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Expectations about Nonhuman Intelligences: Fermi's Challenge, Divine Hiddenness, and the White House Lawn

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ABSTRACT

Why are scientists so often dismissive of UAP studies? Part of the answer to this question must acknowledge common arguments for disbelief in flying saucers. One such argument appeals to the incompatibility between the behavior we would expect to see from nonhuman intelligences, and what we actually see. I argue that common variations of this line of reasoning are unsound. There are strong similarities between three arguments: the argument suggested by the Fermi paradox, the argument suggested by the question of why UAP do not land on the White House lawn, and the atheistic argument suggested by the problems of evil and divine hiddenness. A standard response to the atheistic argument, which is well-known in the philosophical literature, carries over to the other two arguments. In sections 2 through 4, I present each of the three arguments, and I demonstrate their similarities. In section 5, I present a standard philosophical rebuttal to the problem of divine hiddenness. In section 6, I demonstrate how this rebuttal applies at least as well to both of the other arguments. In the final section, I discuss some upshots of this result. The primary upshot is that a common reason for serious scientists not to take UAP studies seriously rests on a bad argument.

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1. Introduction

Science popularizers often dismiss research into UAP. An assertion made by Stephen Hawking is a representative

example: “I am discounting the reports of UFOs. Why would they appear only to cranks and weirdos?” (Hawking 2008) UAP researchers sometimes seem puzzled by this dismissive attitude. Why scientists tend not to take UAP studies seriously

is, undoubtedly, a complicated sociological phenomenon.^{1,2} One part of the explanation of this phenomenon should acknowledge common arguments for disbelief in flying saucers. Hawking suggests one such argument; he is echoed by many other science communicators. The argument bears crucial similarities to two other influential arguments in different domains of inquiry. This sort of reasoning becomes unconvincing once the similarities to these other arguments are fully appreciated.

In section 2, I present a formulation of the argument suggested by the so-called Fermi paradox. Fermi's challenge is raised by the question of why, if there are many alien civilizations out *there*, we do not see any of them *here*. In section 3, I show how this problem is similar in significant respects to a standard challenge for UAP studies: why, if UAP are piloted by nonhuman intelligences, do they not land on the White House Lawn? In section 4, I present a formulation of the problem of divine hiddenness. This problem for Christian theism is often introduced via the question of why, if God exists, evidence for his existence is inconclusive at best.

In each case, I distinguish a *challenge* posed by the relevant question from an *argument* for a specific conclusion. In each case, the salient argument concludes that something-or-other is unlikely to exist—whether that something is an extraterrestrial civilization, an alien UAP pilot, or God. In each case, the salient argument relies on a premise to the effect that there is a violation of our expectations about how such an entity (or entities) would act. And in each case, I suggest a similar response: the challenge may be ignored, because a violation of our expectations is unsurprising, if not outright probable. Sections 5 and 6 are devoted to this point. Section 7 contains concluding discussion.

The upshot is that it is a mistake to use this form of argumentation to dismiss SETI, UAP studies, or theism. Unfortunately for their proponents, these arguments are unsound. Skeptics should find other reasons not to take seriously these subject matters. SETI, UAP studies, and theism, strange bedfellows though they may be, are all in the same boat, at least in this respect.

2. Fermi's Challenge and Hart's Argument

According to lore, renowned physicist Enrico Fermi once uttered his famous question—something along the lines of, “But where is everybody?”—as a reaction to the apparent high likelihood that there are many alien civilizations in our galaxy. It is natural to take this question as posing a challenge to anyone who believes its presupposition. So let us interpret Fermi as being committed to

Fermi's Challenge: If you believe that there are likely many alien civilizations in the galaxy, then you must explain why we do not see them on Earth.³

The challenge, put another way, is to provide a reason why we do not see the aliens here on Earth. In his influential paper on the Fermi paradox, Michael H. Hart summarizes an argument that is naturally suggested by Fermi's Challenge:

[The fact that there are no intelligent beings from outer space on Earth now], like all facts, requires an explanation. Once this is recognized, an argument is suggested... If the argument goes, there were intelligent beings elsewhere in our Galaxy, then they would eventually have achieved space travel, and would have explored and colonized the Earth. However, ... they are not here; therefore, they do not exist (Hart 1975, p. 128).

