



How Academia Processes the ET Contact Issue and Some Implications for the UFO Community

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ABSTRACT

As linear time appears to be speeding up and many people discuss the feeling of being pulled towards some indefinable future incident it is crucial that the issue of interfacing with visiting intelligent cultures is explored as efficiently and fairly as possible. As it stands today, despite 60 years of modern UFOlogical research, some methods of validating interaction with this ‘Other’ are promoted and others sidelined. Although academia has failed to fully embrace the issue in any real manner, what can we learn from the approaches by some academics to codify the phenomenon to date? By examining published sources and the available deconstructions of both theory and language, can we gain useful insights and transfer this knowledge to the wider investigating community?

reports were infiltrated so as to ensure a firm grasp of the perception of the wider exopolitical issues. This policy was made even more effective as we progressed through the post-war decades by a complicit media. Great Britain used its D-Notice framework - essentially allowing the government or military to prevent publication of an issue and the USA managed to infiltrate and control vast media monoliths by stationing intelligence assets in editorial teams news outlets.² As we shall see, it's not just upper government groups that are imposing a framework of 'imposed ignorance' or as one academic paper we'll review terms it an 'authoritative disregard' onto wider society – this process has, since the era of the major reports such as Condon and Robertson, become the staple approach for the majority of institutions that come into contact with the issue.

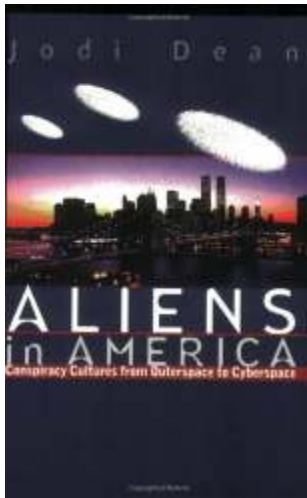
In addition to this top down matrix of control – the very nature of the wider UFO paradigm appears to create its own 'internal plausible deniability'³ as it moves from the variety of vantage points which aim to explore or maybe 'expose' its essence. It is this objective 'exposure' that the phenomenon constantly resists. We could reason that this is due to a couple of points:

1. the high-strangeness⁴ of the topic itself
2. the inability to objectively download the alien experience into terrestrial language structures.

Add these points on to the imposed misinformation [power and hegemony] directives we briefly mentioned above and it shouldn't really come as a surprise to anyone why exploring the issue can be problematic and more importantly requires new methods of investigation and judgement. We can see casualties of the contemporary approach to this supposedly 'legitimate' investigation of the issue in detailed contact cases such as the 35 year long accounts of Swiss farmer Billy Meier and the case of Washington University of Child Psychologist Dr Jonathan Reed. Both these cases appear to have every evidential element present that would satisfy most rational investigators – including forensic aspects such as advanced metal samples and DNA lab results – yet these appear to be insufficient. When persons attempt to tackle the issue in a realistic manner from within an academic institution – they may find themselves sidelined and in several cases threatened with being removed from their post.

The alien issue acts as a mirror to the various realities and frameworks that assume they are legitimately investigating ‘it’, revealing that particular disciplines various failings and inherent contradictions. Astrophysicists are one such collective who claim to be present at the cutting edge of space research yet the majority can’t find room in their discipline for the mass of data on UFO sightings and documented human-ET contact. For example, given that we are a developing planet - not far from moving out of the gravity well and into some form of space exploration, we could be forgiven for assuming that the two sectors handling the issue efficiently and to an extent objectively would be the UFO community itself and academia. The latter has, since Plato’s era, established itself as the very institution which would take hold of [almost esoteric] knowledge yet to be processed by a wider society and by discussion, testing and reason then embeds this knowledge into the wider world in a manner deemed comprehensible and useful. The UFO research community may be a more modern invention but at this point in history it has at its disposal the ability to examine vast archives of data on what this extra-terrestrial Other could be as well as having been witness to a more unique facet of history - the embedding of this phenomena in culture and having been witness to the creation of global national security apparatus, circa 1947⁵, due to collective fear of the alien issue itself.

What we find by isolating both these frameworks or in Robert Anton Wilson’s term “reality tunnels” is that both claim to have an objective hold on the ET issue [or an objective reason



for dismissing it!] but on closer examination they in fact simply create their own internal logic of rationality for arriving at their desired conclusions. The UFO research community one would assume to be the closest to the phenomenon itself and thus have the best insight. In fact we find that even after several decades of experience, UFOlogy either fails to agree on an overall concept or allows itself to be diverted off into numerous branches supporting different scenarios [Extra-terrestrial hypothesis, ultra-terrestrials, time travelling entities etc] which fail to catalyse the epistemological base of the very collective exploring it. The issue of contact is a case in point. Although we have a vast data-sphere

of contactee or experiencer accounts spanning from the 1950s ‘space brothers’ era through to the more recent abduction paradigm, research of this issue appears to be sidelined in favour of continued attention to ‘lights in the sky’ type sightings. Mediated experience continues to

be favoured over direct experience – whether those mediating are news agencies, military groups or even an ‘acceptable’ ring of researchers from within the UFOlogical field itself. Why does the very community aligned with those who have unmediated contact appear to have created a hierarchy of “evidence efficacy” which appears to sideline some aspects of how we interact with the alien Other and promote others as ‘legitimate’?

