

Crop Circles: A Dream Come True

I knew that the Golden Age was all about me,
and it was we who had been blind to it,
but that it had never passed away from the world.

A.E., *Candle of Vision*

On June 12th, a 176-ft crop circle was found in Yancey County, North Carolina, in a remote corner of the Southern Appalachians. It was the first crop formation of the year in the U.S. and one of the first ever found at higher elevations in the world.

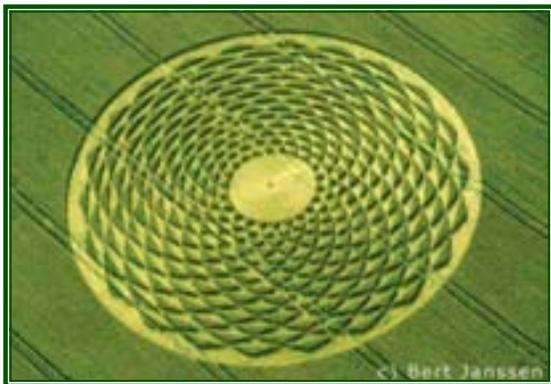
For fifteen years, I'd watched the crop circle phenomenon develop across the Atlantic. I'd heard stories of miraculous healings, sensational visions, lives changed. Here was a formation in my own backyard, less than an hour away. The news hit me like a ton of wheat. I rushed off to visit my first crop circle.

For the past twenty-five years, the "crop circles"— designs found mostly in fields of grain or other plants, but sometimes in sand or snow— have been steadily getting larger, more frequent, more complex, increasingly figural, and in some cases, even literal. Over ten thousand have appeared around the world since 1980 alone (ninety percent of them in southern England), and those that have cropped up (or down, rather) in recent years are simply astounding.¹



If, like most people, you've heard that the crop circles are just pranks done with planks, here's a chance to decide for yourself. Any questions?

"I heard that the crop circles were shown to be fake— I mean, made by people."

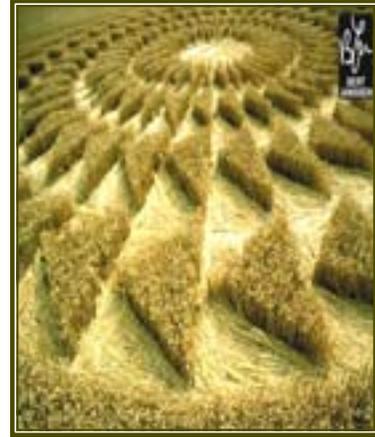


A crop circle— no matter how beautiful or complex— is considered a "hoax" if it is made by humans by familiar means, e.g., using ropes for measurement and boards to flatten crop. And it's true that a few formations have been made this way. But just because some formations have been made with boards or rollers doesn't mean *all* the crop circles can be made that way. The question is, can *all* the crop circles be explained this way?

What you may not have heard in the news is that hundreds of crop formations are now appearing each year, on several continents, often

¹ Crop circle photos c/o Janet Ossebaard, Bert Janssen, and Steve Alexander. To see other recent formations, visit their websites: circulartemples.com, bertjanssen.nl, and temporarytemples.co.uk.

several in one night. They are sometimes found in remote locations, but more often appear in plain view of a major road. Some are incredibly elaborate, with clean, sharp lines (sometimes only one or two crops thick), areas swirled down in a number of different patterns, and several hundred feet in diameter. Many show no visible path leading into or out of the formation. They appear within a few hours of summer darkness or in some cases, within a few minutes of broad daylight.² Could these all be made by a few groups with ropes and boards?



Here are the some of the findings of three peer-reviewed, scientific studies, conducted over a ten-year period, of over two 250 crop formations:

- In many circles, crops have been bent over to a ninety-degree angle or more without breaking them, and they continue to grow to maturity. Early in the season when the plants are still flexible, this can conceivably be accomplished with a board (though the bend is often one or more feet off the ground). However, crop circles continue to appear on up to harvest time, long after the plants have become too stiff and dry to be bent by simple pressure.
- The joints (or “nodes”) of plants in crop circles are often found either stretched or blown open, as if they’d been put in a microwave.
- Seeds taken from plants in crop circles often show unusual rates of growth. Seeds that were immature (i.e., not fully formed) when the crop circle was made produce weak plants, likely to die in the field. Seeds from mature crops, on the other hand, sprout quicker, grow taller, and produce greater yield, often five or six times faster than normal. In a few cases, their rate of growth has been synchronized. In hybridized crop, this would be normal; plants today have been bred to mature at the time in order to make harvesting easier. But seeds taken from crop circles have shown this effect even in *non*-hybridized crop.
- Unusual amounts of magnetic iron oxide particles have been found in crop circles. These tend to be more or less spherical, suggesting that they are of meteoritic origin.

