

The AIDS-ET Connection by Phillip S. Duke. Omaha, Nebraska: Cosmos Press, 1999. 40 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 0-931234-01-8, www.drpduke.com

The gravity of the AIDS problem is apparent, and if we accept the conclusions of Phillip Duke's book, the ramifications increase by many orders of magnitude. Whether you will be persuaded by the arguments Duke presents may be accurately predicted by your reaction to this passage from the Introduction:

This book depends on some UFOs being alien space ships, with diminutive gray alien crew members who abduct people and mutilate cattle. *If you cannot conceive that such things may be possible, save your money and time. Don't waste them on this book, which requires that such things are real.* (p. 8, emphasis is Duke's)

Personally, I can conceive that such things may be possible, but I have yet to see persuasive and compelling evidence that suggests these ideas have any basis in reality. In fact, I like to think that I typically follow the guidelines Duke recommends. also in his Introduction:

Make your decision on the basis of the evidence and logical reasoning from that evidence. *It is your heritage as a human being to make decisions based on facts not feelings.* (p. 6, emphasis is Duke's)

It is ironic then that Duke has quoted on the title page of *The AIDS-ET Connection* the following from Fox Mulder, a fictional character from the popular television show *The X-files*, "I want to Believe."

Duke does not make a convincing, logical, evidence-based case. From the beginning, he makes an emotional appeal, using accounts that have no relevance to his central argument. He makes a predictable comparison between the early rejection of his work and that of Einstein, which is a change from the more often cited Galileo story. Duke's claim that "No scientific journal will publish this hypothesis, because there is a governmental blackout on anything remotely related to Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) and ET activities," doesn't build his case with evidence, but rather an argument from perceived conspiracy and oppression. Rather than lamenting the injustices, rejections of funding requests, and unfulfilled publishing opportunities, Duke should realize that people do not take him seriously because he does not present compelling evidence.

While Duke does a competent job of describing some fundamentals of retroviruses and HIV, he demolishes his credibility by trying to argue that the way HIV has emerged is consistent with a three-pronged alien-orchestrated genocide plot. He either ignores or is unaware of the massive body of data that supports the zoonosis of HIV, and that HIV has been introduced in the human population from simians no fewer than seven times.' His "guesstimates" show a

geometric expansion that suggests total global affliction of the world's human population with AIDS by 2017. This flies in the face of declining rates of new AIDS cases in the U.S. since 1994² and a much slower increase in new AIDS cases throughout the world.'

Duke further posits that cattle mutilations are a byproduct of alien cultivation of HIV and that they result when the aliens come to harvest the HIV for subsequent infection in humans. He is apparently unaware that cows do not possess functional receptors on their cells to facilitate HIV infection, a prerequisite of HIV reproduction.⁴ In order to cover the spectrum of unusual UFO-related claims, Duke also repeatedly cites an account he has heard third hand in which an unnamed individual reputedly goes from being HIV positive to HIV negative after the removal of an alleged alien implant. We cannot accept unsubstantiated hearsay as "hard, physical evidence"!

The most useful and credible part of Duke's book is the list of HIV/AIDS Information and Help resources that he has thoughtfully appended, which includes contact information for the CDC and FDA. He should consider availing himself of these resources in any future writing he does on this topic. Unfortunately, his current effort is an unconvincing tangle of speculative arguments, with a dearth of objective evidence and logical reasoning.

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Notes

¹ Hahn, B. H., Shaw, G. M., DeCock, K. M., & Sharp, P. M. (2000). AIDS as a zoonosis: Scientific and public health implications. *Science*, 287, 607–614

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention—Surveillance and Epidemiology, Table 53. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) cases, according to age at diagnosis, sex, detailed race, and Hispanic 1999 special data run.

³ World Health Organization. (1999). *Weekly Epidemiological Record*, 74, 401–408.

⁴ Comments from C. Wilson. (2000). Division of Cellular and Gene Therapies. CBER/FDA.

⁵ Opinions expressed are the writer's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the NCAS.

Dr. Duke replies as follows:

"Persuasive and compelling evidence that these ideas have any basis in reality" is available in the form of numerous authenticated visual and radar confirmed UFO sightings, numerous cases of physical evidence left by UFOs, nu-

merous cases of authenticated human abductions and cattle mutilations, surgical removal and scientific testing of human implants, the pathology and etiology of the HIV pandemics, and more.