If we return to our notions of disinformation [including power and sovereignty] and high-strangeness [language and clashing cultural-conceptual issues] – we can see how these two meta-elements shape our individual and collective perception of the issue at hand. ‘Truth’ is often shifted by the very process of exploration and research itself. What is truth though, and how do we discern it? What constitutes evidence? In this following section, these issues will help to inform our examination of how academia processes the ET contact issue and we will offer some possible feedback for the wider UFO research community itself.

Professors Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall’s paper, *Sovereignty and the UFO*, is amongst one of the few academic works to critically consider extra-terrestrial reality as a plausible hypothesis for the UFO issue and, subsequently, it inhabits a unique space within academic discourse. Their theoretical premise is not to suggest, however, that UFOs are extra-terrestrial in origin, but rather their principal concern is to systematically address why UFOs are dismissed by the authorities. Using an approach based in political theory they view this subject matter via the constructs of modern sovereignty [which they contend is anthropocentric in nature] and governmentality to outline how an ‘authoritative disregard’ of the UFO issue is necessitated and actively reproduced by science and the state.⁶ Since sovereignty is anthropocentric, in other words ‘constituted and organised by reference to human beings alone’, then state preserves and exerts the right to decide the norms and laws of society, as well as its exceptions.⁷ The threat then that the UFO poses is that the extra-terrestrial hypothesis [ETH] may account for its manifestation. The possibility of an ET presence, therefore, entails that this threat to modern rule takes three forms: physical, ontological and metaphysical. Wendt and Duvall further elaborate upon this idea, but it can be summarised as ‘physical threats to life and ontological threats to identity or social being.’⁸ In light of this, why not, then, mobilise the UFO issue as a political endeavour to securitise the populous? The answer, Wendt and Duvall assert, resides in the particular type of danger that the UFO presents to the metaphysics of anthropocentric sovereignty. Sovereignty relies upon its unquestioned authority in order to maintain its ability to rule, so

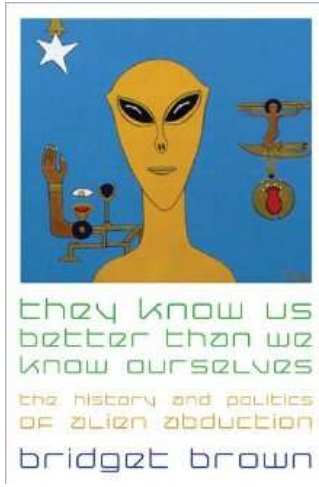
an ‘unknown that incorporates the possibility of ETs confounds this metaphysical certainty’, and therefore it cannot be safely securitised.⁹ Subsequently, Wendt and Duvall propose that the UFO, as an unknown, can only be “known” as a ‘taboo’. They argue that its active denial is a political project, which can be thought of us as the ‘production of [un]knowledge’, or, as they employ Nancy Tuana’s term, the “epistemology of UFO ignorance”.¹⁰

Ignoring the UFO issue, however, requires a strategy, and here science is mobilised in the state’s campaign. Wendt and Duvall draw attention to the fact that, despite the existence of indirect physical evidence for the UFO, as well as witness testimony, the subject has never been consistently studied by science. In addition, and central to our debate, the state utilises a scientific worldview, and UFO skeptics employ this version of truth in dispute of the ETH. Wendt and Duvall outline how science allegedly advocates an objective, factual discourse in its pursuit of truth, and, therefore, politics is assumed to be distinct from this. Yet, they provide a critique of the skeptics’ proposals, such as the notion that ETs would land on the White House lawn if they were here, to demonstrate that ‘debates about ET intention are not based in scientific fact’ 617. Nevertheless, UFO skepticism is expounded as scientific truth. It appears then that a double standard is unveiled in the deployment of the scientific method, and it is the skeptics, ‘having secured the authority of science’, that have gained the ‘decisive advantage’ while the arguments of those in the UFO community are ‘dismissed as irrational belief’. Crucially, UFO witness testimony is also rejected by the skeptics whereas in law and social science it carries ‘considerable epistemic weight in determining the facts’. Science and truth it seems becomes a subjective process when mobilised by the state, and the UFO issue is regarded with ‘ridicule and scorn’.¹¹

