



# Eastern Michigan University

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Dec. 27, 1982

Dear Gary,

Sorry for my delay in responding to what is now three of your letters. Let me take up each chronologically.

Re your letter to me of November 20th: I find it most surprising that you send me as your "evidence" of what "deception" Hynek was supposedly practicing on the "Good Morning, America" show materials by Ken Frazier in which Ken imputes motives and meanings to Hynek's actions based on what Ken assumes Hynek must have been thinking. Surely you can see that there could be many reasons why Hynek did not leap into a suggestion that Venus was the explanation. It is not necessary to impute foul motives to him just because you and Frazier would have preferred it if he had publicly pushed for the Venus explanation. Frankly, I would have preferred it if Hynek had done so, too; but I would not leap to the inferences you and Ken seem so glibly willing to make about his motives and his thoughts on that occasion. And I remind you that the New Zealand flap ended up with details that do not fit the Venus explanation that was at first offered for other reports as well. I read Hynek as simply expressing caution about any conclusions and waiting for the frame by frame analysis while Ken wants the public immediately "set straight" that the Venus conjecture may end up the solution to this case. Frazier sees the primary mission to be one of making sure the public does not think this may be a UFO while Hynek seems to think his primary obligation must be to investigate this case fully before making any conclusions about it publicly.

Regarding your case of the unicorn parallels: Stating the unicorn-exists hypothesis in certain fashions might make it nonfalsifiable. Thus, the hypothesis would not be a scientific one if framed that way. The evidence for the existence of unicorns is not convincing (though it is surprisingly good if you are familiar with the actual evidence cited) to me or to most scientists. But if the unicorn is described as simply a horned horse, one without any special paranormal-like abilities as some legends would have it, the hypothesis that such a simple horned-horse might have once lived is hardly a very extraordinary claim (it does not contradict any zoological laws and only becomes extraordinary if we adopt a far more elaborated portrait of its "powers"); thus, its proof really need not be that extraordinary. But let me return to the central point with this. Science does not have the burden of proving that unicorns (or UFOs) do not exist. The burden of proof is on the claimant, as usual. If the cases of "Dr. Alvin Hychuck" put forward on unicorns failed to convince a scientific panel, the bottom line would be that we would conclude that the evidence was unconvincing and science would act on the assumption that unicorns did not exist. But this is not the same as saying that unicorns were disproven. This is where you are confused, in my view. You confuse disproven with unproven. The unproved is treated as unestablished; the negative is presumed. But that is not the same as having the negative established. All of this is not to say that disproof is impossible. Suppose that a particular witness of the unicorn admitted that he had lied or that we could prove that the witness was actually somewhere other than he claimed at the time of his alleged sighting. This claim by the witness might then be actually disproved. There are cases of unicorns and UFOs being reported where we

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can actually disprove the claim being made. But usually we do not go that far. We simply establish that the evidence for the claim is not strong enough to surmount the strong presumptions of extraordinariness about the thing claimed. In most cases, we say that the witness was probably sincere but in error. We are right in doing so, usually. But that is not to be confused with actually disproving the claim. As I keep saying to you, unconvincing evidence is pragmatically similar in its effects to having disconfirming evidence. So, we can say that we feel that unicorns are almost certainly entirely mythological; they almost certainly have never really existed. But we can not say that they absolutely have never existed. When Aristotle tells us he saw a unicorn, we think it more likely that he was mistaken than that he actually saw one. But unless we have an actual disproof, a disconfirmation, we should not entirely shut the door on this matter. We must recognize that our conclusions are probabilistic rather than logically-empirically airtight. \*

I don't think we really do disagree about what it takes to get a negative result. The difference between us most likely revolves around the adequacy of the mundane explanations offered by Klass and others for some of the UFO reports. I simply have found many of Phil's explanations inadequate given what I believe to be the facts needing explanation.

Let me be clear about one matter with you. There probably are pro-UFO folk out there who maintain a nonfalsifiable view of UFOs. I would condemn any such views as nonscientific. But that is not my own viewpoint.

