

**DR. MIKE CIFONE**

## **ELUSIVE REMAINDER: JACQUES VALLÉE AND THE UFO ENIGMA**

Jacques Vallée's ufology career charts a unique path from scientific inquiry to a speculative, esoteric framework. Prompted by a 1950s UFO sighting and Aimé Michel's influence, Vallée initially approached the phenomenon scientifically. His work in the 1960s adopted an empirical, data-driven perspective, framing UFOs within astronomy and computer science. By the late 1960s, Vallée shifted to comparative folklore, finding parallels between entity encounters (e.g., fairies) and modern UFO reports. The 1970s saw his framework expand to paranormal and psychical research, hypothesizing an unidentified intelligence manifesting in culturally contingent forms. His "control system" theory suggested that these manifestations regulate human perception and access, operating cognitively and culturally. This lecture traces Vallée's intellectual evolution, contextualizing his work historically and disciplinarily. It examines how his synthesis of scientific methodology, comparative mythology, and speculative metaphysics aligns with modern esotericism, challenging conventional science-occult demarcations. It will also address the epistemological tensions in Vallée's oeuvre: for example, the interplay between empirical investigation and interpretive speculation. Finally, the lecture considers Vallée's relevance to contemporary UFO/UAP studies, which increasingly embrace interdisciplinary, non-positivist approaches to the subject. By examining Vallée as scientist and esoteric thinker, we offer a critical perspective on the negotiation between rational inquiry and visionary speculation in the study of anomalous phenomena.



Mike Cifone received his Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science from the University of Maryland in 2009. He has published in physics and philosophy and taught philosophy and science-related subjects at CUNY–Bronx and St. John's University. In 2022, he founded the Society for UAP Studies (SUAPS) and *Limina: The Journal of UAP Studies*, fostering academic work in this emerging field. As a research fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies (CAS-E) in Erlangen, he will begin work on a book advancing foundational ideas in UAP Studies.



**Date:**  
**Tuesday - 09 December 2025**



**Time:**  
**6.15 - 7.45 PM**

**Location: Big Seminar room,  
Hartmannstr. 14, Building D1, Erlangen**

**Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom-x.de/j/62556506187>**



Funded by



Deutsche  
Forschungsgemeinschaft  
German Research Foundation



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