

Do Aliens Exist?

By Roy Fletcher Oct 2019

Some say it's obvious we're not alone, others scorn the very idea and still others yet will hauntingly report their own experiences of alien probings following their casual night-time stroll through the fields of small town America. But with everything from increasingly bizarre reportings from increasingly credible sources, to basic mathematical probability suggesting the likelihood of alien life, these days, scepticism is harder won. Whatever your opinions, you may well find that the following examples have some impact on them.

ANCIENT EVIDENCE

It's easy enough to write off much recent phenomena, quoting anything from wayward weather balloons to the perpetuation of the legend and UFO sightings in pop culture providing a cohesive image of extraterrestrials for eyewitnesses to draw on should someone cry alien. But what's slightly harder to dismiss is the ancient evidence (i.e. pre the National Enquirer). Enter the 'The Madonna with Saint



Giovannino', otherwise known as the UFO painting. Created in the 15th century, it depicts the Virgin Mary and in the backdrop of the painting, a man and his dog staring up at a hovering disk-like object that is suspiciously familiar. And this painting isn't alone either, with everything from ancient cave paintings to Sanskrit Scrolls all depicting alien life. A sighting even crops up in the Bible in The Book of Ezekiel. Either this is compelling evidence, or humanity has a rich tradition of conspiracy theorists.



In the ancient city of Paracas, Peru, archaeologists have uncovered mummified remains with elongated skulls dating back to 300 BC.

STATISTICAL DATA

Back in 1961, astronomer Frank Drake devised an equation by which he could estimate the likelihood of the existence of alien life, taking into account a number of factors including the average number of planets able to support life and the fraction that could go on to support intelligent life. This was then implemented in 2001. The result: statistically, hundreds of thousands of such planets should technically exist.

UNSOLVED SIGHTINGS

There are more registered sightings of UFOs than there is the word count here to deal

with them and the majority of the time, there's a thorough debunking accompanying them. But throughout history there have been a number that have been harder to explain away, from the to 1853 sighting by a number of students and professors at the Tennessee College campus, to the oft quoted Stephenville Lights case from 2008, with over 200 witnesses spotting the UFO including three policemen who remained anonymous. Consider these compelling cases unsolved.

ASTRONAUTS' CLAIMS

If you're going to believe any reports of UFOs, you might as well trust those coming from the men who have actually been to space (who usually also come with all their teeth and a P.H.D.).

The list of those who have made claims of sightings includes Edgar Mitchell, Cady Coleman and Dr. Brian O'Leary, many also referencing government knowledge of alien existence and

cover-ups. Buzz Aldrin has also spoken of his own experience on board the Apollo 11 when they saw something flying alongside them. At first they thought it was the final stage of the detached rocket, until mission control confirmed it was 6000 miles away from them...



GOVERNMENT FILES

While some US presidents have released classified files on the subject of UFOs, with Jimmy Carter famously describing his own encounter, others still have been denied access to classified information on the subject altogether, Bill Clinton claiming to be among them. This has led many believers to suggest there's a cover up afoot. Clinton has been consistently vocal on the existence of aliens and it's worth noting his opinions on an 'Independence Day' situation, too.

NEW ARTICLE

[When Did Alien Sightings Turn Into Alien Abductions?](#) By Greg Eghigian DEC 5, 2017

Reports of encounters with extraterrestrials took a turn in the 1980s. The question is why. Before the 1980s, most alien encounters were friendly, not scary.

For 25 years after the first accounts of "flying saucer" sightings appeared in American newspapers, reported encounters with aliens were mostly just that—chance meetings, often

quite pleasant. By the mid-1980s, this had changed. A new set of stories moved into the limelight, like the one told by “Susan.”

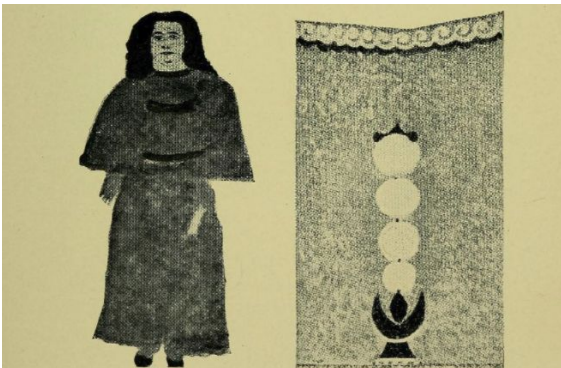
After undergoing a number of hypnosis sessions, Susan recalled an incident that occurred when she was 16 years old and living in Vermont. One night driving home alone, she saw an odd darting light in the sky. She stopped her car to watch. As she stared at the object, she got the distinct feeling that it was aware of her presence and was trying to communicate with her. Suddenly, she felt herself floating upwards, and eventually came to rest on her back on a table, inside what she took to be a craft. Two of the craft’s occupants appeared, and oversaw what could only be described as an intrusive operation. In time, it became apparent that both Susan and her then boyfriend had been abducted by these strange beings.

