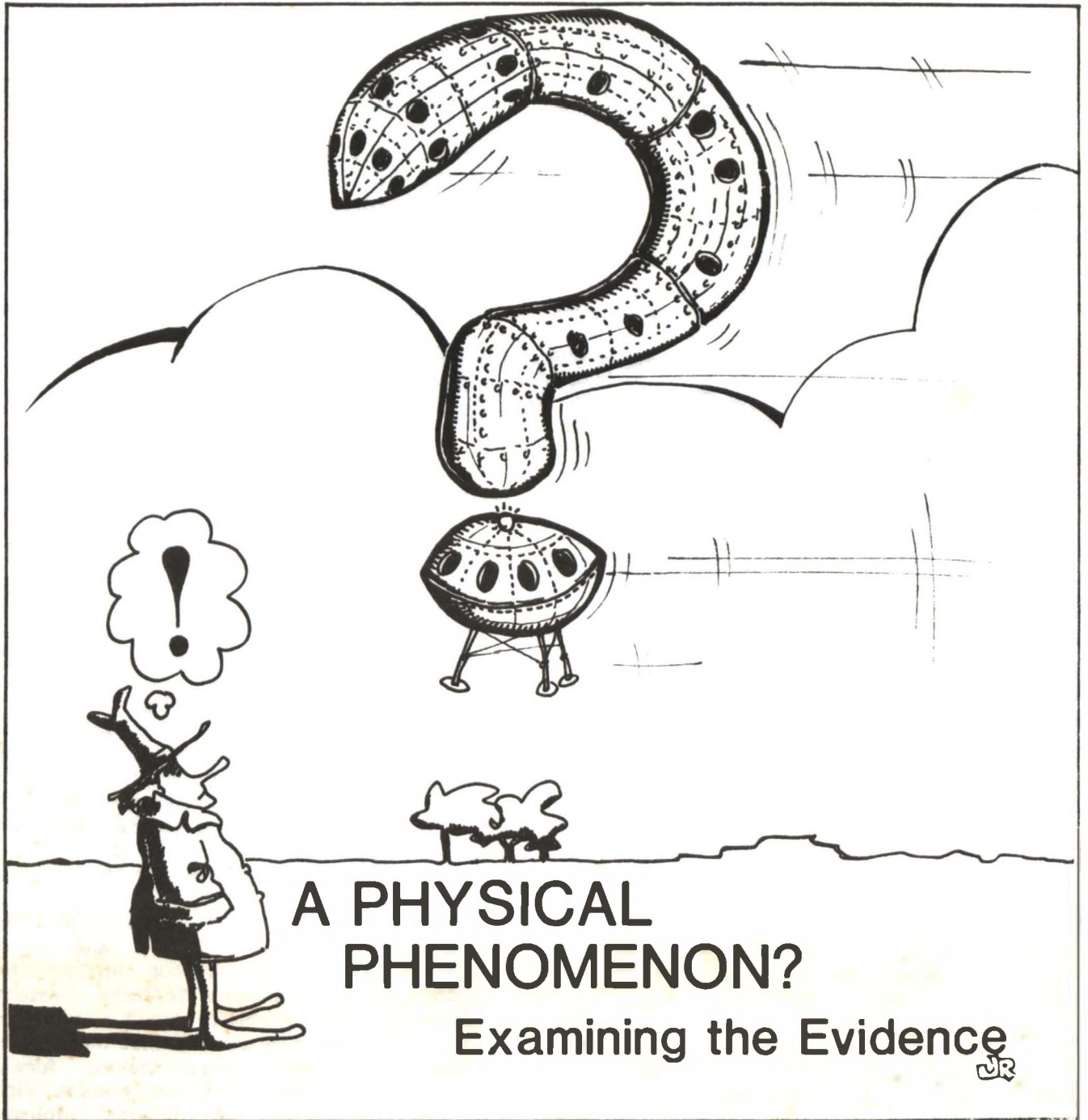


# MAGONIA

13  
1983



A PHYSICAL  
PHENOMENON?

Examining the Evidence

JR

# MAGONIA

MAGONIA 13

(Incorporating MUFOB 62)

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## EDITORIAL

Over the past few weeks I have been helping to sort out material arriving for the ASSAP Reference Library which is now being built up at Purley, in Surrey. Naturally I have been taking time out from this to browse through interesting-looking material, particularly some old editions of UFO periodicals. Quite revealing they are, too. If certain prominent ufological personalities are willing to make donations to the John Rimmer Benefit Fund (third hollow tree from the left), I am prepared to keep very quiet about some of the barmy things they were saying ten or fifteen years ago!

In the magazines of the fifties and early sixties the ETH was almost unchallenged, not just as a theory of UFO origin, but as an explanation which was almost taken for granted. This was quite understandable. The 'new ufologies' had not yet appeared, there was still enough uncertainty about what we might find out in space to make the most straightforward form of the ETH seem much less naive than it does now. The only thing which seemed to be standing against universal recognition of the reality of our interplanetary visitors and their craft was the unimaginative and reactionary views of establishment science. Throughout these

old magazines scientists are constantly criticised for their narrow and petty-minded attitudes. If only these 'white-coated godlings of the laboratory' could raise their eyes above their mundane little test-tubes, the wonders of the universe would be manifested to them, along with the reality of the 'flying saucers'. Ufologists, it was implied, were the true imaginative thinkers and innovators of the age. This attitude is apparent even today in many ufological writings.

But just how imaginative and forward looking were these ufologists? A number of UFO magazines had regular articles on space science and astronomy, and when we look at these we see something remarkable - in the light of hindsight the far-seeing ufologists look very conservative and unimaginative indeed!

