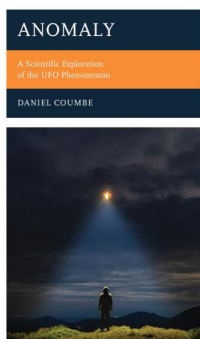


**BOOK AND  
MULTIMEDIA  
REVIEW**

# ANOMALY - A Scientific Exploration of the UFO Phenomenon

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I confess to reading many books dealing with ufology, and – apart from a few exceptions – most of the time, I was substantially bored, not stimulated intellectually, and unmotivated to finish. Unless it deals with the in-depth psychological study of the witness, which is of great importance, uncritically presenting a collection of several testimonies of UFO incidents is like showing a video where several static and unrelated snapshots are linked together. On the contrary, reading this book by Dr. Coumbe, I felt a logical continuum page by page, and I was pleasantly surprised that reading a book about the UFO phenomenon was able to enthrall me from the beginning to the end.

The book presents its issues in a very orderly and methodical way. The first general chapter shows what are the parameters which are able to validate a UFO case; such as eyewitness testimony, sensor data, and physical evidence. After a critical discussion, these parameters are weighed one by one, and a final score is given. Subsequently, four important UFO cases are analyzed according to this criterion.

Every analysis is accompanied with quantitative evaluations, which when concrete data are available from trusted sources, show how a police-like investigation such as the one typically carried out by UFO investigators can be drastically replaced, or at least integrated, by a full physics-like study. At this point, the term “ufology” becomes something that could be baptized with the name of “anomalistic physics.”

The description of each case is never heavy; mathematical calculations are expressed in simple forms and very well formulated and explained so that the book can also be accessible to non-specialists and academic scholars. It is impressive how, through the availability of the necessary data, it is possible to derive with acceptable precision important physical parameters, such as speed and acceleration of anomalous aerial objects or even the weight of allegedly landed objects, for instance.

Every discussed case is full of graphs where a given parameter is plotted with its error bar against an arbitrarily chosen independent variable. Each of the four cases are presented in a targeted way in order to show situations where different physical information are available, dealing with sightings of anomalous objects, sensor measurements, and direct physical evidence. The discussion of previous data interpretations is critically presented, where more or less probable conclusions are weighed and compared together, exactly in the same way in which physical science normally proceeds.

The book is extremely well documented, and after an accurate analysis case by case, the witnessed phenomenon is analyzed as a whole in a redundant way by showing the importance of statistical and correlation analysis both in space and in time. From the charts that are presented and discussed regarding UFO cases, it appears there is no solid certainty as of yet. The admission of our global ignorance that is emerging directly from quantitative analysis, except for some aspects of individual cases, is very instruc-

tive, and it should stimulate science to get much more in-depth in the systematic study of this problem, as it is clearly shown, can be treated in many cases, when sufficient numerical data are available as a target of general physics. However, even if the author himself admits that *correlation doesn't mean causation*, some of the very few correlations that are effectively emerging are unexpectedly surprising.

Independently from the critical way in which the UFO problem is treated both logically and mathematically and from all the doubts that come out from the derived numbers, Dr. Coumbe – by simply following numbers – is not afraid to show some of the absurdities manifested by the phenomenon itself, such as impossible speed and acceleration or the capability to move ultrafast even underwater. This is exactly how scientific minds are stimulated, which do not necessarily investigate only the physics that is known and accepted. In fact, scientific exploration is the only way to bring true discovery by accepting – after having weighed it very carefully – the anomaly in its integrity without filters of academic convenience. Scientists must study the phenomenon in order to learn something new about the nature of reality and not to profess what sci-

entific knowledge is officially accepted while rejecting all that does not fit in it.

In general, my impression is that Dr. Coumbe's efforts are excellent by working on this book exactly in the same way as when working on a technical article. Yet, the treatment is simplified in order to make understanding accessible. The presentation is very clear, orderly, organized, and guided in such a way that a non-specialist can understand without too much effort. In fact, this work might be well considered as a textbook for all those "ufologists" who want to face the problem in a serious, meticulous, and scientific way. I recommend this book to whoever wants to face the UFO problem with balanced objectivity, in particular to scholars having BS or MS degrees in the STEM disciplines and to scholars of different disciplines who want to be informed correctly and without any sensationalism about the phenomenon and the way in which it must be studied.

In conclusion, the study of UFO cases demands an interdisciplinary and in-depth effort, which involves both physical sciences and psychosocial matters. Without a doubt, Dr. Coumbe was successful in the first sector.