Susan’s story was related to the public in 1987 by the New York artist Budd Hopkins. By that time, Hopkins had established himself as one of a small number of figures researching a phenomenon that came to be called “alien abduction.” Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Hopkins—along with historian David Jacobs, writer Whitley Strieber, and psychiatrist John Mack—published bestselling books, gave talks, and did interviews detailing the accounts of individuals claiming to have been kidnapped by extraterrestrials and forced to undergo traumatizing medical procedures. Interest in these tales eventually helped inspire films like *Fire in the Sky* and the television series *The X-Files*.

To this day, the prevailing assumption is that all stories of alien contact have to do with abduction. But, in fact, accounts of contact with aliens went back more than a century and a half, and most had nothing to do with kidnapping and abuse. How and when did things change?

The idea that there are other inhabited worlds in the universe besides our own is an old one, dating back to at least the fourth century B.C. By 1750, most educated individuals in Europe accepted that extraterrestrial civilizations existed, and during the 19th century, many considered it likely that intelligent life existed on Mars, Venus, and even the moon.

Few considered it possible to establish contact with such beings, however. It wasn’t until the turn of the 20th century



that we see more claims of meeting and communicating with aliens, sometimes by entering trance-like states. One of the more famous was a Swiss woman who went by the name of H  l  ne Smith. From 1894 to 1899, she claimed to have visions in which she visited Mars and spoke with the inhabitants there. She even offered drawings of the people and landscape. In the 1890s H  l  ne Smith had visions in which she spoke to a Martian named Astan  , and reported details of everyday Martian life, including the design of their lamps. (*Illustration from From India to the Planet Mars, by Th  odore Flournoy*).

It wasn't until after World War II, however, that witnesses began describing encounters with aliens here on Earth. Starting in the early 1950s, a series of individuals—most of them men living in the southwestern United States—claimed they came across extraterrestrial visitors, who looked like humans, recounted life on their planets, and explained that their purpose here was to warn us of the dangers of nuclear destruction. These “contactees” wrote books, lectured, and gave interviews about their supposed experiences.

The encounters reported by the early contactees were overwhelming friendly, their aliens benevolent. So, why did things change? It's worth noting that some of the first claims of kidnapping and experimentation at the hands of extraterrestrials emerged as early as the mid-1960s, yet they drew only limited public interest until after 1980. In my research I've been considering a number of possible explanations.

Heightened media attention on new reproductive technologies, growing concerns over unregulated human experimentation, and recognition of mental trauma suffered by victims of abuse all helped create a public atmosphere receptive to these new claims. For whatever reason, by the mid 1980s, alien abduction time had come.

NEW ARTICLE



THE ALIENS ARE NOT AMONG US

Copyright    2011 by Les Johnson

The aliens are not among us. The truth is out there—and it is that we are not being visited by extraterrestrials. A flying saucer didn't crash at Roswell, we aren't reverse engineering alien technology at Area 51, and otherworldly tourists, anatomists or anthropologists are abducting no one from their homes. I've said it and I've said it

with certainty. Could I be wrong? Yes, and I will be the first to admit my mistake when someone brings forth credible evidence that our planet is being visited by creatures from another world. But until then, I will be a skeptic on this issue.

Carl Sagan said, “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.” Now, I may not be in the same league as Carl Sagan, but in this case I agree with him completely. Stories of strange lights in the sky, sightings of aircraft performing seemingly impossible acrobatic maneuvers before “shooting straight up,” presumably into space, or recollections of missing time after observing one of these weird aerial phenomena do not qualify as extraordinary evidence.

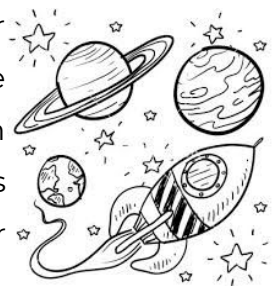
But what about the pictures? Since there have been cameras, there have been fuzzy pictures of these strange objects in the night sky. Most are obviously fake, some are clearly explainable, and, yes, some are truly puzzling—but a puzzling object seen from an aircraft window does not an alien spaceship make! Much simpler explanations (than alien visitors) are almost certainly waiting in the wings to be proffered.