These effects cannot be attributed to any known natural or mechanical process.³

It’s not always easy to tell, even for experts on close examination, which formations are “fake” and which are “real.” A circle need not be elaborate or pristine to be authentic, and by the time one gets to examine it, often people have already tromped through it, making it difficult to know what is original and what isn’t. That’s why those who have been studying crop circles the longest are usually the last to make their pronouncements. But they’re also the least concerned with the question.

² <http://www.circularsite.com/intro2b-eng.htm>.

³ <http://www.blresearch.com/>

Many investigators are no longer interested in evaluating each and every crop circle because for one, there's just too many now to keep track of; and second, there's no longer any need to do so. There is practically no doubt at this point that the *phenomenon* is real. Besides, at least twenty-five people (including two veteran researchers) have actually witnessed a crop circle being formed.⁴ And this process cannot be ascribed to some new secret technology because documented cases of crop circles go back several centuries.⁵

The mystery of the crop circles, then, is by no means "settled." What is amazing, then, is how most people, including the media, manage to ignore them. It's mystifying how readily people write the crop circles off, apparently eager to dismiss them as a hoax.

In retrospect, it's not that surprising: people ignore the effects of war and global warming as well. Crop circles are quickly swept under the rug because they threaten business as usual, and what's too disturbing to admit is easier to ignore, at least for a while.

What's so upsetting about crop circles? The problem, of course, is that if regular people aren't making them, then someone or something else *is*. For many of us, that's a creepy proposition. Why is the prospect that "we are not alone" so scary?

People tend to fear what they can't understand or control. If I know where something's coming from, at least I know where I stand. But when we don't know who's doing something or why, it doesn't feel safe. How do we know "the circlemakers" are not out to hurt us?

Perhaps the fear is only natural. Some say the crop circles are here to help us through a time of transition. But if you've ever tried to help a bird out of your house, you know that it's not about to let you come near it, even if you're only trying to help. How do we know when unfamiliar forces are only trying to help *us*?

"Are you saying that crop circles are made by ETs?"

Not necessarily. Aliens, angels, secret societies, and super-humans have all been suggested, along with the "collective unconscious" and the earth itself (more on this below). When it comes to crop formations, however, does it really matter who is making them?

They say anything's possible as long as it doesn't matter who gets credit for it. Yet



when people talk about crop circles, the only thing most want to know is, "who (or what) is responsible?" Most don't seem to care what message or significance these designs may have aside from who is making them and how. It's as if you were handed a note and rather than read it, you spent all your time interrogating the messenger or analyzing the ink.

Let's say the crop circles are simply *art*. Is a painting any less valuable when it's unsigned or a poem when it's anonymous? Do you have to know who made something to appreciate it or how it was done to

enjoy it?

Whether or not crop circles are human-made, they are still worth paying attention to. They are spectacular—and significant—in and of themselves.

⁴ <http://www.bltresearch.com/eyewitness1.html>.

⁵ <http://www.bltresearch.com/otherfacts.html> and <http://www.circularsite.com/intro1-eng.htm>.

So what do the crop circles mean? Are they some kind of message?

Crop circles almost certainly carry some kind of information, and many have spent decades trying to “crack the code.” It’s possible, however, that trying to decipher the circles just by looking at them could be like staring at a compact disc and wondering what it’s for.

A bigger challenge is the fact that the crop circles are constantly changing. As soon as we think they are a certain way, a new kind appears. It’s as if who or whatever’s making them were somehow always able to stay one step ahead of us, like a carrot before a horse.

But what difference do crop circles make in my life or to our culture? Are they just a fun pastime, a trivial pursuit?

For some, yes. But for many, they restore a sense of wonder. Just the fact that they exist says that human society, at least the part we’re aware of, isn’t running the show. Here is something we cannot control, something beautiful and apparently consciously conceived. Crop circles can teach us humility, something we could probably use.

Crop circles reenchant the world. They literally bring us back down to earth, motivating those who study them to spend time “in the field,” paying attention to the land and the plants.

I find crop circles breathtaking. They tell me that we live in an age of revelation: that miracles are not and never have been restricted to Biblical times and places. I find this so exciting. I also find it wonderful that crop circles are so universal. Having no religious or political affiliation, they can be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. Andy Thomas, the most prolific writer on the subject of crop circles, says “it is the mystery, of course, that remains the phenomenon’s greatest gift, leaving us free to take whatever journey we choose with them.”