Although the UFO articles in these magazines were full of awe and wonder at the achievements of our interplanetary visitors, the 'space-news' features constantly emphasised how primitive man's own efforts at space exploration were. Whilst the 'unimaginative' scientists were looking forward to journeys to the Moon and planets within a few years, the 'far thinking' ufologists

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# QUESTIONING THE 'REAL' PHENOMENON

Claude Mauge

This paper is a longer version of my intervention at the UFO meeting in Boulogne (19-20 February 1983). I quote particularly French-speaking authors, partly to make them better known, partly because I don't know very much about the enormous 'English' literature. I thank Jacques Scornaux and Dominique Behar for their aid with the translation, but I only am responsible for all the mistakes!

I use the following definitions (see 6):

- pre UFO (in French: pré-OVNI) = any 'observation', real or not, which the 'witness or any person calls 'UFO'; it can be for example a real flying saucer, a misinterpretation of the moon, or a case invented by a journalist. All the pre UFO cases build up the UFO phenomenon in the broad sense.

- A pre UFO case can be unexplainable or can become explained - it is also an IFO (French: OVI = objet volant identifié) - or can be not explained - it is also a near UFO (French: quasi OVNI) = any 'observation' which remains unexplained by competent experts (?). All the near UFO cases build up the UFO phenomenon in the limited sense.

- A near UFO case can later become explained because of the progress of the investigations or the evolution of science, or can be a true UFO (French: vrai OVNI), the whole of which is the UFO phenomenon in the strict sense.

All these terms may be improvable.

## 1 THE PRO ARGUMENTS

P Guérin (3) wrote in 1977 that the existence of a fundamentally original UFO phenomenon was proved by the conjunction of three arguments:

1.1 THE EXISTENCE OF CASES WHICH SEEM RELIABLE AND COMPLETELY IRREDUCIBLE TO KNOWN PHENOMENA. Apparently this argument is still sound, even if the number of such cases is much lower than many ufologists said (or still say), such as A Michel (12) who said 22 million or C Poher (16) 90 million! Eighty or ninety per cent at least of the cases in many catalogues don't seem to be true UFOs or near UFOs (6), because today they are well explained, doubtful, or it is impossible to evaluate their credibility and/or probability of being or not being really original phenomena (cf. news clippings). For example, the computer print-out of traces cases from UFOCAT (11) includes 29 traces cases in September-October 1954 in France: 13 are well explained, 6 are doubtful, 10 cases remain, but only one (Chabeuil, 26 September 1954) or perhaps 2

(Chabeuil and Poncey-sur-l'IGNON, 4 October) is (are) sound (6). Better (or worse!), the same listing includes 16 Belgian cases with traces; only one is sound (Bouffioulx, 16 May 1953) but the attribution of the 'traces' to the UFO is absolutely not justified, and the only case with a trace rightly attributed to the 'UFO' is well explained! (1, 6) In fact, it is perhaps possible to estimate the number of sound cases (a priori non-suspect witnesses, good observing conditions, content of observations really extraordinary and not reducible to known phenomena, and good investigation) to be some thousands, or even fewer!

1.2 THE ANALOGIES AMONG THE CASES. But this argument is reduced to nothing by the UFO/IFO 'indistinguishability' (see 2.1).

1.3 THE CONSISTENCY WHICH EMERGES FROM THE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ALL THE REPORTS. But what is the value of this analysis if 80 or 90% at least of the catalogued cases are identified or doubtful? The consistency which seems to emerge is only an artefact like orthoteny (see, for example, 20).

How good are the other pro arguments?

1.4 THE EXISTENCE OF CONSISTENT EXPLANATORY MODELS. I take here the example of the extraterrestrial hypothesis: it is true that the ETH is not only a pure ufological construction and is built on exobiological arguments which are very speculative but which we cannot purely and simply ignore; it is also true that the researches of J McCampbell, J P Petit or M de San (and others) bring possible solutions to the propulsion problem or that some theoretical 'impossibilities' might have technological solutions. But the problem of cosmic distances, the 'anthropo-psychological' component of the UFO phenomenon, etc., are very embarrassing for the ETH. Above all, what is the reliability of so many researches which are based on so many doubtful cases (cf. McCampbell using Vallée's catalogue)? Therefore, the apparent (reinforced by the ET myth) consistency of the ETH is not necessarily an argument for validity. Moreover, the non-reducing models have epistemological disadvantages: they change the paradigms completely and are less economical; they are not falsifiable. (15)

1.5 THE EXISTENCE OF MATERIAL PROOFS OF ALIEN TECHNOLOGY. But no alleged pieces of UFOs seem to be extraordinary, and the 'proofs' by L Stringfield of crashed UFOs and the existence of humanoids' bodies show above all the absence of critical thinking by Stringfield. Really interesting photographs and other records are extremely rare and are not definitive proofs, and the controversies about radar cases do not allow us to draw definite conclusions from cases such as Lakenheath or Haneda (for a discussion of such evidence see reference (2)).

1.6 THE OTHER PRO ARGUMENTS REFLECT ONLY THE IDEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THEIR AUTHORS OR ARE ONLY ARGUMENTS FROM AUTHORITY. For example:

- 'The attitude in official circles proves that there is something in the UFO phenomenon.' This attitude is often ambiguous, but it proves only that official circles don't really understand the phenomenon.
- 'Debunkers are backward anthropocentrists.' Perhaps, but on the other hand believers might also feel the need for Somebody or Something who transcends them...
- 'Debunkers are not aware of recent scientific discoveries.' It is often true but, more often (at least in France) believers also are not aware of these discoveries.
- 'If there was nothing in the UFO

phenomenon we should have a convincing socio-psychological model.' Precisely. Such a model is seriously beginning to emerge.

