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Section C - Blue

Crop Circles

Throughout history, pseudoscientific findings have perplexed the minds of numerous people, and Occam's razor can be applied to these unexplained sciences. Named after William of Ockham, a Franciscan monk and logician, Occam's razor, or the law of parsimony, is a principle of science that insists that one should not make more assumptions than necessary (Occam's razor, (n.d.), para. 1). By making minimal assumptions, complicated solutions are eliminated and simple explanations are favored; therefore, the principle states that the simplest solution is the mostly likely to be true. The theory of the cause of unclaimed crop circles is no exception. Using an analysis of Occam's razor, one can find the most likely solutions to the cause of unclaimed crop circles.

Since the 1970s, the notion of crop circles has intrigued the minds of people worldwide and has initiated a surplus of scientific theories relating to the topic (Crop circles, (n.d.), History section, para. 5). Crop circles, which are found most frequently in the United Kingdom, are patterns of leveled crops: primarily corn, rye, wheat, barley, and soy (Crop circles in 2008, 2008, para. 1). The shape of these crop disturbances was initially a circle, but the shape has evolved to highly complex designs as time has progressed (Janssen, 2008, para. 1). The pseudoscientific theories aimed at the source of unexplained and unclaimed crop circles include whirlwind vortices, plasma vortices, natural earth processes, military experimentation, religious

forces, and aliens (Crop circles, (n.d.), Theories section, para. 2). Most proponents believe that aliens make crop circles in the process of landing their flying vehicles. Although these theories may be true, only a careful examination of crop circles using Occam's razor can lead the scientific community to the cause of crop circles.

A detailed examination of crop circles using Occam's razor leads to a very plausible explanation of the cause of crop circles. Even though there are unclaimed crop circles that have not been attributed to hoaxes, it is possible that these disturbances may be intentionally caused by humans. The construction of a crop circle is an effortless process. Two people working with simple tools such as plank, rope, and wire can construct a forty-foot diameter crop circle within fifteen minutes (Crop circle, (n.d.), Creators of crop circles section, para. 1). With increasingly modern technology, the production of crop circles would be increasingly easier. Another major piece of evidence in favor of the theory of hoaxes is the tourists that are attracted to crop circles. Tourists bring and spend money to sites of crop circles. For instance, a crop circle, which was located near Stonehenge, attributed to hoax earned one man more than $50,000 in a month (Crop circle, (n.d.), History section, para. 6). The conception that unclaimed crop circles are likely hoaxes is a very plausible idea because it is very simple and has a clear purpose.

Additionally, the examination of crop circles using Occam's razor produces another plausible explanation for the cause of crop circles. Crop circles could be the result of natural occurrences such as soil microorganisms, acidic soil, and whirlwind vortices. Soil microorganisms may eat the roots of crops that are similar to wheat, thus leveling the land around the plant. Although invasive plants are most likely not

the cause of complex crop circles, many crop circles are not circular (Crop circle theories, (n.d.), Contending beliefs section, para. 24). One piece of supporting evidence that supports this claim is that most crop circles are localized to the same region. It is likely that an invasive microorganism could be localized in the United Kingdoms, a country where more than half of all crop circles are found (Crop circles in 2008, 2008, para. 3). Another plausible cause is a change in the acidity of the soil in which crops are grown. A change in the acidity can occur from a change in pH levels of an underground water supply, which in turn can result from chemical waste (Janssen, 2008, para. 17). The final plausible theory states that crop circles can form from freak whirlwind vortices, or tornadoes. Although tornadoes are rare in the United Kingdom, this theory may explain crop circles that form in other parts of the world. Additionally, tornadoes clearly have enough force to uproot crops and form circular crop circles. Physical forces such as invasive plants, ground acidity, and tornadoes offer excellent possible explanations to the cause of crop circles because they are naturally occurring.

An inspection of crop circles using Occam's razor leads to insight to the cause of crop circles. The examination resulted in several highly plausible explanations. Based on the amount of evidence, it is evident that most crop circles, including those that are claimed and those that are unclaimed, are clearly hoaxes. Those that cannot be easily explained under the assumption that most crop circles are hoaxes can be attributed to natural forces of weather and geology. After examined with Occam's razor, the pseudoscientific theories that explain crop circles can be ruled illegitimate.

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