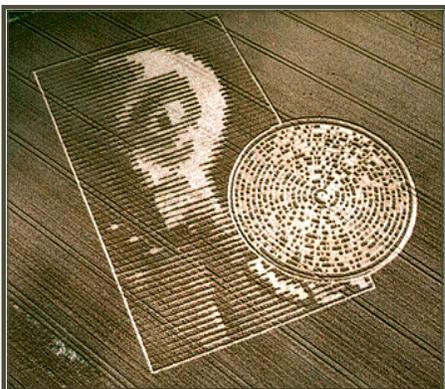


So what’s your theory on crop circles?

In looking at crop circles, people tend to assume that they come from a single source, be it certain extraterrestrials or some other being(s). We also assume that they are meaningful and intentional; that is, that they have some message from one party to another. But there are other possibilities.

Some believe that the crop circles are a projection of our thought patterns, manifesting when a critical mass of ideas overlap. At first the only concept enough of us shared was that of a circle. Then, as human culture develops, more people share the same ideas and more complicated shapes result. Today, as mass media and the internet help build a global culture, the “circles” get exceedingly complex.

This dynamic becomes amplified when people think about the crop circles themselves. Thinking about crop circles in a given area (like southern England) gives rise to more frequent and more elaborate crop circles in that area. Thinking about crop circles being made by extraterrestrials leads to crop circles about extraterrestrials.



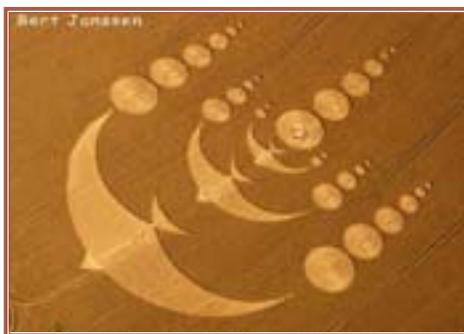
Basically, the idea is that the phenomenon grows wherever and however we pay attention to it. ‘Feedback loops’ like this are not uncommon: the media often plays on what we’re afraid of while politicians and marketing firms tell us what we want to hear. Likewise, interest in crop circles naturally leads to more crop circle hoaxes. Whether this formation from 2002, for instance, is authentic or not is unknown. It was not comprehensively tested, so the characteristics listed above– with the possible exception of bent stems– were never found. Nevertheless, there are still plenty of

authentic crop circles, and there is evidence that thought projection– either unconscious *or* conscious– causes them to form. There are many stories and several documented cases of people concentrating on a given image and having it appear in the fields the following morning.⁶

Apparently, even a single person with focused intention can create a crop circle, though the result is usually unintentional. Busty Taylor, a veteran crop circle photographer, was once sent on a wild goose chase to find a formation. To the prankster's shock, Taylor found a crop circle– exactly where he went looking for it.⁷

Let’s say this process of projection (a.k.a., “outpicturing”) accounts for the crop circles themselves. How then do we explain the strange experiences people have in or near crop circles, like sudden bursts of emotion, seeing balls of light, and equipment malfunctioning? In the same way.

The crop circle phenomenon– in all its aspects– illustrates the way in which *consciousness* (through belief and/or desire) creates reality. As quantum physicists have long been forced to admit, the line between “inner” and “outer” experience, or “subjective” vs. “objective” reality, is a very gray one indeed. This turns our most basic assumptions about “the real world” upside down. If *we* are the ones somehow making the crop circles, then the reason they’ve always managed to stay one step ahead of us is that we’ve been chasing our own tail. What if the same is true of all our experience?



Looking for who or what’s responsible for something– whether it’s love, disease, or terrorism– is often more appealing than taking responsibility for it yourself. But what if the buck stops there? What if science were not the study of how things are, but rather, how we want them to be?⁸

I’m not saying it’s all about *us*. Obviously, life isn’t just what we want or expect it to be. That’s because reality is a group effort. No, we are *not* alone.

⁶ see <http://www.circularsite.com/intro9-eng.htm>.

⁷ Busty Taylor, in the documentary *Star Dreams* (www.stardreams-cropcircles.com).

⁸ This notion of a ‘science of possibility’ is taken from Jorge Luis Borges’ short story, “Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis, Tertius” (as quoted by Michael Talbot in *Mysticism and the New Physics*).

“O Tiger-lily,” said Alice, addressing herself to one that was waving gracefully about in the wind, ‘I wish you could talk!’”

“We *can* talk,” said the Tiger-lily: ‘when there’s anybody worth talking to.’”

Alice was so astonished that she could not speak for a minute: it quite seemed to take her breath away. At length, as the Tiger-lily only went on waving about, she spoke again, in a timid voice—almost in a whisper. “And can *all* the flowers talk?”