In fact, the only pro argument which seems reliable to me is the apparent existence of some thousands (?) of reliable abnormal cases. But to me the con arguments seem to be increasingly sound.

## 2 THE MAIN CON ARGUMENTS

2.1 THE UFO/IFO 'INDISTINGUISHABILITY'. It would seem that the UFO cases and the IFO cases are a priori indistinguishable. They correspond to the same stories, they contain the same details, and the range of data does not become smaller when the explained cases are removed. (13, 21) In particular, many cases which, we were assured, 'totally reliable and totally unexplainable' were later well explained. But this indistinguishability is far from being proved, and it is not by itself a definitive argument against the reality of a fundamentally original UFO phenomenon.

2.2 THE UFOLOGICAL CIRCLES. Besides many dubious people or groups, most ufologists seem to be intelligent and honest. But they often have very sketchy scientific knowledge (for example, of geophysics or psychology) and their critical attitude is very often unsatisfactory: see for example S Friedman, P Guérin and his analysis of the Warminster photographs, A Michel and his paleolithic UFOs, L Sprinkle and his 'cosmic citizens', L Stringfield and many others... See also the (very) low standard of almost all the UFO papers and books; and also the mixture of UFOs with 'hollow earth', Bermuda mystery, Loch Ness monster, animal mutilations, 'ET in history', Charroux's and Däniken's theories, and so on (there are perhaps relationships between some of these data and UFOs, but evidence of such relationships is very flimsy).

Ufology is founded on some implicit postulates, such as the following: # The residue postulate (cf. Oberg (14)), that is the equivalence - unexplained case = unexplainable case = true UFO (= ET vehicle very often). # The Zorro syndrome of J Scornaux (21): the ufologist who studies a case and seems to explain it in a conventional manner, but 'proves' (in reality, claims) that some small detail shows that the proposed explanation cannot be correct, therefore the case is necessarily a true UFO. # The case unity postulate: in several reports it is the ufologist (or the witness) who builds the unity of the case in combining independent details. # The objective causes postulate, or the reliability of testimony postulate: if the ufologist hasn't an objective reason to de-

side if the anomalies of the case are due to the witness or to the object, he postulates that the cause is always the object. # The UFO/IFO independence postulate: there is no interaction between the UFO phenomenon and the IFO phenomenon, apart from very marginally, therefore IFO studies are useless for obtaining knowledge about UFOs.

In fact, many ufologists seem to be trapped in a system of belief where everything reinforces everything, and in which the power of the ET myth plays a fundamental role - whatever the reality may be about ET visits to Earth.

The consequence of the combination of the UFO/IFO indistinguishability and of the frequent lack of reliability of the ufologists seems to be that almost all the UFO literature since 1947 (case studies and theoretical studies) has almost no value. This combination obliges us, then, to formulate the crucial question: are today's unexplained cases as explainable as the others?

2.3 THE BEGINNING OF A SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL, which is based on (among other things):

- the numerous convergences between the UFO phenomenon and various productions of our brains and the at least structural analogies with similar phenomena: science fiction (9), folklore, NDE, many religious apparitions such as Marian apparitions or the 1905 Welsh revival (7), ASC, for example with hallucinogens, shamanism, sorcery (10), historical filiation of the ET myth (19) and so on.

- a beginning of a study of the perceptual and cognitive processes which transform a more or less ordinary stimulus into a UFO. After the 'pioneers' such as J Meerloo (8) or M Monnerie (13), the most important researches are those from M. Jimenez of GEPAN (4), based on the perception model of J Bruner, and P Toselli (23); Toselli takes several factors into account, among which are the social and cultural influences on perception, and distinguishes three 'transposition' levels: 'misinterpretation' (the witness describes objectively the 'banal' stimulus but calls it a 'UFO'); 'projective transformation' (the witness projects his more or less conscious knowledge of the UFO phenomenon into the stimulus); and 'projective elaboration' (with production of a complex story).

- a beginning of analysis of the different steps of the transmission chain of information: witness (see above, the data of A Keul (5), etc.), ufologists, official circles, mass media, general public. We know,

for example, the extent of the beliefs in UFOs which several polls show, or the role of release events in several UFO waves (17), which might be compared with some episodes of 'collective delirium'. (22)

- some indications of the meaning of UFOs, many of which derive from the ideas of C G Jung: see for example J Meerloo (8), J B Renard (18) and the 'cargo cult of the west', or P Geste who thinks that the hard UFO experience (contact, abduction...) can protect the subject from psychosis.

In fact, despite the existence of thousands (?) of reliable cases which are rather embarrassing for the socio-psychological hypothesis, and despite some other problems (such as the genesis of UFO phenomena), this hypothesis - plus certainly natural physical phenomena, some of which might directly affect our brains (cf. Persinger) - seems to me to have a solid consistency and seems to me today to be the most fruitful working hypothesis. But we must not forget that this hypothesis is perhaps like the ETH, a system of belief.