I don't want to get into a debate with true believers out there who have seen something they cannot explain, or have read about an encounter that had to be with a creature from another world. Sending me pictures taken with your cell phone camera will not convince me.

Why am I so adamant? Why would I take a position that will almost certainly cause many readers to call me “closed minded”? Because the thought of us being visited by aliens from another planet *at this time* simply is so highly improbable as to be, for all practical purposes, impossible.

Let me be clear. I do believe that there may be other life in the universe. I find the thought of humanity being alone in the universe to be not only depressing, but also arrogant. Surely, if it can happen here, with us, then it can happen elsewhere also. But, almost as certainly, life is rare. Intelligent tool-using life is likely even more rare. It is incredibly unlikely that intelligent, tool using life just happens to come visit us during a brief moment in the history of our species when we are beginning to explore space ourselves. I'd better explain how I come to this conclusion : **SPACE IS BIG**

The Earth is ninety-three million miles from the Sun. If we imagine that the planets in our solar system can be represented by a series of marbles orbiting the Sun in the center of a room, then we can shrink this ninety-three million mile distance to one inch. (Scientists do this and instead of an inch, they call this distance an Astronomical Unit, or “AU.”) On this scale, Jupiter would be five inches from the Sun and the dwarf planet Pluto would be at a mere forty inches. The nearest star, Proxima Centauri, would be about four *miles* away. And that is the *nearest* star. The light from Proxima Centauri takes over four years to reach us traveling at 186,000 miles per *second*. The distance from here to Alpha Centauri is so large that scientists had to invent yet another term to make it easier to comprehend—the light year. One light year is the distance light travels in one year, making Proxima Centauri about 4.2 light years distant. Our galaxy, which contains hundreds of billions of stars, is over one hundred thousand light years across. The nearest galaxy to our own, the Andromeda Galaxy, is over *two-and-a-half-million* light years away.



According to what we know about how the universe works, our knowledge of physics, there is a natural speed limit for us and for any aliens out there: the speed of light. 186,000 miles per second is the fastest anything can go. We've never observed anything going faster and it appears that it would actually take infinite energy to accelerate anything other than light to that speed. So the best we, or any aliens, can hope to achieve is some speed that is a significant fraction of the speed of light. If we assume that we can get a spacecraft the size of the Space Shuttle to travel 75 percent of the speed of light then it would require a lot of energy. The journey would take about five-and-a-half years and require one hundred percent of humanity's current global energy consumption for 195 years! All of that energy would have to be somehow provided to the spacecraft. And that's just to get here from the *nearest* star. Crossing the gulf from farther away would lengthen the travel time considerably, only making the duration of such journeys even harder to believe when compared to a human, and presumably, alien lifetime.

All right, so an interstellar voyage will take a while and require lots of energy. Surely, out there somewhere, someone or something may have the interest and ability to take the trip. Well, yes, perhaps, but it doesn't seem very likely.

INTELLIGENT, TOOL-USING ALIENS ARE VERY, VERY, RARE

Putting one's religious beliefs aside, life appears to have developed and evolved on planet Earth over about four billion years. Biologists can show that we humans are merely the latest development of a series of evolutionary processes and historical events spanning this chasm of time. We are not the inevitable byproduct of evolution.

Alas, this is not the case. The Theory of Evolution says that species evolve to survive and those physical characteristics that allow a species to survive, prosper and reproduce will propagate and preserve as long as they are useful survival characteristics. If a mutation doesn't serve a useful purpose in keeping the creature in which the mutation occurred alive long enough to reproduce, then it is not likely to be one that is passed on to future generations. The world is not simply a tug of war between competing species with generations born, living and dying, some passing on their more successful characteristics to future generations. No, events play a pivotal role and some events are true game changers. Arguably one of the most successful species ever to inhabit the Earth, the dinosaurs, had their reign end rather abruptly about 75 million years ago when an errant meteor is thought to have hit the Earth, dramatically changing the climate of the entire planet, making it less hospitable to dinosaurs and more hospitable to the small, furry mammals from whence we descended. This pivotal event in the Earth's history is the one that allows us to exist and ponder how we happen to be here.

But, as they say, there is more to the story. What characteristics must a species have to build spaceships that would travel between the stars? Alien life would have to be intelligent in order to figure out how to build spaceships. Okay, so intelligence is a survival trait that has allowed humanity to survive and reproduce. But is it the only trait required for a technological society? Not by a long shot.