In regard to your Statement of Common Objectives, I see that one point needs to be clarified that I had not earlier appreciated. Your second paragraph clarifying the term UFO should say "will here be taken to encompass" rather than "actually encompasses." I am quite happy to define the term UFO this way in relation to this statement and future related statements, but I did not mean to suggest that this is really the proper definition of UFO as I generally have meant it in my past or other writings. You seem to have later been bothered by my not taking this definition of yours as my own preferred definition, as though I had agreed with you on this definition outside the functions it has in this Statement. This is important since by this Statement's definition of UFOs, I find (e) and (f) far from empirically established. Thus, by this definition, I am personally not agnostic but inclined to disbelief rather than mere nonbelief. But by my own definition of UFOs used regularly by me, items (e) and (f) are not part of my definition --and I don't think they are part of CUFOS' definition even if Hynek and many other CUFOS members may believe in (e) and (f) about UFOs without making that part of their definition. In other words, by your definition here, I am a disbeliever in UFOs while by the more general definition (the one I have been using and that which I think CUFOS and Hynek actually have put forward), I am agnostic (a skeptical nonbeliever rather than a denier).

Gary, none of this is to say that I am completely consistent in my views. I think I am consistent, and I want to be and try to be. Corresponding with you has raised some of these issues in my own consciousness, and that is valuable to me. You may in due course be able to persuade me that I am inconsistent in ways I do not now appreciate. But I don't think you have done so thus far.

I turn now to your letter of November 26th: I appreciate that you accept my sincerity even if Klass does not. Let me comment on the matters you raise.

In terms of your Statement's definition of UFOs, Hynek is a believer in UFOs. But in my 8/29 letter, I was referring to your definition offered in your 8/15 letter to me in which you define a true UFO as implying "phenomena foreign to our present concepts of the universe." I think your 8/15 definition goes a bit further than your recent Statement (compare your (d) part which is

\* So, a contemporary pursuer of unicorns has a very very low probability of finding one; but his search -- especially if he believes he saw one -- is not irrational or necessarily unreasonable so long as he understands his odds.



less exotic than your earlier phrasing). The central point, however, is that in my conversations with Hynek, I get the clear idea that he differentiates between what he scientifically knows and what he is inclined to believe about UFOs. Thus, he thinks the evidence "points" to a marvelous and momentous new area unexplored by science. But he does not--at least has not with me--contend that the evidence is convincing for this viewpoint. It is his belief, his assessment; he has not claimed that it is the only reasonable evaluation possible for others. Again, in terms of your earlier definition (8/15), I think Hynek does retain doubts about his own beliefs and hypotheses about UFOs being that momentous for science. So, he would be a "skeptic" to that extent. But in terms of your newer definition, he does accept (e) and (f) as part of his definition of UFOs, so by this definition he would not be a skeptic but a believer. (And, as I noted earlier, I would disagree with Hynek on this.)

You are quite right that <sup>much</sup> common terminology today would probably not call being doubtful towards all proposed solutions (as is Hynek) a skeptical position. And the term skeptic has come to be used towards those like yourself who believe in prosaic solutions. But, as I argued with you earlier, this current usage is actually semantically incorrect. A skeptic is one who doubts, not one who denies. Denial is a position claiming knowledge, not doubt. This is not a new point from me. The point has been made many times in the past by others. What has confused matters is the relativity of this term as it is used. You and others are doubters of paranormal and extraordinary claims. You are skeptics towards those claims. But there are extraordinary claimants (like Stanton Friedman with his ETH views) and agnostics towards both the extraordinary and the prosaic explainers. From what I can read and put together, Hynek is in that middle position. He claims only that a legitimate puzzle exists in UFO reports. He also thinks that this is an important puzzle for science (something I have great reservations about). He is like a voter who thinks the upcoming election is going to be terribly important but who has not yet decided who to vote for; there is something wrong with all the candidates. Perhaps I can make the matter clearer to you by speaking of the psi research area with which I am far more familiar. Lots of pro-psi research people do not necessarily believe in ESP but think something remarkable is happening in psi experiments. People like me and Ray Hyman think that we are likely to make methodological strides in this area by learning about new sources of experimental error we had not previously known about. We only argue that something anomalous and worth investigating is going on. We think the psi hypothesis (like the ETH in ufology) is probably wrong, but we also doubt the mundane explanations of people of like Hansel. People like Hansel do not bring doubt to this area, they bring "answers." Skeptics raise questions rather than bring answers. Ray and I would agree that Hansel is a nonfalsifiable denier of psi; he is improperly called a skeptic for he knows the "answer." He has no doubts at all, really. I think the same sort of thing exists in ufology. The problem is that deniers like Klass (in my view) lump the agnostics in with the believers. This not only obscures the true skeptics (the agnostics) but mislabels the deniers as doubters, which they are not. I am happy to say that my distinction (really the old one) is now returning into parapsychological discussions. I hope it does so for ufology, too.