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# CONSPIRACY UPDATE

## Roger Sandell

- LINCOLN, Henry. The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail. Jonathan Cape
- GILMAN, Richard. Behind World Revolution: The Strange Career of Nesta H. Webster. Insights Press
- ERINGER, Robert. The Conspiracy Peddlers. Loompanics Press
- WEBB, James. The Occult Establishment. Richard Drew Publishing

Together these books provide interesting evidence of the vitality of conspiracy as an image of contemporary society. Robert Eringer's The Conspiracy Peddlers does this in the most straightforward fashion by reporting in a straightforward manner on some of the American groups and individuals who devote their time to investigating conspiratorial activities. Those depicted range from some researchers beavering away at significant issues largely ignored by the media such as the activities of the super-rich and the intelligence community, to the near-demented, living in private worlds in which Soviet nuclear missiles are hidden under the Mississippi, the Rockefeller family maintains secret bases on the moon and leading politicians are in reality synthetic androids. Here and there are reports on one or two anti-conspiracy groups whose own activities seem sufficiently sinister and mysteriously funded to provide better evidence for a conspiracy than any that they claim to uncover. (Loompanics, the publishers of this book, actually seem to be a somewhat alarming organization since much of their booklist seems to be on matters such as lock-picking and firearms.)

Ufologists will of course recognize such a spectrum from the responsible to the lunatic as being similar to that in their own subject, and there seem to be various other similarities between the world of ufology and that of conspiracy theories.

Both groups consider themselves as the custodians of bodies of information that are rejected by the orthodox in the fields of politics and science respect-

ively. In each case this information ranges from the potentially interesting to the maliciously fabricated. However, in each case those assembling the data often have a totally uncritical attitude to what they have collected and no idea of how to assess and analyse it. In each case there are those who see their role as not being to develop and refine the data available but to take on an evangelistic role in broadcasting the message, whether about UFOs or conspiracy, to an audience which is simply urged to accept it equally uncritically and to pass the message on in its turn.

One of the few recent writers on the subject to attempt to do more is Richard Gilman, the author of Behind World Revolution: The Strange Career of Nesta H. Webster. The subject of this biography is the English writer who, in the 1920s, propounded the idea that the real force behind the Russian Revolution was a conspiracy of Satanists, occultists and Freemasons dating back to the medieval Knights Templar. Mr Gilman shows in interesting detail how such ideas were widely taken seriously at the time and documents Nesta Webster's later career as an apologist for Hitler and her influence on later Fascist groupings such as the National Front. (These, incidentally, are matters that should give pause to those who are attempting to import some of Nesta Webster's ideas into the occultist side of ufology. (1))

A particularly interesting aspect of this book is the section that describes how Nesta Webster first became interested in conspiracy theory on a visit to Paris where she underwent a mystical experience that convinced her that she was the reincarnation of a French countess who had been a victim of the French Revolution, which she saw as being the work of the same occult forces as the Russian Revolution. This is an interesting example of the point made earlier in MAGONIA that some believers in conspiracy have a super-historical perspective in which they see themselves as fighters against some eternal principle of evil, the reality of which is sometimes conveyed to them in a visionary experience.

Another bizarre example of this process is The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail. This book originates from a series of TV documentaries made by the author Henry Lincoln on the mystery of Rennes le Chateau. Briefly, these told how in the 1890s Berengere de Sauniere, the village priest of Rennes le Chateau in southern France, seemed to have deciphered some mysterious inscriptions on tombstones in his churchyard, as a result of which he was able to excavate some unknown relics which he took to Paris and returned to live in luxury for the remainder of his life, building for his village a church whose unorthodox decorations hint at some great secret.

In the last decade in France a series of mysterious manifestos have appeared, which claim to be messages from the Priory of Sion, a secret society claiming great antiquity and political influence and in some way linked with the mystery of Rennes le Chateau.

The story is clearly a strange one and it is a pity that Mr Lincoln bases much of his treatment of it on the secondary literature that it has recently inspired in France. The story of de Sauniere appears to be factual, since photographs of those involved are produced, but one wonders how many of the details are the elaboration of village gossip. (Perhaps the whole business of treasure-finding could even have been an elaborate deception to conceal the reality of a fortune acquired in a rather more disreputable manner.) Certainly one's confidence in Mr Lincoln's French sources is not enhanced by the fact that they include Robert Charroux, a veteran writer of worthless ancient astronaut material.

Considerations like this do not, however, deter Mr Lincoln. He claims to have cracked a secret code used on the tombstones at Rennes le Chateau. However, the code is not described and since the resulting messages are, to me at any rate, totally meaningless ('By the Cross and this horse of God I destroy the demon of the guardian at noon. Blue apples.') it is not at all clear what the point of enciphering them was.

As the book goes on it plunges into 2000 years of the more bizarre corners of European history. The Knights Templar, the origins of Freemasonry, the Holy Grail, Nostradamus all put in appearances before the conclusion is finally revealed. Jesus was married to Mary Magdalen and their family emigrated to Gaul where they became the ancestors of the Merovingian kings of France following the fall of Rome. Since the fall of the Merovingians a succession of

occult groups have been working to restore their descendants to their rightful place. Their current incarnation, the mysterious Priory of Sion, is active behind the scenes of European politics and moves towards European unity are the opening stages of a plan to have one of the descendants of Jesus become ruler of Europe.

