

THE “UFO WAVES” REVIEW PROJECT

An Invitation to Participate in a Joint Research on the Literature of UFO Waves

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ABSTRACT

In December 2015 there was published the most comprehensive bibliography on “UFO waves,” one of the most defining features of UFO phenomena.

It is scientifically imperative that a synthesis of all research be achieved in order to appraise the knowledge acquired over the years.

The present essay invites the participation of both UFO students and academic researchers to review all work done to date on UFO waves and flaps.

This multidisciplinary and collective experience is unprecedented in the history of ufology, and the reader is invited to join the project.

The final version of a paper entitled “UFO Waves: An International Bibliography” was released in December 2015. It is available at the following link in the GEIPAN’s website:

http://www.cnes-geipan.fr/typo3conf/ext/dam_frontend/pushfile.php?docID=11383

This release marks the start of a project I am planning as an international group effort. It aims to synthesize what has been learned, discerned, or theorized over the years concerning the peculiar, universal phenomenon of UFO “waves” or “flaps.”

The modern study of UFOs was born in 1947. Naturally, many researchers are unaware of what has been written on this subject in the decades since then. Most English-speaking investigators have missed literature penned in other languages. In my judgment, the synthesis I am proposing to develop is fully necessary. It will be of benefit to all UFO students worldwide, as well as to historians and other academics.

In science, a mandatory step when preparing a research work is a literature review of the subject. This is what I am empowering my colleagues to do in this particular area. I am establishing a task force of UFO students and experts in academia, aimed at reviewing all listed references and composing a summary of findings and methodology, which is both an exposition and an evaluation of the facts and theories posed by the authors.

The basic goal is to prepare a very short summary of content (findings and methods) for each reference. It intends to be a review of every item listed in the above compilation. It will allow organizing and structuring all knowledge achieved up to the present day. It will therefore condense, collate, and assess the various conclusions arrived at by those who have researched the occurrence of waves of UFO reports in the world. Some have simply

noted statistical results that put forward substantial reporting peaks in certain years, periods, or countries. Others have analyzed the structure of waves, while others went further and proposed repeated cycles in peaks of UFO observations. Finally, other authors tried to enumerate the prosaic reasons why those waves occurred naturally.

With this in mind, I am formally inviting you to participate as part of this team. The job consists of selecting one or more items (with no maximum) from the above-cited bibliography (articles, papers, book chapters, monographs, or books) and write a brief abstract of findings and results, including a critical assessment when necessary. According to the length of the original source, the canonical summary will extend from a few lines to a maximum of one page. Emphasis will be on presenting—in abridged form—either true findings or detected failures in data-collection, methodology, and conclusions. A minimum of rhetoric or narrative is encouraged. At the same time, it seeks to highlight quantitative data and to show the core of every reviewed source. The program needs to count on specialists in ufology, university experts (with or without prior familiarity with the UFO literature), or any professional eager to employ his/her skills to review, summarize, and evaluate UFO essays. The common language will be English.

The *modus operandi* is simple. Under my general supervision, Spanish physicist Julio Plaza del Olmo will coordinate this group effort. He will correspond with volunteer evaluators, control the selection of papers, provide writing standards (a form with reference data already embedded, as well as a checklist to assist in the preparation of summaries), and will check all input to ensure compliance to guidelines. As acting editor, he will compile all the summaries, sort them under a number of main topics, and enter all input into a properly-designed template.

The net result will be a concise paper for future publication. I foresee the “end product” as a multi-author database that serves as a consultation reservoir for finding research material useful for comprehending the state-of-the-art on topics directly related to UFO waves. I am convinced this will be most helpful to many investigators’ current or future work. It will summarize in a single source almost seven decades of UFO study. Then, this work will become a definitive reference in itself, allowing anyone to have a quick overview of the main conclusions, relevance, and strong and weak points of the reviewed literature. In the meantime, any reviewer is free to publish his/her own reviews elsewhere.

If you agree to join this team of reviewers, the first step is to select the reference or references you plan to review. Your selection of materials may be driven by your personal criteria, for example:

(1) Language. Texts written in English, or material in languages other than English (in the present set of references: Spanish, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, Russian, or Ukrainian.)

(2) A specific topic (e.g. waves prior to 1947, contemporary waves, general research, general discussion, or theories and hypotheses.) See the Appendix for specifics.

(3) Other (e.g. a specific region, a specific author, a specific sourcebook, etc.)

The bibliography supplies links to online articles and papers. For those references not online, at your request we will provide you with the selected material in the form of PDF or Word.doc files. For books or large monographs, reviewers preferably must own the texts to review.

This joint project attempts to realize the objectives of a recent paper that contemplates the future of ufology.¹ It recommends that, after 70 years of UFO reports, in order to objectively know exactly where we are in terms of actual knowledge, we should isolate, collect, arrange, order and discuss all items categorized as discoveries, findings, or results made during decades of UFO research. Work should target potential or supposed patterns observed in the mass of UFO sighting reports or their detected key variables.

Sound UFO information is poorly organized, in my view due to the absence of rigorous, standard authoritative criteria. There are some good encyclopedias², but—logically—they are limited by criteria imposed by the publishers (i.e., the market). In order to change this situation and elevate the level of quality of UFO data, we must effectively perform as information curators: save, maintain, organize, and distill the information. As the paperwork (and its digital counterpart) is immense, it is advisable to focus on particular, essential subjects. Similar to what has been achieved with the bibliography on UFO waves, this process must be followed by abstracting knowledge on other key variables of UFO phenomena like geography, intensity, duration, noise, physical effects, physiological effects, the problem of indistinguishability, event classification systems, weight gauging systems, etc.