Consider dolphins. Many believe that dolphins are intelligent, that they have language and that they experience many of the higher-order thought processes that we previously considered being the

sole province of humanity. That's just great for the dolphins—as they swim around in the ocean, seemingly carefree, playing with each other and amusing human biologists and tourists alike. But without fire they will never be able to alter their environment to build spaceships.

Consider the dolphins again and let's assume they are, or will be able to be, as intelligent as humans. Even without the fire issue, how will they be able to manipulate their environment to make things without hands and fingers? Better yet, how could they do this without opposable thumbs? Without the ability to grasp, making tools is much more difficult and making complex tools is likely impossible. So, from an evolution-to-space-traveling-species point of view, being a dolphin is a dead end.

What, then, is the likelihood of natural processes creating life and that life evolving a species that is intelligent, capable of using tools, making fire, and curious enough to invent space travel? It is clearly not zero, after all, we're in the process of doing just that. But I can say it is a very low probability.

DEEP TIME IS UNDERESTIMATED

We humans in the developed world have, on average, a lifespan of fifty to eighty years. We have recorded history going back a few thousand years. There is archeological evidence that humans have been around for one hundred thousand years; most of that time was spent in the “survival mode” without a whole lot in the way of civilization being built, let alone spaceships.



Current estimates place the age of the universe at about 13.75 billion years. That's 13,750,000,000 years for those of you who like to see all the zeros. The earliest stars in the universe probably didn't give rise to life because the early universe was lacking most of the elements in the periodic table – including most of those we require for our physical bodies to exist. Elements lighter than iron, including the carbon, nitrogen and oxygen which, when combined with hydrogen, make up much of the stuff from which we are made, were formed

inside those early stars as their fusion processes converted primordial hydrogen and helium into them. Elements heavier than iron had to wait for massive stars to explode as novae or supernovae in order to be created. It took time for these processes to occur and it is because of them that we are here. To again quote Carl Sagan, “We are made of star stuff.”

The Earth is about 4.5 billion years old. In that time, evolution has produced many species, some of which have been quite successful—from an evolutionary point of view. Consider again, for example, the dinosaurs. They reigned supreme over the Earth for about 180 million years, disappearing about 75 million years ago. According to fossil and genetic evidence, modern humans have been around for only about 100,000 years, or 0.1 million years. Hmmm. 75 million versus 0.1 million—it sounds like those dinosaurs had a pretty good run.

But what does this have to do with alien visitors? Well, if you strictly play a numbers game and look at the age of the Earth, not even considering the age of the universe, what is the probability that

alien visitors who are, by all alleged accounts, no more than a few hundred years ahead of us technologically, would just happen to start paying a visit to the Earth when we humans are here to see them? Looking at our fractional time of existence on the planet, which is roughly 100,000 divided by 4,500,000,000 (0.00002 or 0.002 percent), the chances are slim that they would be here at a time when humans exist at all. Slimmer still is the chance of them happening by when we have a technological civilization. If we liberally define a “technological civilization” as one in which we know that the Earth revolves around the Sun, then we can date its beginning with the publication of *De revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres) by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543—merely ~500 years ago. What is the chance we’ve been visited by aliens since that time? Roughly $500/4,500,000,000 = 0.0000001$ or 0.00001 percent. Folks, that is a pretty *small* number.

Let me be blunt: the chance of an alien species evolving, developing intelligence with the physical characteristics that allow them to make fire and use tools, evolving to the point at which they can travel through space (obeying nature’s speed limit), crossing immense distances, and just happening to reach Earth at a time that we, too, are starting to explore space is, within any reasonable rounding error, ZERO.

At this point, some might say, “But Les, *you* are now underestimating the effect of deep time! Science and technology are advancing at an amazing pace. Who’s to say that ET hasn’t found a way to tap the quantum vacuum energy (or some other breakthrough). Look how much we’ve accomplished in the last 500 years—maybe the extraterrestrials are a thousand years ahead of us technologically.”

My conclusion is unchanged. Look at the odds. It wouldn’t make a difference if they were 50,000 years ahead of us technologically. The odds of them being *here, now, and with a technology that we would recognize* are too small to worry about. Might such a super civilization have visited the Earth in the past? Perhaps. If so, then it is far more likely that they arrived to find an Earth populated with dinosaurs and not human beings.



Actually, I truly wish they were here. I’d like to think that the universe abounds with intelligent, tool-using species that travel between the stars. I want there to be a Federation of Planets with myriad species learning from each other and exploring the great unknown that is the universe. I am not so naïve to assume that in such a future there wouldn’t be conflict. I can put up with conflict in my wish list for the future; though I doubt there would be massive interstellar wars given the impracticality of interstellar travel to begin with.