Henry Lincoln's attitude to all of this remains oddly ambiguous. Unlike most writers who claim to have discovered vast conspiracies, he does not think that his Priory of Sion is the embodiment of fiendish evil. Indeed, he almost seems sympathetic to their aims which he feels could indeed bring peace and unity to Europe. He rushes breathlessly to pile one hypothesis on top of another without considering any less-spectacular explanations (e.g. that an obscure modern secret society might make grandiose claims or that the Merovingians might have had some legend of extraordinary origins without either of these claims having any factual basis), but on individual points he seems not un-sceptical. He describes meetings with Men-in-Black type figures who claim to be representatives of the Priory of Sion and concludes that the whole business is too elaborate and pointless to be a hoax. (In fact, ufologists will be familiar with very elaborate hoaxes, such as the APEN and 'Peter Hargreaves' cases described in MUF0B/MAGONIA, which seem to have no obvious point other than to demonstrate the extremes of perverse ingenuity. (2))

Ultimately this book and its writer's ambiguous fascination for its secret society are another testimony to the roots of conspiracy theories in apocalyptic world-views. As Norman Cohn has pointed out, the twentieth-century myth of the Jewish world conspiracy owes much to the medieval idea of Antichrist. Henry Lincoln seems to reverse this process and produce a conspiracy to make plausible the other favourite traditional apocalyptic theme, that of the millennial king ushering in a reign of peace and justice.

Just how widespread the political influence of occult/irrational ideas has been is made clear by James Webb's The Occult Establishment, an immense (500 pages) superbly researched survey of twentieth-century occultism. It is impossible to do justice to this book in a brief review but, among much else, it includes a serious discussion of Nazi occultism (a subject which, up to now, has largely been the province of trashy paperbacks) but also discusses occultist influence on rather more surprising movements, such as modern art, socialism and

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# 'EARTHLIGHTS' FURTHER COMMENTS

Ian Cresswell

After reading through the book Earthlights by Paul Devereux and his article in MAGONIA 12 in defence of his theory, I suggest that another, more neutral, opinion about it should be expressed within the pages of MAGONIA.

I found Earthlights a most interesting and absorbing work, carefully done, with much thought given to it by its author, who I have no doubt is a most sincere and devoted researcher. But whilst I found it fascinating, I also found it frustrating, and sometimes unclear about parts of the theory. I found it frustrating in that the author, whilst getting close to some possible truths about the nature and origin of the phenomenon, allowed himself to drift away from them.

The theory does not seem totally clear because of Paul's insistence on the main core of the phenomenon being objective, then bringing in very strong elements of a very subjective nature in an attempt to explain the full extent of the UFO phenomenon. If the origins of the two aspects of the phenom-

enon are different, then why have a link at all? Could there not be some other expression for the shadow content of the reports other than PK manipulation of a plasma light?

The weak link in Paul Devereux's chain of reasoning lies in the most vital part. The evidence of the cases themselves points away from a tectonic origin. Although the controlled laboratory tests are potentially the most important replicable evidence in support of the earthlights theory, it is curious how little space the book devotes to them. It would also, I suggest, have been better if there had been a wider review of the geological literature to examine the status of geoluminescent effects amongst specialists in the field. Perhaps even a 'forum' of geological opinion would have been profitable here?

I was interested in the similarity between many of the examples given in this book, and other forms of natural light phenomena - ball-lightning, mountaintop discharge, and so forth. However, interesting as these phenomena are, their relevance to ufology seems limited, and they cannot be put forward convincingly as a complete explanation for the UFO phenomenon - either objectively or subjectively.

Although I would agree that an electrical phenomenon might be the original stimulus of

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were writing things like this:

"It will be at least twenty-five years before a human being capable of taking off to explore space successfully will be able to bring back the answers, and then only if his parents allow him to be trained for the job from the moment he is born. But even twentyfive years is optimistic... I submit, therefore, that the powers now working on manned space-flight programmes are over-reaching themselves."

This was written in 1960, just a couple of years before Gagarin and Glenn, and just eight years before the first Moon landing.

Another writer painted a picture of a future Utopia that presumably mankind might be able to build by its own unaided effort, but then adds:

"[Having achieved this] they will still be... chained, bemused and blinded, if they have not by then established spiritual communication with the higher intelligences who are so intensely concerned with our world, and if they have not, by then learned the discipline of discipleship".

Why should there be amongst some

ufologists a desire to denigrate the achievements of their own species, whilst urging our submission to some vague 'higher intelligences'? Lest it be thought that this attitude has disappeared since the 50's and 60's, one has only to consider the popularity of 'ancient astronaut' ideas amongst rank-and-file ufologists (however much the 'ufological establishment may deplore them), or consider some of the finding from Shirley McIver's study of members of UFO groups, published in Journal of Transient Aerial Phenomena (Vol. 2, no. 5) 31.2% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "Homo sapiens was created by the genetic engineering of extra-terrestrials who visited Earth millions of years ago". Only 28.4% disagreed. Some ufologists, it would appear are not even prepared to allow mankind the privilege of breeding without some voyeuristic space-people superintending the proceedings!

More seriously, it seems rather worrying that a preoccupation with 'higher intelligences' should lead so many people to denigrate and dismiss the achievements of their own kind.

SSS-

the 'main-core' phenomenon, I doubt that its origin is as proposed by Paul Devereux. He appears to take it for granted that the light effects associated with UFOs are of an objective nature - but although it has been assumed in the past that the UFO phenomenon is of an entirely objective nature, this is by no means proved. If there is an electrical phenomenon involved, might it not come rather from the human nervous system than from the external world?

In The Psychology of Consciousness, by Robert E. Ornstein [1] we find something of possible relevance to our study:

Wilder Penfield, among others, has demonstrated that the experience of vision can also be evoked by electrical stimulation of the central nervous system. Penfield performed brain surgery on patients with epilepsy and, as part of this procedure, electrically stimulated various areas of their brain; his patients often reported conscious experiences without any input at all. For instance many surgeons have found that electrical stimulation of the occipital cortex usually leads to the experience of vision. We can understand then that seeing is a process which takes place not in our eyes, but rather with the help of the eyes. It is a process that is constructed largely in the brain, one largely determined by the category and output systems of the brain."