This argument aims to prove that there are indeed no alien civilizations in our galaxy. An expository problem is that the main premise, which asserts that intelligent beings definitely would colonize Earth if they existed, masks much of the underlying structure of the argument. We can easily imagine that the galaxy might be full of technologically advanced alien civilizations, which simply choose to mind their own business, happily farming away on their own home planets.⁴ The proponent of the argument should concede this point and formalize Hart's Argument as follows:

1 For discussion of the sociological issues, see the essays in Part III of Sagan and Page 1972; and Powell 2024: Ch. 7-9. True understanding of these issues arguably requires study of the recent history of the UAP topic. See Dolan 2000 and 2009; Graff 2023; and Eghigian 2024 for differing presentations.

2 Of course, not all scientists dismiss UAP studies. It would appear that there has always been significant interest in the scientific community since the latter half of the 20th century, as witnessed by McDonald 1972, Hynek 1972, Vallee 1975, Hill 1995, and Dick 1996, among many others. For further references, see Powell 2024.

3 Whether Fermi was actually committed to Fermi's Challenge is an open question. See Cirkovic 2018: Ch. 1; Frank 2023, p. 21; and Tipler 1980.

4 Compare Howard-Snyder 1999, p. 82-4; van Inwagen 2006, p. 64-5.

Hart's Argument

H1. If there were alien civilizations in the galaxy, then aliens would be on Earth now, unless there were some reason why they would not visit Earth.

H2. There are no aliens on Earth now.

H3. There is no reason why they would not visit Earth.

H4. So, there are no alien civilizations in the galaxy.

Clearly, if you accept the premises, then you must accept the conclusion of Hart's Argument. But are the premises true? H1 seems independently plausible. When we speculate on the vastness of our galaxy, fairly "conservative" estimates concerning the potential for technologically advanced civilizations to develop suggest that there should be at least thousands of such civilizations in the history of the galaxy.⁵ Since these civilizations could travel here, presumably they would, unless there were some reason or reasons why not. And, while it is controversial (especially among UAP researchers), H2 certainly appears to be compelling to the preponderance of scientists.

It seems that anyone interested in SETI must formulate a concise reply to H3. Hart explicitly presupposes that in order to reply to his argument, we must take up his challenge. It is compelling to think that if you have no reply to the challenge, then you have no business using valuable scientific resources. So it would appear incumbent upon the SETI researcher to hypothesize why the aliens are not here now. A cottage industry has grown in the past few decades, based upon a rejection of H3, with speculation about possible reasons why we do not observe aliens on Earth.⁶

I do not, however, have a particular horse in that race. In the end, I will argue that there is a very general reply to Hart's Argument that does not rely upon the adoption of any particular hypothesis that explains the observed cosmic silence. The reply is general in that it also applies to the other arguments discussed below.

3. Frank's Challenge and the White House Lawn Argument

Popular science communicators often argue against belief in flying saucers by posing a challenge, in much the same way

that Fermi's Challenge is posed. Thus, Neil deGrasse Tyson asserts,

...if we had an alien invasion, more than the US government would know about [it.] We would know about it. We, with cameras and smartphones, we are crowdsourcing an alien invasion of Earth because everybody has a camera, [a] high-resolution camera (Sforza 2023).

Similarly, Lord Martin Rees says,

I think most astronomers would dismiss [UFO sightings]. I dismiss them because if aliens had made the great effort to traverse interstellar distances to come here, they wouldn't just meet a few well-known cranks, make a few circles in corn fields and go away again (Spiegel 2012).

And Adam Frank writes,

If we are being frequently visited by aliens, why don't they just land on the White House lawn and announce themselves? There is a recurring narrative, perhaps best exemplified by the TV show "The X-Files," that these creatures have some mysterious reason to remain hidden from us. But if the mission of these aliens calls for stealth, they seem surprisingly incompetent. You would think that creatures technologically capable of traversing the mind-boggling distances between the stars would also know how to turn off their high beams at night and to elude our primitive infrared cameras (Frank 2021).⁷

I suppose you get the idea.⁸ What is important is that each of these quotes appeals to our expectations about what our experience of alien visitation would be like. As a result, each suggests a challenge for the study of UAP. Because Frank's writing most clearly makes this challenge, let us call it

Frank's Challenge: If you believe that aliens might be the pilots of UAP, then you must explain why they do not make themselves publicly known, for example, by

5 See Shklovskii and Sagan 1967, Ch. 29; Cirkovic 2018: sec. 3.9; and Frank 2023: Ch. 1.

6 See Hart 1975; Shklovskii and Sagan 1972, Ch. 24; Frank 2023; and Cirkovic 2018 for discussion and further references.

7 Compare Frank 2023, p. 119-21.

8 See also Condon 1968, p. 26: "[The UFO question] would be settled in a few minutes if a flying saucer were to land on the lawn of a hotel where a convention of the American Physical Society was in progress, and its occupants were to emerge...".

landing on the White House lawn.