Turning to your second numbered point and the questions there. As I have indicated, I think there are genuine anomalies in the UFO area and that some of these seem to imply "new phenomena." I think that some of the new explanations offered by people like Persinger may have merit. Some of even the "silly" new explanations like the big "school" of bugs postulated about a year ago may explain some sightings. I think the unusual plasmas that Phil suggests may be part of the answer. But when it comes to the more exotic things like the "missing time" reports and the abduction tales, I think we are dealing with material for new psychological and physiological theories. We actually know very little scientifically about



dissociation and fugue states. I think much of what we are witnessing is anomalous psychology rather than anomalous stuff in natural science.

Perhaps I was somewhat unclear about the matter of loose ends. There are big and little loose ends in the area of UFO reports. I think some of the big loose ends have not been tied up, so that is why the puzzle area remains legitimate. I do not contend the puzzle is legitimate because small loose ends remain untied. Small loose ends are inevitable and will probably always be with us. But I think there are gross problems with some of the prosaic explanations offered for some of the cases. I can see that what I wrote was probably misleading to you. I stand corrected on that. We can speak of big and little loose ends, or we can speak of "gross problems" and "little loose ends." The point is, I do not wish to argue in a circle as my language led you to perceive I was. For myself, if the NAS were to examine X cases and conclude that all of the cases examined were genuinely of insufficient merit to warrant a conclusion that a genuine anomaly was present, and if I agreed with the general reasoning put forward by the NAS (for I do not accept their conclusions based merely on their authority; similar commission have been wrong in the past, as with meteorites), that would be quite good enough for me. As I said earlier, I would not insist that every piddling little element be neatly handled. I would concur that these cases were unconvincing, and I would treat the UFO case as a judgement against the proponents. I would not consider this to be the final coffin nail in the coffin to bury UFO claims. But it would be strong argument, indeed. And I would be reluctant to seek another such adjudication without rather stronger new evidence being put forward. But at the same time, I must emphasize that I would have to find the proceedings and the arguments reasonable. After all, I found the Condon Commission pretty terrible.

I turn now to your letter of November 27th: I think I have taken up some of the points in this letter in my above comments. As I emphasize now, the UFO definition of your Statement is fine for the purposes of that statement and whatever this new bipartisan committee wishes to state about UFOs. If Klass wishes to adopt that definition with me for our exchanges, that is all right with me if we clearly understand that and do not then try to use this new definition to show alleged contradictions in my past positions when I did not adopt that definition. The fact is that Klass and I have been corresponding for many years now without benefit of your definition. I naturally write to Phil in terms of our past communication context. There is nothing wrong with this "inconsistency" so long as all parties are aware of the shifts in the definitions adopted. I have not intended to mislead anyone about these matters.

In principle, I don't object to having the Statement's UFO definition be part of the proposal to the NAS. But I must naturally leave that to be negotiated between Phil and Hynek. (Actually, all this may be moot since I have yet to hear from Hynek on any of this NAS business.)

I turn now to your numbered points. (1) I have only recently been sent Klass's letter to McCarthy (presumably what you mean by his "response." I do not find it at all adequate, for I think Phil simply does not understand the norms involved that make me and others judge his actions towards MacDonald harshly. Yes, I think (but don't know) that McCarthy was a "believer" in UFOs prior to his thesis, but I hardly see that as critical if we are to judge his thesis on the basis of its evidence and arguments. His evidence seems unconnected with his own biases so far as I read the thesis. (2) I have not confronted Phil with the personal matters between him and Hynek. I have no reason to doubt them since Phil has done many similar things with other people and has never denied them (he thinks such actions are justified and proper, just as he thinks his actions against MacDonald were proper). I am ~~sure~~ that Phil would similarly defend his actions re Hynek.