The dismissal of the UFO issue is frequently evident in academic literature that encounters it. The mechanism of modern rule ensures that ‘power flows primarily from the deployment of specialized knowledge for the regulation of populations’.¹² Arguably, in spite of interdisciplinary discourses, academia is structured in such a way: as compartmentalised, specialist areas. Although academic discourses create the space for both resistance to and assimilation of dominant metaphysical constructs, as well as sites of ambivalence, in reality sovereign rule necessitates a conventional scientific world view. Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that the authoritative disregard of the UFO issue is prevalent in the academic community. Moreover, the higher the authoritative status of those in academia the more ‘epistemic weight’ an authoritative voice has, and this privilege is reserved for the few that

inhabit this elite space. The authoritative disregard that Wendt and Duvall underscore is clearly evident in Dr Mark Newbrook’s essay, *The Aliens Speak – and Write Examining Alien Languages*.¹³

In 1999, Gary Anthony, a ‘sceptical examiner’ of the UFO subject, initiated the Alien Semiotics Project and recruited the aid of scientists who specialised in cryptanalysis and linguistics.¹⁴ The aim of the project was to involve ‘unbiased qualified experts’ in the scientific, ‘fair appraisal’ of experiencers’ use of alleged alien languages and scripts. Newbrook was enlisted in the project and their call for contactee data was published in the MUFON UFO



Journal in 2002. In this article, Anthony and Newbrook address the lack of ‘qualified linguistic, cryptanalysis or phonetic analysis’ of such contactee accounts. This, they claim, is surprising given the efforts of ‘enthusiastic amateurs’, although

often ‘well intended’, into the alien abduction phenomenon.¹⁵ By the time Newbrook’s 2004 essay appeared, this mode of rhetoric is markedly more distinct. UFO researchers are now ‘amateurs in linguistics’ with ‘a low level of expertise’ that have ‘no awareness of the subject’. Furthermore, Newbrook alludes to the idea that should they risk assisting in ‘the complex task of analysis and assessment’, their observations are liable to be ‘scanty and/or confused’ and of ‘almost no value’.¹⁶ He does not, however, provide in-depth scientific results for this assessment, much less an adequate discussion of how these conclusions were determined. Nevertheless, this rhetorical strategy serves a dual function: to reaffirm Newbrook’s position as an authoritative voice, while simultaneously marginalising UFO

researchers, and it excludes the audience from access to the authoritative domain. It seems that Newbrook did not anticipate significant scholarly interest in this project from his peers, much less academic scrutiny via a peer reviewed process, so it would seem that his target audience are the ill-



informed UFO researchers and ‘believers’. Of course, what credible academic would seriously dispute Newbrook’s assertions anyway? Newbrook’s authoritative claims, it seems, and his delineation of truth are secure.

Another point of contention for Newbrook is that enthusiastic UFO amateurs are ‘clearly committed to an interpretation of UFO abductions and contact as genuinely involving extraterrestrial aliens’. This is a curious statement considering that Newbrook’s research interests include ‘the application of skeptical methods to ‘fringe’ or controversial ideas about language’.¹⁷ Newbrook has also contributed articles to the *Skeptical Inquirer* as well as the *Association for Skeptical Enquiry*. The subheading of the latter reads ‘Casting a critical eye over suspect science, dubious claims and suspect beliefs’.¹⁸ Given that Newbrook, as a Skeptical Linguist, is ‘predisposed in favour’ of the skeptical hypothesis it is unlikely that alien languages and scripts would be granted a scientific ‘fair appraisal’.¹⁹ Also, if we were to adopt Newbrook’s empirical requirements for the study of ET languages and communication then Gary Anthony’s involvement would be highly questionable since he is described not as a linguistic specialist but rather as a ‘linguistic enthusiast’. By virtue of association, however, Anthony’s entitlement, as representative of a subdominant order, is legitimised and regulated by the dominant order as bestowed by Newbrook’s authoritative rights.²⁰ Anthony’s claim to the ‘Alien Semiotics Project’ is authenticated while the research of UFO ‘amateurs’ is sidelined. Evidently, as Wendt and Duvall imply, the dominant order reserves the right to decide the exception.

There are other examples of empirical gaps in Mark Newbrook’s essay. Far from providing the results of a rigorous scientific analysis into alien languages and scripts, as highlighted earlier, he reserves a few remarks for the Garden Grove abduction case, Paul Potters’s study of Betty Luca’s alien language and John Elliott’s SETI related research. His main focus remains on Mary Rodwell’s work and, in particular, Tracey Taylor’s case.