“As well as *you* can,” said the Tiger-lily. “And a great deal louder.”

“It isn’t manners for us to begin, you know,” said the Rose, “and I really was wondering when you’d speak!”

Lewis Carrol, *Through the Looking Glass*

Crop circles are not necessarily *human* thought projections. They might just as well be the plants or even the earth itself speaking to us—now that we’re willing to listen.

When crop circles were just circles, scientists liked to think they were the result of some natural, meteorological process. The more complicated the formations became, the more scientists had to give up a simply mechanistic explanation. There had to be some intelligence at work. Meanwhile, “believers” always imagined UFO’s to be responsible. Both groups assumed that something had to be either natural *or* intelligent. Nothing could be *both* because nature is dumb. Flowers don’t talk.

If you discover or hear about a crop circle in your area, don't trespass; make sure you have the property owner's permission first. Remember that Americans are far touchier about private property than the English. Also keep in mind that farmers depend on crops for their livelihood and having dozens or hundreds of people trampling through a field can cause a lot of damage. Encourage owners to charge \$1 or \$2 per visitor. If there is ample parking and the shortest path to the circles is mowed and clearly marked, fields suffer little damage and farmers are invariably *more* than compensated within a couple weeks. Since most owners are busy doing other things, offer to collect admission for them. Even just putting out a donation box can work well.

Some property owners are OK with a select group of visitors to a circle but not with making its location public. In these cases people should only share the property owner's name and phone number.

To report a crop circle, call the BLT crop circle hotline at **617-492-0415** or go to <http://www.blresearch.com/contact.html>.

Why does any non-human intelligence have to be *extra-terrestrial*, i.e., not of the Earth? That assumption is not only arrogant but misogynist as well; for the Earth, as our birthplace, has always been considered female. Why shouldn't it be intelligent? Probably because it's more convenient to pretend that it isn't.

Just as it's easier to experiment on animals by denying that they feel pain or to treat blacks or Jews as if they were subhuman, it's easier to exploit the Earth if we can assume it's inanimate. There's not only a fear but a selfishness in the resistance to the idea that we are not alone—especially to the idea that we're not *home* alone. It means there's someone else to consider.

Despite our “new” age-old fascination with self-empowerment, it's foolish to think that we, as *individuals*, create our own reality. Eastern and Western religions both denounce this delusion as egotism, the original sin. *We do* have the power to shape our world, much more

than we imagine, but only with others. We are all in this together: all species, rocks, everything.

Maybe the crop circles are an expression of ourselves, the earth, *and* others. Maybe some circles in this parade represent certain voices and others come from others. It might even be a conversation. Then again, maybe it's not about “us” and “them” at all.

When we see ourselves as individuals apart from everyone and everything else, the crop circles can look like messages from others or from the divine. But are we really that separate? What if we're really like the fingers on an unseen hand? If the crop circles, like all of our experience, arise from a collective unconscious, then asking what these forms mean is like asking what dreams mean, what a tarot reading means, what *life* means. If we are all part of One Dream, then who's really sending these messages, and who are they really for?



After nine days I let the horse run free
'Cause the desert had turned to sea
There were plants and birds and rocks and things
there was sand and hills and rings

Dewey Bunnell, "A Horse With No Name"

I arrived at my first crop formation on a sunny Sunday afternoon. The simple fifty-foot circle stood in a small hollow on the bank of rocky creek, tucked two hundred feet below a future housing development about a half hour out of town. It was hot, and I was alone. I gathered my bearings and stepped inside.

Nothing unusual happened until I stepped back out of the formation. I took a dip in the creek. On that muggy day, the rushing water and the cool sensation held all the fascination of the circle and more. I realized that crop circles are nothing special— no more than water, sunshine, and the blackberries I picked nearby.

The fever was out of my system. I was whole again, and home again, just in time for dinner.⁹

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For more information on crop circles, I recommend the FAQs at <http://www.circularsite.com/feiten-eng.htm>. For a brief summary of the facts, see the e-booklet at <http://theconversation.org/booklet2.html>. Links to other crop circle websites can be found at <http://www.cropcirclesearch.com/links/index.html>. I also recommend the documentary *Star Dreams* (stardreams-cropcircles.com). Although the film is highly speculative, the crop circle footage is gorgeous, and unlike nearly every other crop circle video I've seen, it isn't stuck on the question of authenticity.

⁹ "I see now that this anonymous horse was a vehicle to get me away from all the confusion and chaos of life to a peaceful, quiet place." Bunnell, in Barry Alfonso's "Highlights," the liner notes to the CD box set, *Highway: 30 Years of America* (Rhino, 2000), <http://www.rhino.com/features/liners/79887lin.lasso>.