheless we must suspect all UFO revelations fall short of a full disclosure of what the reality behind the event we observe really is.

SYMPTOM OF FEAR

A truly benevolent reality which is vastly superior to humans might realize that we need a rock to hide in because if we look the UFO reality straight in the face, we may die. We need to consider the Rock of Ages Principle. We also need to suppose that the terror many feel in the presence of the UFO reality may be an inevitable part of the UFO revelation experience.

Returning to the

letter to Hopkins from England, the man's terror is a common part of the UFO abduction experience, including the religious type of abductions of Andreasson and Strieber. The man's continued terror of the space where the sighting occurred is also common.

Biblical

encounters with God were filled with terror, had spatial consequences, and often involved trance or sleep as a coating of insulation. Abram met God in a deep sleep, and "a dread and great darkness fell upon him." (Genesis 15:12) Jacob had a dream of the angels of God ascending and descending on a ladder to heaven, and when he woke up he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place." (Genesis:28:17) He then built an altar there; the place became a sacred space, a place of dread.

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Sinai became a holy mountain because that is where Israel had its basic UFO experience (Exodus 19-30). In our modern UFO abduction cases, the place where the abduction occurs, that lonely stretch of road, suddenly becomes a place of fear and awe—it becomes holy ground.

I think Vallee is

essentially right when he says that the UFO phenomenon is "more complex, more interesting and more profound than any of us has ever dreamt." If he is right, we need to suppose that this reality is intelligent enough to know that it can only show itself to us in disguised ways without destroying us.

And

if UFOs are using a disguise to protect us—the Rock of Ages Principle—then we must be very careful about passing judgments on this reality that label it as either immoral or demonic. It appears to me that the UFO reality is behaving in such a way as to communicate its presence to us, and much of its complexity to us, without destroying us at the same time. Furthermore, we must suppose that what is "good" from the point of view of UFOs might not be good from the point of view of the American government. Pharaoh probably did not have a high opinion of the "pillar of cloud and of fire" when it drowned his army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:19-30). But it looked good from the Jewish point of view.

Even if most students

of UFOs do not accept my God Hypothesis, I believe we need to think very seriously about any data that indicate that UFOs often use a disguise in relating to humans. A vastly superior reality might well do this, not out of evil intent, but because to confront us face to face might lead to our death.

We need to suspect

that if some kind of UFO disguise is at work, then even if our government has crashed UFOs, and is working with live alien beings, it may still not have the full picture. If we remember that our government is taking a tight security approach to UFOs, that means UFOs are evaluated only on a "need to know" basis. Very few minds have access to the whole picture. Most of those minds would be scientific-military, not necessarily the best minds to deal with a reality which may be right in front of their eyes, but not be what they see.

I remember a Roman military-political leader sending an alien Jew to the cross almost 2000 years ago because he did not understand what he was looking at. We are poised for a war of the worlds, and if there is a war, I am worried that the governments of this world could again be the bad guys.

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