"Furthermore, we do not even need the presence of external light to 'see'. If seeing is a certain pattern of excitation in the central nervous system then anything that produces that pattern will result in visual experience."

One can see this pattern at work with the dream state, where we have a pictorial image which is totally created within the brain, and viewed in a completely subjective manner, without any objective stimulus reaching the brain.

Yet the dreamer watches the events with the same apparent eye of objective consciousness, but in a totally subjective way. The dream is the result of electrical stimulation within the memory cells within the brain, and both the cause and effect of this is entirely within our own nervous system. The subjective has become the only reality, and as such can be said to exist whether or not it has any existence in an objective sense.

If, when Devereux talks of the creation of protoentities from the 'UFO material', he is talking of a process within the brain, I would accept it. But to regard this creation as being occasioned by psychokinetic impress-

ions on a geoelectrical plasma is harder to accept than the idea of extraterrestrials visiting this planet.

I also wish that the author had not made such an important point of the location of stone circles. The relevance of this to the location of UFO sightings is unclear. Very few reports emanate from these areas, although admittedly there are fewer people in these parts of the country to make such reports. Those parts of the country which boast the fewest stone circles are the south and east are by no means devoid of UFO sightings. The factors involved in the siting of stone circles in Britain are unconnected with any possible tectonic activity.

Aubrey Burl [2] states:

"This region [eastern and southern - Britain] is a paradox. Covering nearly half of the 121,000 square miles of the British Isles, much of it lowlying, fertile, patterned with slow, wide rivers, some of its territories were the most heavily populated in the country. Yet only 12% of stone circles are located here.

"this is partly because much of the prehistoric landscape was avoided by man. Southern Britain presented an illimitable forest of 'damp oakwood', ash and thorn and bramble, largely untrodden...

"...although this panorama of a widely hostile land is being modified by discoveries of henge and settlement on the heavy clays of the midlands it remains largely true. But the main reason for the scarcity of stone circles in eastern and southern Britain was the presence of alternative forms of building material. Here there was timber in plenty."

Burl concludes by pointing out that although this area has only 12% of the stone circles, it holds well over 50% of the (wood) henges. The distribution of the stone circles is therefore a result of the availability of building materials. Wood henges, which would have the same social and ceremonial function as stone circles were their substitute in the south and east. Their distribution has nothing to do with reactions to geoluminescent phenomena, as Devereux insists.

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# OUR UNRELIABLE 'EYEWITNESS'

## Paolo Toselli

'I saw it with my own eyes!' How many times we have listened to this statement designed to avoid doubt, to reinforce certitude.

Usually, but erroneously, one believes that the witness is a perfect recording apparatus, that all that passes before his eyes is recorded and may be plainly reproduced through well-contrived questions. Numerous experiments show, however, that testimony is remarkably subject to error.

In order to discuss something as controversial as UFOs, it is first important to realize that the eyewitness is as much a part of the event as is the physical stimulus that led to the personal experience. In fact, an objective stimulus seems to be there in the first place in a UFO experience, but the whole thing is channeled through our own personalities and comes out as an experience with greater or lesser 'subjectivity' elements.

Perception is not just a simple reproduction of what we see. Some psychologists have argued that in order to comprehend an event that we witness, various aspects of the event must be interpreted by us. Only part of this interpretation is based upon the environmental input that gave rise to it; that is, only part comes from our actual perception of an event. Another part is based on prior 'memory' or existing knowledge, and a third part is inference.

As remarked by Haines: 'In an honest attempt to reduce the emotional and intellectual uncertainty which inevitably accompanies a novel experience, the witness may add certain types of percepts from his memory and/or delete other types; this helps reconcile the often unreal quality of the original percepts with an acceptable, reality-based, final perception. For instance (...) a UFO witness may add certain visual details gleaned from his imagination or memory. The addition of these details usually makes the object he describes appear more similar to objects he believes others have reported. Thus, what may orig-

inally have been the perception of a vague, greenish haze seen hovering silently above an open field late at night, may be reported as a well-defined, light green object which flew slowly and evenly over the field without making a sound.' (1)

Another process influencing the responses that will be made to an ambiguous, novel (unknown) event is the psychological predisposition (also known as 'set') of the witness. Many times the concept of 'set' is expressed in the psychological literature with the terms of 'hypothesis', 'expectation', 'meaning', 'attitude'; they are quite similar terms emphasizing the general concept that a person is prepared or syntonized to receive some kinds of information; so the perception depends on set and stimulus interaction.

Ron Westrum, in a paper on UFO witnesses, touches upon this matter. 'A considerable folklore has grown up around UFOs, as I discovered to my surprise' he writes 'in the course of making investigation of UFO sightings. (...) This folklore tends to set up an expectation that certain kinds of things will be seen or will happen during a UFO experience and this affects not only what the witness feels he ought to relate to others but also what the witness remembers as happening.' (2)

The question of 'mental set' is especially important to consider when dealing with certain UFO/IFO cases. Because so few data exist, the distortion of only one factor can make an identifiable object apparently unidentifiable.

An example of the 'mental set' effect is supplied to us by Philip Morrison. It is a case of three radio-astronomers; one of these was a friend of Morrison, who stood outside Washington DC some years ago watching a large cigar-shaped object in the air, perfectly silent, with lighted windows, moving very rapidly past them.