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\* Obviously what you or I saw as a "piddling" loose end might be seized upon by an advocate as a "gross problem." There are possible areas of reasonable difference here. But I think you and I would agree about such matters for the most part.



\* (3) I thought I earlier had stated to you that I personally think the Carter UFO report has been adequately explained eventhough there remain some loose (small) ends. (4) I don't know about you, but I think Klass's actions evidence that he is indeed seeking to close the door on UFO matters. I have in the past sought to have Klass work cooperatively with UFO proponents including Hynek. He has refused. He has not even been willing to enter the dialogues on UFOs with others in ZS when that opportunity has been frequently offered him. Perhaps that is simply because he dislikes me and ZS and is not relevant. Perhaps I misjudge Phil on this matter. I must say that his rather reasonable posture on the NAS business is forcing me to reconsider his orientation on this point. But there remain problems for me with his past behaviors. For example, I earlier tried to encourage him to join with Hynek to get some independent party to seek funding to examine Phil's plasma theory as a possible UFO explanation. He seemed unwilling to do this. But I must admit that Hynek was equally unwilling to join forces with Phil. But I guess the critical thing here for me is that by Phil's lumping all UFO proponents into some sort of simplistic "believer" category-- a label he then uses to argue ad hominem against their arguments and evidence-- he tars all with the same brush and functionally tends to bury the good (protoscience) along with the bad (pseudoscience). Nonetheless, I must emphasize that this is one area I may misjudge Phil on. I can only say that I am reconsidering the evidence and look forward to new evidence from him (and you) that you wish to promote constructive rather than destructive criticism of ufology. I assure you that I really would prefer to believe that Phil is as you picture him on this matter. (5) Preparation of a list of my own residue cases will take some time, I will try to do that for you in a later letter (this one is already getting out of hand in size). (6) I will send you some ZS editorials,\* but you should consider subscribing. (7) Priorities for scientific research are largely subjective. If Cancer research is high for most people, I must confess it is rather lower for me, partly because I distrust the cancer research establishment. But in terms of the public interest, with cancer getting a rating of 90, I would rank UFO research about 10, Bigfoot about 6, unicorns about .10 and fairies about .0001. Psi research I would rank about 12. I do not consider most anomalies of great priority for science relative to things like finding a cure for the cold or for herpes. Similarly, I would not consider government aid to research in sociology (my own field) as anything like its current level of funding. I think most of the behavioral sciences are over-funded. But this is subjective, as I said. But what is low priority for science, and the public, may be high priority for individuals interested in the subject. So, I would rate anomaly research as high on my personal priorities while I would not seek to impose my priority upon the general scientific community. And, of course the level of priority should not suggest no funding be given, only that relatively less funding be given to the lower priority items. (8) The problem here is your use of the term "publicly." I have told CUFOs members and anyone who has asked me. I have knocked some UFO authors in my book reviews in ZS. I make no secret of my condemnation of pseudoscience within ufology as elsewhere. But I have not gone out of my way to actively condemn and debunk. I prefer the constructive approach of praising protoscience rather than the destructive approach of concentrating by attacking pseudoscience. But I do not condemn attacking the true pseudoscientists by others. When Phil does a good job, for example, I am willing to tell him and others so. (9) Klass's attacks are almost always of an ad hominem character. This has been documented over and over again and is admitted by many who share his dislike for UFO proponents. The reason why many in science have admired Phil's attacks is because (a) they don't know the full facts, and he fits with their biases, and (b) Phil is a "hit man" for science as defined by Ray Hyman in Ray's article on "pathological science" (in ZS#6 but also now reprinted elsewhere).

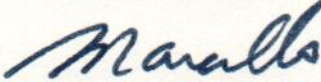
The last part of your letter again misrepresents me. Perhaps this letter will clarify rather than further obscure my arguments for you. We shall see.

\* next week when the office is reopened (with its xerox machine).



Regarding the matter of anomalies being important or not. You seem to have misunderstood my point. I think anomalies in general are important for science. But I don't have good reason to think that UFOs represent particularly important anomalies. My guess is that UFOs are far less important than lots of other anomaly areas (including psi research).

Happy Holidays,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marcello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'M' being particularly large and stylized.