As an experiencer, Taylor appears to be able to write and speak in various alien scripts and languages. One of his main criticisms is how she delineates such language in use, particularly that there ‘‘is no preconceived idea or concept about what a particular sound actually means’’ and that ‘‘each utterance’’ is not related to ‘‘earlier utterances’’.²¹ Taylor elaborates upon this further in Rodwell’s book by explaining that sounds and words do not denote specific meanings and the filtering of this process bypasses the ‘linear logical aspect

of consciousness' as well as 'linear space-time'. Furthermore, each utterance is 'not related to the past in anyway'. She posits that it is interpreted unconsciously, intuitively and instantaneously by another. The origin of this 'sound vibration' is attributed to the 'universal mind' or to 'God' and, at this present time on Earth, cannot be accurately translated. Instead, it 'directly connects to the 'soul of another' and she implies that this method moves towards a mode of telepathic communication.²²

Although Taylor's delineation of such language may seem incomprehensible to some, evoking the notion of the 'uncanny' whereby the seemingly familiar or everyday becomes the unfamiliar and strange, it is, nevertheless, recognisable to others.²³ Rodwell states that these languages, when spoken by experiencers, are familiar to many and she highlights the reaction of Dana Redfield upon hearing the use of Taylor's alien language: 'I spoke along with her, almost as if I was engaging in a two way conversation'.²⁴ Newbrook, however, fails to mention this. Presumably, this constitutes a moment of when witness testimony is rendered meaningless but it is, nevertheless, representative of an essential moment in moving towards an understanding of what may be occurring in forms of alien communication. Consequently, a language or mode of communication that exists only in the present and is interpreted via an unfamiliar process, and does not, seemingly, signify a particular meaning would indeed confound a standard linguistic analysis. If this is accurate, it would in fact disrupt conventional concepts of time and challenge our understanding of the methodology of language and how we define it. Newbrook does concede that the translation of this type of alien language, as described by Taylor, would be impossible in the absence of a 'stable or well-defined structure'. However, he implies that such a language would be 'unlikely in the extreme' since language conveys the 'repetition of meaningful units'. This leads him to speculate about the improbability of these languages and that they could 'differ in such a fundamental respect', and suggests that aliens that had these psychological capabilities 'would presumably not need or use alien language'.²⁵ Newbrook's mode of analysis is in-keeping with skeptical rhetoric but, in utilising Wendt and Duvall's argument, is not based in scientific fact. Similarly, it is not far removed from their criticism of the sceptics' strategy of adopting debates about ET intentions as scientific discourse.

In another passage, Newbrook is able to describe Taylor's scripts as 'grass-stroke style in a range of large alphabets', but he is unable to translate the meaning. This is apparently due to the fact that there is 'too little material'.²⁶ Philip J. Imbrogno however received eight pages

of a script from Dean Fagerstrom, a security guard, in 1982 and they were examined by cryptographers and linguistics. They were unable to produce a sufficient analysis except to offer that the symbols in his script appeared to resemble a real language and contained two hundred individual characters. Imbrogno asserts that he was able to eventually identify ‘symbols and letters from over fifty different languages, of which thirty no longer exist.’ The implications of this are still compelling since Fagerstrom had reported to have obtained these during a missing time episode and has no conscious recollection of producing the symbols.²⁷ Does the establishing of known languages in Fagerstrom’s script therefore eliminate the possibility of ET involvement? Not necessarily, and even Newbrook suggests that Taylor’s spoken material could be indicative of glossolalia ‘speaking in tongues’, and that ‘such phenomenon are still very interesting in themselves’. Furthermore, neither does this remove the possibility of an engineered language that is a hybridised endeavour.²⁸

Aside from Newbrook’s exclusionary rhetoric, such as the deployment of linguistic terms that,



on occasion, omit sufficient explanations regarding their meaning and usage, Newbrook manages to create the impression that his use of linguistic application is the only method of analyses. In fact, linguistic typology, phonology and grammar, for instance, form only a part of linguistic studies, and even debates about the use of such

fields configure part of a contemporary, on-going process of revision. For example, debates about linguistic typology include the consideration of ‘language as a dynamic system operating simultaneously on multiple levels of representation – rather than as a disparate assemblage of discrete levels of analysis [lexicon, phonology, syntax], or as a collection of particular linguistic phenomena’.²⁹ Moreover, there are many fields and sub-fields that interrelate, and yet we are left to accept that Newbrook’s framework, which is suggestive of a reductive paradigm, can somehow adequately account for the totality of a completely unfamiliar discourse: alien languages and scripts.

Another example of the differences in linguistic application can be found in Robert de Beaugrande's work. As a text linguist, he observes that linguistic studies had become 'obsessed with the system [units of analysis] at the expense of the text', and he notes the limitations of a linguistics that examines the arrangement of words within sentences, but not the reasons for 'why speakers say what they say, how language is used in various social groups' and 'how it is used in communication'. Furthermore, he advocates the use of other disciplines, such as 'literary studies, cognitive science, artificial intelligence, ethnography, economics, and political science', in the application of a linguistic framework.³⁰ Robert de Beaugrande's argument is a crucial one. For example, intertextuality, normally employed in the use of literary studies, is highly relevant to the examination of alien languages and scripts. Although its definition and use varies somewhat, this model can be employed to study the multifaceted interrelationships of ET contact accounts. In Newbrook's analysis however, no such analysis of the relationships between ET contact texts is made. Instead, for the moment at least, a comparative study of ET contact accounts is curiously absent from Newbrook's study of alien scripts. Of course, such an endeavour as The Alien Semiotics Project would prove to be a challenging one. Problems notwithstanding however, it seems that the project is little more than a political one, designed to reaffirm the authoritative discourse and foreclose the possibility of a serious, consistent examination. At present, no definitive results by Newbrook and Anthony have entered the public domain.