'Independently, they told each other they had each certainly seen the most remarkable kind of unidentified flying object. Suddenly the wind changed, and aircraft engines were heard; the distance adjusted itself, and they recognized they were seeing an ordinary airliner, much nearer than they had thought but not audible because of some peculiar sonic refraction of the wind. A change of the perceptual set changed their entire view of the phenomenon.' (3)

When we experience an event, we do not simply record that event in memory as a videotape recorder would. The situation is much more complex.

Usually, we don't retain the pure experience, but we elaborate it before storing it. In fact, we store in memory not the environmental input itself, nor even a copy or a partial copy, but only fragments of the interpretation that we gave to the input when we experienced it. A vivid, detailed photographic resurrection of the past is not the most efficient way to remember. Memories of everyday events are more similar to a syllogism than to a photograph; usually we go gradually towards the past and only seldom do we recall it as a 'snapshot'. A grown-up person usually uses (verbal) symbols, to organize his memory in such a way as to find what he needs. We constantly translate our experiences by means of intervening symbols, store them in our memory and recover them instead of our original experience. When we have to remember, we try to reconstruct the experience from the symbols.

Research indicates that the experiences people remember about an event are influenced by the label associated with the event. Labels are not neutral, they carry explicit and implicit stimuli previously associated with them. As remarked by Michael Persinger: 'A confounding interaction arises when one uses a label which is already heavily "loaded" with emotionally laden associations. For example, suppose an observer sees a pulsating luminous light with dark stimuli moving within it. If the person labels the observation as a landed UFO, then the observation is no longer "neutral" since the previously learned associations of the word UFO may now contaminate the observation. The operation of this process could result in a report like: "I saw a UFO landed on the hill, it was slowly materializing and dematerializing, and there were aliens moving within."' (4)

People's memories are fragile things. The tendency to invent or to introduce new material taken from a different structure can increase considerably with the passage of time.

External information provided from the outside can intrude into the witness's memory, as can his own thoughts, and both can cause dramatic changes in his recollection. Usually, this happens when witnesses to an event later read or hear something about it and are subsequently asked to recall the event. Post-event information can not only enhance existing memories but also change a witness's memory and even cause non-existent details to become incorporated into a previously acquired memory. (5)

Many people believe that their memories are absolute and constant. But, contrary to apparent popular belief, the evidence in no way confirms the view that all memories are permanent and thus potentially recoverable.

A witness's confidence in his memories and the accuracy of his memories often have little correlation. People are often confident and right, but they can also be confident and wrong. To be cautious, one should not take high confidence as any absolute guarantee of anything.

Memory isn't the only place where the recognition processes can go on the wrong track. Many psychologists think that the main errors and misunderstandings depend on the retrieval processes.

The conditions prevailing at the time information is retrieved from memory are critically important in determining the accuracy and completeness of an eyewitness account. Reporting is one of the most crucial factors in the UFO problem. There are numerous ways to influence (and often drastically distort) the recollection of a witness.

The manner in which a question is phrased and the assumption it makes have profound effects on the accuracy and quantity of eyewitness testimony. By using leading questions, for example, an attorney can 'shape' the testimony of an eyewitness. A leading question is simply one that by its form or content suggests to a witness what answer is desired or leads him to the desired answer. We all probably ask leading questions without realizing we are doing so.

Dr Elizabeth Loftus, an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington in Seattle, has demonstrated how altering the semantic value of the words in questions about a filmed auto accident causes witnesses to distort their reports. (6) When witnesses were asked a question using the word 'smashed' as opposed to 'bumped' they gave higher estimates of speed and were more likely to report having seen broken glass - although there was no broken glass.

To summarize the issues involved in question type and structure of testimony, the notion of cognitive set, defined in terms of the specificity of the questioning situation, is a useful tool and also helps to illustrate the negative correlation between accuracy and quantity of testimony. When giving unstructured testimony (i.e., free elaboration without the use of any questioning) the witness's cognitive set is under the least restraint, and witnesses

are likely to give only testimony about which they are somewhat certain, causing accuracy to be high and quantity low. As the questioning becomes more and more specific, cognitive set becomes directed and narrow, accuracy decreases, and quantity increases. The studies in this area indicate, then, that the witness should first be allowed to report freely, or in a controlled narrative fashion. This free report can be followed by a series of very specific questions so as to increase the range or coverage of the witness's report. On the contrary, asking specific questions before the narrative can be dangerous because information contained in those questions can become a part of the free report, even when the information is wrong.

Summing up, the reported testimony - viz., the UFO report - on which we are bound to work is conditioned by many facts that affect the observation and reporting of an event, whose effect nevertheless we aren't able to quantify and estimate a posteriori.

It is essential, therefore, that UFO investigators recognize the factors that might influence how well a person perceives, remembers and reports an event.

The purpose of this paper is to present an invitation to probe the numerous problems involved in dealing with eyewitnesses.

Continued from page 7

psychoanalysis. In particular, a whole chapter is devoted to an analysis of the manner in which nineteenth-century occultists helped originate the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy.

On the evidence of these books it would be unwise to see the current predilection of FSR for conspiracy theories as simply one of the vagaries of the present editor. Rather, it seems to be another example of the way the UFO has become associated with many of the oldest and most potent myths and symbols.

#### NOTES

1. See, for instance, Roberts and Gilbertson; The Dark Gods (Spearman, 1980).
2. Jenny Randles; The Strange Affair of APEN, MUFOR, ns3: The Unmasking of a Man in Black, MAGONIA 6. Another investigation which revealed an elaborate and apparently pointless hoax is described in Probe 3:3.