Marcello Truzzi

P.S. I can not help but wonder if you have actually read the Jacobs and Clark articles on Klass. If you have not and want to, I could send you copies.

Since your letters to me do not indicate that you are sending copies to Phil or elsewhere, I send this letter only to you. However, feel free to share my correspondence with you with Klass, Hynek or Clark.



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January 2, 1983

Dear Marcello,

Many thanks for your delayed, but greatly appreciated, letter of 12/27. My response in order:

You may choose to believe that Hynek, in his GMA appearance, was "simply expressing caution about any conclusions and waiting for the frame by frame analysis..." But if his interest was "caution", why did he not "caution" his viewers that (per his letter of 3/16/79 to Frazier) there "was certainly strong evidence that the object was indeed Venus...The probability was high but...not 1.00". Instead, millions were left to conclude that the "Galileo of Ufology" was stumped by another unexplained case---one of the most famous in recent years. I cannot help but assume his motives to be as you described them (in another context) in your letter to me of 9/12: "Hynek goes on a talk show...and infuriates people...(sometimes me...) by not making it clear to the audience...that Hynek does not believe it was a legitimate...encounter...Hynek is particularly anxious to get people in the audience to be willing to come forward to his Center with reports..."

Regarding your response to my series of questions about Alvin and the unicorns (not to be confused with Alvin and the Chipmunks, a novelty singing group from the early 1960s)---I assume that your answers are as follows (please refer to enclosed copy of my letter of 11/20):

- (1) Yes (2) No (3) No, unless one captures the suspected animal, or the witness admits to a hoax. (4) No  
(5) No, but they can be labeled "almost certainly mythical".  
(6) Unanswered (7) Yes (8) Yes (?) (9) Unanswered  
(10) Unanswered (11) ~~Unanswered~~

If I have misinterpreted any of your answers, or if you wish to answer the other questions, please pick up on this theme in your next letter.

You still feel that I "confuse disproven with unproven". I can't understand why you continue to insist that this is so. My series of questions about unicorns demonstrates my awareness that it is impossible to disprove a jealous phenomenon, and that, as you agree, science bears no burden to disprove a phenomenon in order to render a "negative judgement" as to its reality within the context of the scientific method. And I refer you back to my letter of 9/3 on the same theme.

Enclosed is the fourth draft of our Statement, incorporating your suggestion in a way that I hope will be agreeable to you, since you seem to find it a generally superior definition upon which



to base future committees, etc. Regarding your reservations about the Statement's usefulness as a universal definition because of parts (e) and (f) in paragraph 2:

(e) was added at your own suggestion (refer to your letter to me of 10/17) Note: At that time, it was labeled as (f):

(f) was suggested by me because Hynek is always emphasizing this point.

If you wish, either or both of these parts of our definition can be modified or deleted.

Again on p. 3 of your letter we find that "A skeptic is one who doubts, not one who denies." I have already referred you back to my letter of 9/3. How much doubt does Hynek have about UFO reality? And do I deny the possibility of UFO reality?

I appreciate your clarification of the "loose ends" matter. Also appreciated is your pledge on p. 4 which states (with noted reservations) that:

"For myself, if NAS were to examine X cases and conclude that all...were genuinely of insufficient merit to warrant a conclusion that a genuine anomaly was present,..that would be quite good enough for me...and I would treat the UFO case as a judgement against the proponents...And I would be reluctant to seek another such adjudication without rather stronger new evidence being put forward."

In your response to my letter of 11/27, you rather quickly disposed of the first half, so let me know if my inferences are in error:

- Although my submitted "UFO" report fits within your longstanding definition, you recognize that this is because of the shortcomings of your old definition, and not because the "strangeness" of my report warrants its inclusion as a "UFO". Presumably you now have one more reason for considering making our joint definition your new working definition.

- You no longer wish to argue that my colleagues are the proponents, and Hynek et al. are the skeptics, with regard to the question of UFO reality. You are agreeable (as your pledge [my word] indicates) to a UFO study that properly places the burden of proof on Hynek et al.