Perhaps then, amongst the inherent difficulties in the examination of alleged alien scripts is in the application of a mainstream, compartmentalised discipline that it is derived from conventional, human constructs of metaphysical reality. Indeed, the possible implications of Taylor's account would entail such an ontological threat to identity and social being that Wendt and Duvall speak of, an unknown practice that exists outside of the state's ability to know, whereby disrupting, its capacity to regulate its subjects. In addition, this unknown discourse, a seemingly intuitively derived, non-local mode of communication, defies authoritative discourses and potentially engenders a move towards a 'non-sovereign notion of self'.³¹ It is also possible that this mode of communication extends beyond our current understanding of what a language actually is. As Mary Rodwell has highlighted, recent discoveries by Russian scientists have found that 'DNA can be influenced and reprogrammed by words and frequencies'.³² Consequently, it is possible that a currently unobservable, deeper purpose exists to experiencers' use of alien languages; one that transcends our current

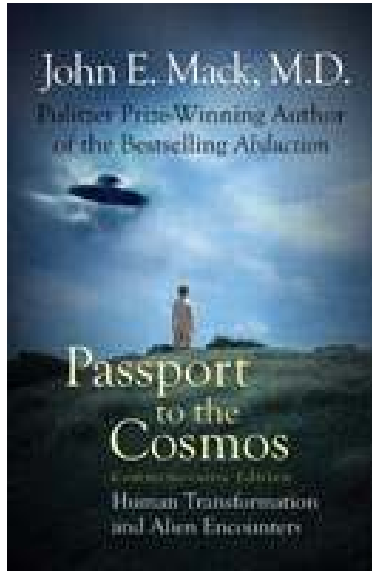
conceptions of language to reveal a bio-communicative modality. Nevertheless, the intervention of alien languages contests our understanding of reality.

Whereas Wendt and Duvall's political theory approach adopts a 'realist moment' to seriously consider the epistemology of UFO ignorance, and Newbrook's analysis is informed by skeptical linguistics, a fairly significant body of academic texts that consider the ETH is situated within the humanities: in disciplines such as cultural and literary studies. However, Wendt and Duvall's, somewhat rare, realist approach stands in sharp contrast to these anti-realist texts. In fact, Wendt and Duvall draw attention to this issue in reference to Jodi Dean's *Aliens in America*. Her cultural, sociological critique attributes the manifestation of the ET presence to the "postmodern breakdown of all modern certainties".³³ These types of text exist within the anti-realist paradigm since the possibility that ET contact could form a part of the fabric of reality is foreclosed from the outset. Instead, the phenomenon is typically viewed within a cultural, sociological or psychological context. In fact, psychology's treatment of the ETH is a fairly extensive area in of itself.

In Jodi Dean's text the UFO issue is also political. However, unlike the ramifications implied by Wendt and Duvall's rendering of the UFO as a subversive threat to modern rule, Dean situates declarations of ET contact as a political act that consigns the claimant to the margins of society. Aliens then, as a symbolic trope, serve as a focus for societal ills, especially 'those located around the fault lines of truth, reality, and reasonableness'. Aliens, Dean says, are connected to the hopes and fears 'inscribed' by technology, and the postmodern conditions of 'passivity', 'suspicion' and 'paranoia', have become reconceptualised via the alien abduction discourse. She implies that the once marginalised have now, in a 'techo-global information' age of 'networked opportunities', gained access to communicative mediums that enable the stigmatised to articulate these fears. The representation of ET contact, as indicative of a postmodern state of ambivalence or dissonance in America, reconstructs the 'familiar' as 'strange' and Dean situates the UFO community within this site by alluding to the notion that science becomes reinterpreted as irrational. Furthermore, it is 'ufological discourse [that] upholds the very criteria for scientific rationality that mainstream science uses to dismiss it'.³⁴ As Wendt and Duvall note, however, Dean locates 'scientific truth' as a "fugitive", and not that this 'might be overcome by considering, scientifically, the reality of UFOs'.³⁵ In spite of this, Dean's observation concerning the UFO community's

utilisation of the scientific perspective is an important one, and one that, crucially, influences the various dynamics. On this point, we shall return to this in the conclusion to our debate.