It is worth taking a moment to clarify the concept of public knowledge involved in Frank's Challenge. Let us say that if a claim is publicly known, then the evidence for that claim is readily available to essentially everyone, and the claim itself is ordinarily considered common ground in most conversations.⁹ We may distinguish publicly known claims from situations where the evidence for something may be available only to a select few. Thus, it has been suggested that there are people within the government who have alien bodies from crashed UAP. But this evidence of aliens has not been released, so it is not publicly known. In a different sort of scenario, private knowledge may fail to convert into public knowledge when a UAP experiencer reports an event of high "strangeness" rating (Hynek 1972, Ch. 4). Even if she conveys everything she experienced accurately, and even if this is evidence for her to believe that she was indeed confronted by an alien, the queer nature of her evidence may undermine the credibility of her testimony. As a result, perhaps she cannot, by testifying about her experience, convert the event into something that is publicly known. On the other hand, if videos of a flying saucer on the White House lawn were all over the internet, all the major news networks were talking about it, and the president addressed the nation about it on television, then, presumably, that would properly be considered public knowledge.

Closely associated with Frank's Challenge is an argument, of which we get hints in each of the above quotations. The argument may be formulated in much the same way that we formalized Hart's Argument:

The White House Lawn Argument

WHL1. If there were aliens piloting UAP, then they would make themselves publicly known, unless there were some reason why they would decide not to.

WHL2. They do not make themselves publicly known.

WHL3. There is no reason why they would decide not to make themselves publicly known.

WHL4. So, no UAP are piloted by aliens.¹⁰

The structural similarities between the White House Lawn Argument and Hart's Argument are obvious. Both WHL1 and WHL2 seem independently plausible. The third premise again appears to be where all the action is. Indeed, there is something of a cottage industry consisting in speculation about what the alien agendas might be, and how our visitors might go about their work.¹¹ Those ufologists who speculate in this way choose to take up Frank's Challenge. Again, I have no dog in that fight, and so I set that matter aside.

Instead, let us turn to the evaluation of these arguments. Are they any good? To that end, we will consider a group of classic problems for Christian theism. I will argue that a standard reply to these problems carries over to the realms of SETI research and UAP studies.

4. The Atheist's Challenge and Divine Hiddenness

A very common reason for disbelieving in a theistic conception of God is voiced in the question, "If God exists, then why does he allow bad things to occur?" This question raises a problem for theism, commonly called 'the problem of evil'.¹² The problem of evil has a close cousin, or, maybe more aptly put, an offspring, which is commonly called 'the problem of divine hiddenness'. This problem can be voiced in the form of a challenge raised by an atheist:

Atheist's Challenge: If you believe there might be an unsurpassable God, then you must explain why he does not make himself publicly known.

The reasoning underwriting Atheist's Challenge is voiced in a closely associated argument, which we may call

The Divine Hiddenness Argument

DH1. If God were to exist as unsurpassable and expressing perfect love to all of humanity, then he

9 See Stalnaker 1974 for clarification of the concept of common ground.

10 Clarification of some technical terms is perhaps overdue. By 'alien' I tend to mean something like what is meant by 'nonhuman intelligence'. I use 'piloted by' not according to its ordinary meaning, but very broadly, in such a way that even a UAP that did not contain an alien, and was not remotely operated by an alien, and was not even controlled by a computer program that an alien had authored, but whose proper functioning was appropriately descended from what an alien once did, that UAP would still be "piloted by" an alien. In addition, by 'UAP' I mean roughly what is meant by 'UFO', but I intend to refer not merely to those things that we cannot immediately identify, but more appropriately to observed objects for which we have enough information such that, under a typical observation, a given object would be identifiable, but in our observation it is not identifiable because it represents some sort of anomaly. However, much more can be said to clarify the concept, especially regarding the constitutive concepts of *identifiability* and *anomaly*. See e.g., Hill 1995, p. 26-7; Hynek 1972, Part 1; and Powell 2024, p. 1-3.