The bibliography on UFO waves that I have compiled accurately shows that intense, repeated sightings of aerial vessels or unconventional aircraft date back to the late 1800s. At least. For some researchers, there is a historical continuum of sky wonders defying established wisdom from antiquity to our days. In every epoch, these have been given names, described, and interpreted in line with contemporary scientific knowledge, culture, or societal fears and tensions. In modern times (since the 19th century), these have been called airships, mystery airplanes, ghost rockets, or flying saucers. Under this line of thought, these sets of phenomena were unsolved because the impetus for every subset of events is different in every case. Its solution requires delving into current-time sociology, expectations, social panics, etc. To make things more complicated, the answers to individual sightings are as numerous as the actual reports, which are unfairly lumped together under different labels, UFOs being the most celebrated tag of all.

There is another philosophical position from which to view this recurrent situation. An anomaly that only the classical, well-known ETH would satisfactorily explain. It is the nuts

and bolts hypothesis that points to the arrival of extraterrestrial vehicles as the generator of true observations. Sightings of a phenomenon that our culture cannot grasp and that our technology is incapable of matching. Their visits, for reasons that escape us, are not normalized or regular, coming in much more dense proportions during a certain period (waves), to vanish later without a permanent trace.

An in-depth analysis of all information at hand should settle which one of the two hypotheses fits the data best. For that reason, it is fundamental, indeed it is vital, to collect and evaluate all information from decades of UFO research. The collective project that commences through the present communication attempts to make this come true.

Philosophers of science propose five major criteria to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific disciplines: “(1) is empirical, (2) seeks certainty, (3) proceeds by the use of the scientific method, (4) describes the observable world, not an unobservable one, and (5) is cumulative and progressive³.” The reader can promptly realize that one of the multiple impediments that prevents ufology from becoming eligible as a science is the notorious lack of built-up knowledge. Important discoveries are either inaccessible (language barrier, remote publications) or simply lost in a morass of worthless articles. Consequently, major findings went unnoticed (and, conversely, false results gained excessive attention) and knowledge was dispersed and did not build on itself.

The final joint paper I am envisaging attempts to set up solid and objective foundations of knowledge on the phenomenon of UFO waves, so that we can build further research on this. I expect the resulting paper will show what we know and what we do not know about the mechanism and nature of UFO waves and will suggest future avenues for investigation.

In order to commence the process, I am requesting those interested in participating as reviewers to write Mr. Julio Plaza del Olmo (plazaaj@gmail.com), indicating the reference(s) that you intend to review.

In principle, there is no deadline to finish the project but good practice advises to establish a deadline, and we believe 31 December 2016 is a reasonable deadline, provided enough researchers volunteer for the task.

I hope you will decide to participate in this intellectual adventure. Individually, you can limit your effort to what you wish to encompass, but collectively it will surely take us very far. I encourage your personal participation as well as your suggestions of other colleagues and peers who can participate.

Notes

1. Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, “The Future of Ufology,”
https://www.academia.edu/11170842/The_Future_of_Ufology

2. Jerome Clark, The UFO Encyclopedia, Volume 1: “UFOs in the 1980s” (1990), Volume 2:

“The Emergence of a Phenomenon: UFOs from the Beginning through 1959” (1992) and Volume 3: “High Strangeness: UFOs from 1960 through 1979” (1996), Apogee Books/Omnigraphics, Inc., Detroit, Michigan.

3. P. Achinstein, “Demarcation Problem,” in Edward Craig, The Shorter Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Routledge, London), 2005, page 165. Quoted by Jean-Michel Abrassart, “Le statut épistémique de l’ufologie,” <http://tinyurl.com/pg7tpvc>

APPENDIX

For the forthcoming UFO Wave Review Project, items in the compiled bibliography will fall into the following general topics:

1. Waves prior to 1947 1.1 Airships (1896-1897) 1.2 Phantom ships (1900-1918) 1.3 Mystery airplanes (1930s, WWII) 1.4 Ghost rockets (1946) 1.5 Other vintage waves	
2. Contemporary waves 2.1 The 1947 wave (worldwide) 2.2 The 1950 wave (worldwide) 2.3 The 1952 wave (worldwide) 2.4 The 1954 wave (worldwide) 2.5 The 1957 wave (US) 2.6 The 1965 wave (worldwide) 2.7 The 1966-67 wave (US, Canada) 2.8 The 1968-69 wave (Spain) 2.9 The 1973 wave (worldwide)	2.10 The 1973-74 wave (UK) 2.11 The 1974 wave (Spain) 2.12 The 1975 wave (Spain) 2.13 The 1977 wave (Italy) 2.14 The 1978 wave (Italy, Argentina) 2.15 The 1985 wave (Italy, Argentina) 2.16 The 1989 wave (Canada, Russia) 2.17 The 1989-92 wave (Belgium) 2.18 Minor waves and flaps 2.19 Multiple
3. General research 3.1 The Martian cycle 3.2 Other astronomical correlations 3.3 Non-astronomical correlations 3.4 Search for periodicities	3.5 Statistical studies 3.6 Prediction of waves 3.7 Other studies
4. General discussion	
5. Theories and hypotheses 5.1 The extraterrestrial hypothesis 5.2 Theory of processes (M. Guasp) 5.3 The psycho-social hypothesis 5.4 Other theories and hypothesis	

(This text has been edited by Richard W. Heiden and Chris Aubeck. My sincerest thanks to both of them.)