Other academic texts that adhere to an anti-realist discourse process the ET contact issue via

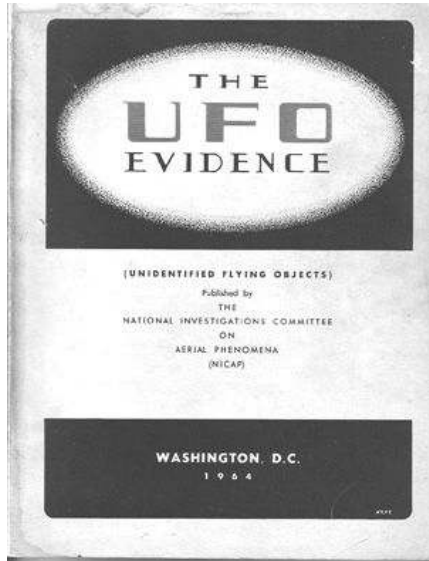


the lens of race and identity. In *Captivity Narratives and the Unknown Frontier*, Anne Tiernan examines and compares the use of linguistic devices in Indian captivity, alien abduction and war captivity narratives. In this instance, the ET contact issue is consigned to a literary and cultural endeavour. Metaphors, that unveil how “the Other” is delineated, are utilised in Teirnan’s approach to demonstrate how Americans responded to the capturing of its citizens by Native Americans; namely, that they became defined as ‘inferior or barbaric’. Subsequently, alien abduction accounts, like the Indian captivity narrative, is illustrative of ‘the unknown’ and ‘undiscovered’ territory. This unknown

reflects concerns about ‘crossing frontiers and the forced experience of another culture’. Similarly to Dean, the impact of globalisation is the site for the new and unfamiliar frontier, but included within this concern is ‘the rapidly changing face’ of American society.³⁶ The aspect of race is explored to an even greater degree in David Drysdale’s framing of the ET contact experience, in *Alienating Futures: Raciology and Missing Time in The Interrupted Journey*. In this he notes that scholars have observed the alien abduction narrative’s ‘strange obsession with race’. The Betty and Barney Hill case provides the material for Drysdale’s theoretical premise that competing constructions of race ‘organise themselves around the body’, and the abduction narrative is viewed as a societal response to anxieties about a ‘technologically mediated raciology’. In the Betty and Barney Hill case, the use of ‘advanced imagining technology’ to scan the Hills’ bodies is interpreted as a dystopian vision of a post racial future; a scientific colonisation of the body that deletes the historical experience of race since the body is read as ‘code and information’. Race, therefore, is subsidiary in this ‘nanopolitics’ but the potential for racial transcendence includes the possibility of ‘the affective significance of the body and its physical reminder of racial difference and its history’. Similarly, the description of the grey signifies the postracial body: a future vision of humanity that collapses racial differences ‘to the extent that they become inhuman’. Additionally, Betty’s alien captor indicates that although she may remember her experience

Barney will not. Subsequently, Drysdale suggests that a historical remembrance of race cannot be accessed by all in the postracial future. The ETs therefore denote ‘a cold, ahistorical future where history can be, and is, selectively deleted’.³⁷

Drysdale’s processing of the ET contact issue raises some crucial points that warrant serious consideration by the UFO community since its cultural location is not exempt from wider societal issues. Nevertheless, he does not engage this very point. Human articulations of



experience are shaped by the historical moment in which they are enunciated and the use of language will illustrate this. For instance, Drysdale highlights Betty’s use of various racial descriptors, such as the use of the term ‘mongoloids’, and attributes this to the historical moment. Still, his viewing of Betty and Barney’s testimony of ET contact never moves beyond the racial paradigm to conceive of their discourse as a potentially real experience. Similarly, Jodi Dean’s insightful analysis of the ambivalent, anxiety ridden experience of contemporary society brought about, in part, by the impact of globalisation is also a valid perspective. Yet,

her positioning of the UFO issue as a manifestation of these concerns, that in turn provides a political site for the displaced, is an over simplification of the UFO issue and one that uses subjectivity, not scientific discourse, to disregard a body of evidence. Crucially though, it is the pervasiveness of the scientific world view that assists in how the ET contact issue is processed in anti-realist texts. The parallels that Anne Tiernan draws between Indian captivity and alien abduction narratives are somewhat tenuous since it is heavily reliant upon some broad themes, although well-established ones, of the alien abduction narrative. Yet, the reproduction of these themes is not without pit falls since the complexities and diversities experienced in ET encounter narratives, especially those often labelled as exhibiting high strangeness, are often overlooked or not extensively analysed. Therefore, the processing of the alien abduction narrative in academia that disregards the possibility of ET contact as a real experience is demonstrative of a peripheral vision.