11 See for example Dolan 2022 and 2020; Strieber 2023; and Hastings 2017: Ch. 8.

12 See Howard-Snyder 1996; Hudson 2020; and van Inwagen 2006 for further references.

would make himself publicly known, unless he had some reason not to do so.

DH2. God does not make himself publicly known.

DH3. There is no reason why God would not make himself publicly known.

DH4. So, there is no unsurpassable and perfectly loving God.

The structural similarities between the Divine Hiddenness Argument, the White House Lawn Argument, and Hart's Argument are obvious. And again, the first two premises seem plausible. When we reflect on the nature of God, we recognize that he is not lacking in power and knowledge, and moreover he is perfect in all moral respects. So he would love each of us at least as much as a good father loves his children. But a good father is "there" for his children, unless circumstances beyond his control prevent him from doing so, or he has some important plan that requires his absence. God, if he exists, unfortunately does not appear to be "there" for us. He apparently cannot even be bothered to give us straightforward evidence for his existence.¹³

Again, the action in the argument occurs in the third premise. And again, there is something of a cottage industry of speculation about God's possible plans, attempting to justify his decision not to provide for us some conclusive and unambiguous evidence for his existence. Let us call these stories 'theodicies'.^{14,15}

Like the earlier arguments, the important question is why we should believe the third premise. And here, the atheist has a ready answer. He might say, "The fact that so much ink has been spilled writing theodicies, trying—but failing!—to explain the reasons for God's absence, is evidence enough that there is no good reason why God would remain hidden. For if there were such a reason, then we would probably have found it by now." After making a speech along these lines, the atheist may then find it rhetorically persuasive to reissue his challenge (Hudson 2020, p. 19-20).

This reasoning applies analogically both to Hart's Argument and to the White House Lawn Argument. Their proponents express the analogical rationales for their respective third premises. Hart argues against a variety of theodicy-analogues (Hart 1975, p. 129-34). Frank writes, "... the discussion always ends up sounding like the script of a

(bad) science fiction film" (Frank 2011). But is this a good rationalization?

5. Noseeum Inferences

The above rationale in favor of DH3 presupposes the failure of all theodicies heretofore espoused. The claim here is that there is always a flaw, some thin crack, which, when a wedge is applied, breaks the story open and exposes it for what it is: just another piece of speculative fiction. This is controversial. Presumably, the authors of those stories would not agree that they are mere pieces of fiction. But again, I have no rooster in that ring, and so I at least am willing to concede the point. Let us therefore assume that every theodicy ever told fails to justify divine hiddenness.

Even if all the ink spilled over theodicies were washed away, the atheist's rationalization of DH3 would still be lacking. That rationalization relies on the following principle:

Noseeum Assumption(DHA): If there were a reason for God to stay hidden, then we would probably be aware of that reason and we would recognize it as such.

Put the other way around, Noseeum Assumption(DHA) implies that if we do not see a reason for God to stay hidden, then there probably is no reason (Howard-Snyder 1999, p. 104-5). If this assumption were generalized to any claim whatever, it would clearly be false. It would be far too close to the shunned principle expressed by the phrase "absence of evidence is evidence of absence". There are ever so many subject matters about which we know very little, for which a noseeum assumption would be incorrect: in general, any topic about which our ability to perform inquiry is significantly hindered by our own imperfect epistemic situation. On the other hand, there are obviously plenty of subject matters where a noseeum assumption is warranted.

The question is whether we are in a position to know what might be God's reason for hiding, or whether we have any evidence for the idea that we would recognize the reason if there were one. So let us assume, for a thought experiment, that God exists and is truly unsurpassable. On this assumption, should we mere humans expect to see God's

13 Compare Hudson 2020, Ch. 3; van Inwagen 2006, Ch. 8; Rea 2018, Ch. 2.

14 See Howard-Snyder 1999, p. 86-101 for a description of some theodicies.

15 It is standard to distinguish between *theodicy* and *defense*. My usage of 'theodicy' does not quite fit with all usage in the literature. Compare Lewis 1993, p. 104-6; and van Inwagen 2006, p. 7.

reason? Reflection on the question suggests that we would not. There are two crucial points here.¹⁶

First, much like the drunk searching for his car keys under the streetlight, there is a vast darkness where the light of our cognitive capacities do not shine. The reasons for action that are available to God may be completely beyond our ken, due to the unlimited nature of his intelligence, and the very limited nature of ours. Because of his epistemic perfection, God can understand literally infinitely more than we are able to grasp. Some of the facts that are unavailable to us are reasons for him to act in one way or another. We, imperfect epistemic agents that we are, are unable even to entertain these facts, let alone to adjudicate whether they are good reasons for his absence.