With regard to your responses to my "numbered points":

(1) I have since borrowed and read the McCarthy thesis. If you wish, we can debate this subject at length. I agree with Phil that the thesis proves illegalities that Phil had only suspected, and that Phil's actions were proper and appropriate. As for your statement that "I think (but don't know) that McCarthy was a 'believer' in UFOs prior to his thesis...", I refer you to his remarkable Preface:



p. v. "In the jargon of the field of ufology, I was a believer. By this I mean I felt that the Earth was experiencing extraterrestrial visitation...the conspiracy hypothesis...I concluded the government and/or Air Force intentionally covered-up the fact..."

p. ix. "...there is really no way to convey how impressed I became with McDonald. If there were some doubts about... ETH, after going through his files they were alleviated."

p. xvi. "Yet this does not mean my substantive UFO bias will not be a factor...I am at least aware of this problem and to some degree am able to rectify it and alert the reader." (emphasis added)

p. xvii. "...it is in the nature of a subject such as this that one does not get involved unless one has an axe to grind."

p. xviii. "...a function of my psychological predisposition to believe one group of investigator over another. Not necessarily because they are correct, but because I would like to think they are correct...I know that my psychological predisposition is playing a larger role in my conclusion than is intersubjectively verifiable evidence\*...Therefore, this bias may subtly influence the matter in which the data in this study is arrayed. It may make one group of scientists appear to be 'good guys' and the other group not so good."

(2) I presume that you do not wish to specify even a single example of one of the "personal things that have allegedly happened between them (Hynek and Klass)", although you assume Phil's guilt.

(3) You may have previously so stated, but your signals have been mixed. In your letter of 11/15 you clearly argue that in the Carter case, "...if Venus is being claimed, that object should match the description given. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. Thus, Sheaffer uses Venus to explain Jimmy Carter's sighting even though it leaves a number of loose ends unaccounted for. To that degree, that Venus explanation may be a pseudo-explanation...that conjectured explanation is not an example of skepticism but an example of a positive claim of some sort..."

Q: In your opinion, within the context of scientific methodology, does the Carter case remain a true UFO, or has there been a valid "negative judgement" that is "quite good enough for me"?

(4) Regarding your belief that Phil is trying to "close the door for future investigation" of UFOs---How can you say this, especially in light of his Nov. 28 letter to you in which he specifically agrees to sign a petition to NAS? And do you really consider UFOs EXPLAINED to be "destructive" as opposed to "constructive

\* Do you still insist that "His evidence seems unconnected with his own biases...?"



criticism" of ufology? As you admit, you may be misjudging him.

(5) and (6) I look forward to your list, and the editorials. And I will consider subscribing to ZS.

(7) Thank you for your response. But I wonder how you can assign unicorns a rating of three orders of magnitude greater than fairies, whose existence Sir Arthur Conan Doyle so persuasively established (to some).

(8) I have no specific comment, although I suspect that Phil might. I know that he feels that you fail to criticize UFO proponents when such criticism is due. I can't really disagree with that, although of course I have no way of knowing how much private criticism you may convey.

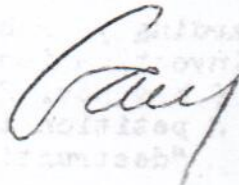
(9) As always, you refuse to specify even a single example which we could discuss. Again, I request one or two (or as many as you like) specific examples.

I can understand your feeling that the end of my last letter misrepresents you. Perhaps so. Your latest letter does contain some clarifications (as well as your admission of possible inconsistencies) that do render your viewpoints more understandable.

As for Jacobs' and Clark's articles, I have read (and possess) some of them. I find them unconvincing, terribly inaccurate in many instances (as Phil has pointed out), and sometimes seemingly dishonest in their intent. I have no respect for Clark as a journalist, and not a great deal more for Jacobs (based upon some limited firsthand experience with him, as well as knowledge of his sloppy research regarding Phil). This is why I continue to ask you for examples of Phil's "violations of proper science", dishonesty, or anything else, rather than have you refer me to authors whose work I do not respect, and cannot assume to be accurate.

Although I have not been putting "cc:" at the end of most of my letters, you can always assume that I send a copy to Phil, and to no one else, unless otherwise noted. Unless you wish for Clark and Hynek to receive my letters, I shall continue to not burden them with my enlightened thoughts.

Best wishes for the New Year,



cc: Phil Klass  
Ken Frazier