Some Implications of Academic Discourse and the Scientific Worldview for the UFO Community

Ufology, as a site distinct from the wider community, has sought to employ the scientific method in an attempt to validate the ETH as an authentic discourse within consensus reality. Subsequently, the influence of the dominant order has shaped the treatment of the UFO issue in the UFO community. Yet, Wendt and Duvall's assessment of the scientific paradigm suggests that the ETH cannot be, at present, authenticated by it. This places the UFO community within an uncomfortable paradox, unable to achieve significant advancement in its dependence upon a conventional framework that cannot, at least in its conventional usage, sufficiently address the wider impact of the alien Other. Equally important is the impact of this upon the UFO community. Since scientific evidence and reliable witnesses testimony is, typically, the hallmark of what determines a case's validity then incidents which appear to lack respectability or scientific proof are often significantly marginalised or fervently contested.

However, we find often when contact cases are fully documented with all the differing stands of data required under this framework this still isn't really enough. We mentioned previously two cases which had sufficient databases of evidence that would lead most legal organisation to declare them "authentic" in a trial situation and yet these cases are ignored or derided by many from within the UFO community. Thus in addition to the conflict outlined above – certain aspects of the contact community are also subject to the vast disinformation and PR resources of those power vectors who continue to prefer to see the issue marginalised.

The Gulf Breeze, the Billy Meier and the Jonathan Reed cases are representative of only a few examples of such accounts that dramatically split the UFO community, sparking fierce debates about their authenticity. However, in a reassessment of the Jonathan Reed case, Craig R Lang maintains that 'the pursuit of the deepest truths behind the ET/UFO anomaly phenomenon is, in fact, a harshly forbidden endeavour'.³⁸

What are these deepest truths? It is interesting to note that Jodi Dean's anti-realist analysis is able to offer a shrewd observation concerning the UFO community's assimilation and utilisation of the scientific method that is rarely, if ever, interrogated by the UFO community itself. Instead, any limitations regarding this approach remain, largely, unacknowledged. In addition to this, those in the UFO community who are keen to establish an authoritative

discourse exemplify, in their attempts to adhere to a conventional scientific worldview, the dominant order's practices. Therefore, as representative of a subdominant order they regulate, whereby determining, the wider UFO community's practices. Certainly, alternative studies of cases believed to be tenuous or unreliable would perhaps not prove to be a wise move for the established, authoritative researcher, and the use of language in the positioning of credible and non-credible researchers contributes to polarisation. Comments such as those made by UFONAUT RADIO would not seem out of place in the *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine. In a recent interview the site remarked that Nick Pope is 'far from your average grey-worshipping alien sycophant - he's into evidence and open mindedness, much like ourselves'.³⁹

Given the media line their interviewee has taken for the last decade or more, it seems this open mindedness implies the establishing of evidence via the scientific method with a good degree of formula fence-sitting thrown in. It's important to remind ourselves, with all this discussion of models, theories and metaphors, that there is a real impact for the way we confront the issue of ET contact. People have lost jobs, finances and been threatened or even killed for either being directly involved in or supporting certain contact cases that the state, or more likely above-government groups, have no desire to see illuminated. Those members of the UFOlogy community who continue to declare what they see as the legitimate cases over the 'hoax' or inauthentic ones are in one sense directly aiding the very tangible negative effects on those associated with contact cases.

Thus as a dynamic and responsive model, we maintain that Exopolitics should seek to address the very constructions of reality that help to shape the Ufological discourse and, in the process, seek new approaches to contribute to the existing frameworks of analyses. John Mack suggested that the scientific method, as a paradigm, could not sufficiently account for the ET contact issue. Instead, his call for the development of a scared science was an attempt to address the limitations of a Western, scientific discourse and its inability to account for the complexities of the ET contact issue.⁴⁰ In the process, we perhaps may move towards enabling wider society to view the UFO issue with the urgency and importance that such a transformational event truly deserves.

About the Authors



David Griffin established the [UK network](#) of the global exopolitics initiative in 2006 as the first national exopolitics site outside of the American continent. Although he has no long term background in UFOlogy he found himself returned to this framework repeatedly when researching wider areas and currently considers exopolitics to be the best ‘lens’ through which to view the complexities of contemporary, deep political culture. Academically David attended the well known Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution dept. of Bradford University just after then Prime Minister Thatcher tried to get the School closed down. In addition to a degree he worked at various higher education organisations in the UK in the area of Virtual Learning and courseware development. He also achieved an MSc in Multi-media and Education with an emphasis on Human Computer Interaction. He regularly speaks at events in the UK and Europe. Website: <http://www.exopolitics.org.uk> Email address: david@exopolitics.org.uk



Natasha Acimovic is a lecturer in Further Education and currently teaches Adult Literacy and Academic Study Skills at a British college. An interest in various theories, language and constructions of identity led her to complete a degree in Creative Writing and English Literature, an MA by Research in English Studies and a PGCE in Adult Literacy. An interest in the UFO phenomenon early on led her to research the less well known elements of the field including the human-alien identity, comparative literature of contact and abduction, the impact of the alien Other on language and symbolic communication forms. She also contributes to the UK Exopolitics Initiative and can be contacted at Natasha@exopoliticsunitedkingdom.org



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ENDNOTES

¹ <http://condon-committee.co.tv/>

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Mockingbird

³ With relation to the complex contact case of Billy Meier - Jim Deardorff has explained this multi-layered process on his website: <http://www.tjresearch.info/denial.htm>

⁴ High strangeness was a term coined by Fortean author John Keel. A term he concluded after much research as being representative of the often bizarre incidents that took place that eluded labelling of any real form.