Second, even if we can entertain God's reasons, we might not be in a position to recognize them as such. Let us extend the analogy involving the drunk who is searching for his keys. We may suppose that the keys, due to some fortunate accident, dropped out of his pocket under the beam of the streetlight. But if he has had enough whiskey, the drunk might not be able to identify the keys, even if they were directly under his nose. Likewise, we might be able to entertain God's reason for acting as he does, while the fact that it is a reason escapes us. The lesson is that it is possible to grasp a certain claim, and yet be unable to recognize this further fact about it, namely, that it is a reason for God to stay hidden.

My goal here is not to present a full defense of theism from the atheist's attack. Rather, I aim to rehearse an established point in the philosophical study of religion: the theist has an avenue of reply to the Divine Hiddenness Argument, which does not require that he take up the Atheist's Challenge. Because the Divine Hiddenness Argument is similar in all relevant respects to Hart's Argument and the White House Lawn Argument, there are analogous upshots for these two arguments.

6. Applications to the Earlier Arguments

How do the above considerations bear with respect to Hart's Argument and the White House Lawn Argument? Let us take them in turn. In order to rationalize H3, it would appear that Hart must appeal to

Noseeum Assumption(HA): If there were a reason why technologically advanced aliens would not visit Earth, then we would probably be aware of that reason and we would recognize it as such.

Unfortunately, reflection on our discussion of the Divine Hiddenness Argument suggests that this principle is untrue. For any alien civilization out there in the past fifty million or so years, do you find it plausible that we might be aware of the explanation why or why not they have travelled to Earth? I myself do not see the appeal of that. We very likely would not be aware of most possible explanations. The best we can do is shrug and admit that we are in no position to know much of anything about their particular contingent circumstances. Indeed, I am inclined to accept the stronger claim that, for all we know, we may not even be able to grasp the actual explanation for why a given technologically advanced alien civilization is not now on Earth.¹⁷

How does this approach fare with respect to the White House Lawn Argument? In order to rationalize WHL3, it seems that Frank must appeal to

Noseeum Assumption(WHLA): If there were a reason why alien UAP pilots would not make themselves publicly known, then we would probably be aware of that reason and we would recognize it as such.

Noseeum Assumption(WHLA) is in the same boat as Noseeum Assumption(HA) and Noseeum Assumption(DHA). Let us suppose that long ago, and far away, some aliens advanced enough technologically to send crafts vaguely in the direction of Earth. Suppose either that some of those crafts, or their von Neumann descendants, are here today, and we observe some of them as UAP.¹⁸

Are we in any position whatever to know much at all about the products of their intelligent activity? Bear in mind that the aliens evolved under unknown circumstances. We know next to nothing about their compositional makeup. We know nothing of their cognitive architectures. We know nothing of the organization of their society, or even whether they inhabit something that truly deserves the name 'society'. Indeed, we know very little about them at all, perhaps aside from the assumed fact that they sent the UAP to Earth, and that their technology is far more advanced than ours. We

¹⁶ Compare Hudson 2020, Ch. 2-3; and Howard-Snyder 1999, p. 110-12.

¹⁷ Compare Van Inwagen 1996, p. 167-9; and Howard-Snyder 1999, p. 108-9.

¹⁸ See Frank 2023, p. 211; and Tipler 1980 for brief descriptions of von Neumann probes/replicators.

should not be surprised if the plans that such beings are able to make are enormously complex and sophisticated. Their goals and motivations may be so foreign to us that we are unable even to entertain them. Again, the appropriate reaction is to admit that we are at sea, totally in the dark, and the best we can do is to fumble about like our drunk friend.

The point can be driven a bit further. Like our drunk friend, we can search only the illuminated patch of light available to us. But our search parameters may, as a matter of coincidence, define the correct search area, just as the drunk's keys may have slipped from his pocket and coincidentally landed under the streetlight. So let us suppose that there are aliens, and their reason for not making themselves publicly known is indeed something that we can comprehend. Suppose even that many of us, in our ordinary musings, has entertained this state of affairs; it is something mundane to us.