I quote "I want to believe" from the important fictional character Fox Mulder, because where disbelief reigns, the desire to believe is essential. Fox Mulder's positive attitude is an effective role model for investigation in a field where disbelief is rampant.

Regarding "compelling evidence" not being present, this is a matter of opinion. The "AIDS-ET Connection" presents a new, unifying hypothesis, which simply and logically explains otherwise incomprehensible phenomena. However, this research concept is presented only as a hypothesis, the least well-established stage of scientific knowledge. Therefore it serves only as a guideline for investigation. As such, compelling evidence is not required for it.

The zoonosis (animal) concept of HIV origin is not generally accepted scientifically. HIV geneticist Dr. Betty Korber recently mentioned "the mystery of HIV-1's origin" in a public statement regarding her HIV-1 research. I have asked numbers of researchers to comment publicly on HIV-1's origin, and they refused, simply because the subject is controversial. The idea that HIV-1 and HIV-2 originated in a (simian) animal reservoir and was (somehow) transmitted from there to humans in central and west Africa and the American coasts in markedly different strains all at the same time is contrary to everything we know about the etiology of HIV. In addition, HIVs have never been found in any animal. Simians do not carry HIV, and numerous attempts to infect chimpanzees with HIV have all failed to produce AIDS. The concept is politically acceptable but not scientifically correct.

The number of new AIDS cases has declined in the US due to earlier and better treatment, but the AIDS pandemics' future courses depend on the incidence of HIVs. Focus should be on HIVs not AIDS numbers, because eventually HIVs results in AIDS. The incidences of HIVs are rapidly increasing in S.E. Asia, India, and China, as well as in Africa.

Cattle and human blood are genetically very similar. Rather than make "comments" on why it is theoretically not possible, attempts should be made to replicate HIV-1 employing appropriate cattle blood cells in vitro. In vivo cattle replication should also be attempted. Authentic cattle mutilation cases should have their HIV test status determined. The history of science contains many cases where what was first considered theoretically impossible became practically possible once it was repeatedly attempted, and the necessary conditions determined.

Regarding the "unsubstantiated hearsay" case where an individual tested HIV positive until the implant was removed, after which he tested and remained HIV negative, this case is independently confirmed two ways. One way is by the signed letter published in my book. This case was also independently confirmed by phone, and the name of the person doing so is also given in my book. The signed letter and phone confirmation, both by respected and identified living persons, are not "unsubstantiated hearsay."

The evidence in this case suggests the implant was responsible for HIV antibodies, and the virus was not present. This constitutes a protective system against HIV infection. I did avail myself of all literature on HIV/AIDS available from the CDC. I am on the CDC mailing list regarding HIV/AIDS and examine everything they send me. The literature on HIV/AIDS is so large no one can read it all.

The final critical reviewer statement is that "his current effort is an unconvincing tangle of speculative arguments, with a dearth of objective evidence and logical reasoning." What the reviewer is really saying here is simply that he does not like the concept. I suggest this final statement shows a negative bias, because like the claim of "unsubstantiated hearsay" it is untrue. In fact I present considerable evidence, taken from each of two different disciplines, Biomedicine and Ufology. If the considerable evidence in support did not appear sound, I would not have made the hypothesis public. Although I have sought far and wide for evidence contrary to the hypothesis, so far none has been found.

I have done my best to logically and clearly present the complex, interrelated evidence on this subject. I believe that under the circumstances I have done a good job. Let people look at the evidence I present and decide for themselves.

The reviewer criticizes me for not presenting "compelling evidence." He also criticizes me for presenting the relevant fact that I work without funding, lab facilities, or publication in scientific journals. When considered together these combined criticisms are seen to be unjust.

Science exists to seek the truth, not tell people what they want to hear. New scientific concepts with different social implications have been making people uncomfortable for some time. But despite this progress has been made. Instead of being threatened with burning at the stake, I have had the relatively trivial experiences, to cite just a few, of my resignation from MUFON being accepted without its being offered, my home being broken into with only my research papers taken, being told publicly (on UFO Updates) that my work is "malicious crap," receiving death threats, etc.

For those who do not have access to the more detailed book, a recent article titled "The AIDS-ET Connection Hypothesis" was published by Great Britain's Flying *Saucer Review* in Volume 45/2 Summer 2000, and is posted at <http://www.caus.org/pn042500.htm>.