⁵ Examining of prominent researchers work such as Richard Dolan’s book “UFOs and the national Security State” leads to the conclusion that a pre-cold war National Security status was established in 1947 partially due to the panic over more overt contact with ET life after the atom bomb and Roswell crash.

⁶ Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” (Sage Publications, 2008) Political Theory: Volume 36 Number 4, August 2008, 607-633. This paper can also be obtained here: http://ovnis-usa.com/DIVERS/Wendt_Duvall_PoliticalTheory.pdf Wendt and Duvall draw upon Michel Foucault’s notion of governmentality, which can be thought of as the art of non-coercive governing via the regulation of knowledge to produce subjects who adequately fulfil governmental policies and, in turn, subjects become a part of the normalisation process. See Michel Foucault’s “Governmentality,” *Ideology and Consciousness*, No.6, Summer 1979, 5-21.

⁷ Wendt and Duvall, *Sovereignty and the UFO*, 608-612. They employ the use of Carl Schmitt’s term, “decide the exception”, to argue that when governmentality is challenged then its sovereignty authority can decide when to suspend its norms and laws.

⁸ Wendt and Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” 620-622.

⁹ Wendt and Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” 621-622.

¹⁰ Wendt and Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” 611-612.

¹¹ Wendt and Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” 607-17.

¹² Wendt and Duvall, “Sovereignty and the UFO,” 612.

¹³ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>

¹⁴ <http://www.uk-ufo.org/condign/bioga.htm>

¹⁵ http://www.theblackvault.com/encyclopedia/documents/MUFON/Journals/2002/July_2002.pdf

¹⁶ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>

¹⁷ <http://users.adam.com.au/bstett/AWritersNewbrookMark75.htm>

¹⁸ http://www.aske-skeptics.org.uk/lost_for_words.html

¹⁹ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>

²⁰ See Mae Gwendolyn Henderson’s essay for her use of the dominant and subdominant order, *Speaking in Tongues: Dialogics, Dialectics, and the Black Woman Writer’s Literary Tradition*, available in: Cheryl A. Walls, eds., *Changing Our Own Words: Essay’s on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women* (Great Britain: Routledge, 1990), 17.

- ²¹ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>
- ²² Mary Rodwell, *Awakening: How Extraterrestrial Contact Can Transform Your Life* (UK: New Mind Publishers, 2002), 230-231.
- ²³ <http://www.nthposition.com/uncanny.php>
- ²⁴ Mary Rodwell, *Awakening*, 230.
- ²⁵ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>
- ²⁶ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>
- ²⁷ Philip J. Imbrogno, *Ultraterrestrial Contact: A Paranormal Investigator's Explorations into The Hidden Abduction Epidemic* (USA: Llewellyn Publications, 2010), 237-238.
- ²⁸ <http://magonia.haaan.com/2009/the-aliens-speak-and-write-examining-alien-languages-mark-newbrook/>
- ²⁹ <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~lingdept/LT%2011.pdf>
- ³⁰ <http://www.beaugrande.com/textmillennium.htm>
- ³¹ <http://ojs.ed.uiuc.edu/index.php/pes/article/viewFile/1806/516>
- ³² <http://merkaba.tribe.net/thread/cbbc4f8c-c4bf-45bf-9652-df48554ac5cd>
- ³³ Wendt and Duvall, "Sovereignty and the UFO," 612.
- ³⁴ Jodi Dean, *Aliens in America: Conspiracy Cultures From Outerspace to Cyberspace* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 6-15.
- ³⁵ Wendt and Duvall, "Sovereignty and the UFO," 612.
- ³⁶ <http://abacus.bates.edu/eclectic/vol4iss2/pdf/troaaams.pdf>
- ³⁷ David Drysdale, *Alienated Histories, Alienating Futures: Raciology and Missing Time in The Interrupted Journey* (Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English) ESC: English Studies in Canada: Volume 34, Issue 31, March 2008, 103-123.
- ³⁸ http://home.comcast.net/~lang.craig/reed_qs.htm
- ³⁹ <http://jesserandolph.com/?p=1836>
- ⁴⁰ http://experiencers.com/media/mack_goodchild.mp3