Does it then follow that we are in a position to recognize *that* as the fact that explains why the aliens stay hidden? It does not, because their reasons may be so foreign to what we assume are valid reasons for action that we are not in a position to see them as such. We know nothing about their desires, intentions, or values. Perhaps we should be unsure whether they have mental attitudes that truly deserve the names 'desire', 'intention', or 'value'. We might even properly doubt the idea that they exemplify any ordinary conception of personality.¹⁹ So, for all we know, their reasons may be in plain sight, but we pass them by because of the radical dissimilarities between our patterns of thought and theirs.²⁰

Let us close with one final analogy, involving the game of chess. I am an adult chess novice. Every so often, my nine-year-old daughter and I play a match. Typically, when she makes a questionable move, I can quickly and easily form a good hypothesis why she did it. If I were to play against another adult of my skill level, I would probably be able to do the same, but it would take at least several minutes of careful deliberation. It would require even more effort and rigorous study to understand the move of a grandmaster. What about an apparently questionable move executed by an artificial intelligence? Try as I might, I may never have a good explanation why it made the move, especially if we press pause and I must hypothesize without any knowledge of how the match evolves. This final scenario is analogous to our epistemic situation with respect to advanced nonhuman intelligences, and the question why they do not land on the White House lawn.

7. Conclusion

The objective of this essay may be misinterpreted. It may be helpful to discuss what I have *not* tried to establish.

Most obviously, I have not argued that there are alien civilizations in our galaxy, or that there are alien UAP pilots, or that an unsurpassable God exists. I have not even suggested that there is any good evidence for these controversial claims. I have merely demonstrated that, for each of these domains, there is a popular argument that aims toward dismissal of the domain, and it bears important structural similarities to the arguments of the other two domains. There are adequate rebuttals to all the arguments, and, crucially, these rebuttals need not take on the challenges that are intertwined with the arguments.

It is important to recognize that these rebuttals are not merely variants of hypotheses that purport to explain cosmic or divine silence. Those hypotheses aim to take on their associated challenges. Instead, the above rebuttals avoid those challenges, and assert merely that we are totally in the dark about what aliens would be like, and so there is no rationale available to the proponents of those arguments for their respective third premises. The arguments fail due to their undefended premises, which, moreover, appear to be *indefensible*.

I do not, however, claim that it is a waste of time to take up any of those challenges. Indeed, for each domain, it is plausible that significant advances have occurred (or will occur) as a result of speculation about theodicies, or their analogues in the realms of SETI and UAP studies. But caution in speculation is recommended, especially when we are thinking about aliens and fringe science. There is a fine line between scientific speculation and science fiction, and perhaps too often the one inappropriately blends into the other (but I do not claim that this is *always* a bad thing).

Let us turn to positive upshots. This avenue of reply to the White House Lawn Argument is general in that it applies at least as well—and sometimes even better—if UAP pilots are conceived as something weirder than mere extraterrestrials: extra-dimensional, inter-dimensional, crypto-terrestrial, time-travelers, or even a kind of entity such that our conceptual apparatus cannot now latch onto its nature, or for which we currently have no appropriate terminology. These hypotheses, assuming they qualify as such, carry extra baggage, however, in that they often presuppose much more

19 For some discussion of conceptions of personhood, see for example Feldman 1992, p. 100-104; and Parfit 1984, Ch. 10.

20 Compare Madden 2023, Part 1; also Bates 2021. For further references in this vein, see Cirkovic 2018, Ch. 4.

speculative empirical claims, with metaphysical assumptions that are often only vaguely understood, if at all. We should have no in-principle problem with metaphysics as such, but it is something that should generally be left to those with special training in the relevant theories and their presuppositions. Sloppy metaphysics can easily sound like the ravings of a crackpot, and even good metaphysics often seems absurd.

Dismissive attitudes about SETI or UAP studies cannot be grounded in these considerations involving our expectations about nonhuman intelligences. Science popularizers are wrong to dismiss the study of UAP merely because of their assumptions regarding what our evidential situation would be like if we were being visited. These arguments provide no reason to disbelieve in alien UAP pilots. When we consider the possibility of alien visitation, we should let go of our preconceptions, open up our minds, and swallow down a healthy helping of epistemic humility.

An established point in the philosophical study of religion smoothly transfers to its analogues in the domains of SETI and UAP studies. Finally, SETI researchers should take note of the similarities between Fermi's Challenge and Frank's Challenge: for any response to Fermi's Challenge, there is a parallel response to Frank's Challenge, which at least deserves serious consideration.²¹

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