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#### CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR QUIZ. The Answers:

1.a. Ivan Sanderson; b, Frank Scully (games for bed-ridden youngsters), c, Donald Kehoe; d, Charles Fort; e, John Michel. f, John Keel; g.Charles Gibbs-Smith; h. Hilary Evans.  
2. a, Desmond Leslie biffed Bernard Levin because he gave a bad review of Leslie's wife's play; b, Edward Condon; c. Donald Kehoe; d. Gordon Creighton; e. Ray Palmer.  
3. a. Blue Books; b. Men in Black. 4. a, Dino Kraspedon; b, Fred Crisman; c. Menger; d, Barney Hill; e, Malcolm X. 5. Entities from 'Aenstria' contacted Arthur Shuttlewood by phone. He knew they were extraterrestrials because he did not hear them putting money in; b, 'Ashtar', a hoax by students who interrupted TV broadcasts in southern England. They had done a similar hoax earlier when they claimed Idi Amin was taking over the BBC; 'Spring Heel Jack' was widely believed to be the Marquis of Waterford.

The winning entry was from Martin Kottmeyer, from Illinois, who showed a wide understanding of the byways of British ufology. He wins 2-year subscription to MAGONIA and a copy of John Rimmer's forthcoming book, The Evidence for Alien Abductions.



# LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I see that the frequently published Roy Jennings 1961 photograph of alleged ball lightning is once more causing controversy and confusion (MAGONIA 12, page 10). Stuart Campbell made a detailed investigation of the circumstances of the taking of this photograph (published in *The British Journal of Photography*, 23 October 1981) and reached the conclusion that the picture was not intentionally faked by Jennings, but his faulty camera had superimposed a trace of light across the film after he had finished taking his picture of a normal lightning flash and as he moved away from his bedroom window. It is my experience that such 'lazy' camera shutters frequently produce these anomalous light effects and cause inexperienced photographers to claim all manner of psychic and atmospheric manifestations.

In his letter in MAGONIA 12, Paul Devereux makes some erroneous assertions regarding the photographic process which to the inexperienced would appear to give authenticity to the Jennings ball lightning claim. To prevent the confusion being even further compounded, I should like to bring the facts to the attention of MAGONIA readers.

(1) Devereux says in effect that because the image of the houses, and telephone kiosk, are not blurred by movement, the trace of light could not be caused by a moving camera. This is incorrect. The reason is simply that the light source is hundreds of times brighter than the light reflected from the houses and the light coming from the telephone kiosk. According to Campbell's report (mentioned above), the photographer held his camera against the window and opened the shutter on a time exposure, waiting for a flash of lightning. After he saw a flash he closed the shutter. Therefore, during the time exposure the dimly lit houses and telephone kiosk would have long enough to register an image on the film, and the brilliant street lamp would overexpose and cause an area of 'flare', which is what the picture

shows. When the photographer moved his camera away from the window, erroneously thinking the shutter was closed, the brilliant street lamp was bright enough to cause a streak of light to register on the film, but everything else in the scene is so dimly lit it could not imprint any image on the film during the brief time available. Campbell makes the same point in his article. Anyone with a camera which has a 'B' setting on the shutter dial can try it for themselves. All photographic images are subject to a law which can be expressed as: strength of photo image = intensity of subject illumination x length of exposure time. This means that a dimly lit object exposed for a long time will produce the same strength of image on the film as a brightly lit object exposed for a short time.

(2) The perspective effect which Devereux sees in the light trace is a likely source of confusion, but it is a product of the same photographic effect as the confusion dealt with above. If the camera is moved rapidly, the image of the intense light source will register as a faint and attenuated line, and when the camera is moved more slowly the light will have a longer time in which to affect the film and will therefore leave a wider and brighter trace. This is supported by the visible trace in the picture: the straight, horizontal lines of movement show a faint, thinner image where the camera moved quickly, and where the camera slowed to change direction the image is brighter and wider.

The pulses of light are caused by the alternating current of the street lamp, pulsing at 50 cycles per second. Studying the picture, one can easily see where the regular pulses are 'stretched out' where the camera moved rapidly, but 'crowd up close' as the speed of camera movement slows. Throughout the whole trace the light pulses remain horizontal and parallel to the light tube in the street lamp, clearly indicating that they are images of this source of light. By counting the number of pulses throughout the whole trace one can estimate the length of time which the whole manoeuvre took, which appears to be a little less than 2 seconds.

So this apparent perspective effect of foreshortening, frequently used by artists to simulate three-dimensional space, is in this case purely a photographic effect. Devereux has interpreted the picture with the eye of the creative artist, but what is required here is the eye of the analytical photographer.

(3) At the time of exposure there was clearly mains electricity in the area. I have checked with a telephone engineer who assures me that all telephone kiosk illumination is direct from the mains (the power for the telephone itself is quite independent), and the telephone kiosk in the picture is undoubtedly illuminated. Also, lit windows can be seen in the row of houses; an illuminated first-floor window in the dark area on the right and the window immediately below the light source. Another relevant point is made in Ball Lightning and Bead Lightning: Extreme Forms of Atmospheric Electricity by James Dale Barry (Plenum Press, 1980), who writes that 'Davies and Standler (Nature, 1972) ascertained from the Electricity Board that it (the street lamp) was in fact illuminated at the time of the recorded event', and that by photographing a street lamp Davies was able to reproduce the visual effect seen in the photograph.

Other points of interest are that the photograph as published in Earth Lights is reversed when compared to the daylight photographs of the site reproduced with Campbell's article, as well as all the other published reproductions. The best reproduction of it I have seen is on page 41 of Photographs of the Unknown by Rickard and Kelly (1980), a book which every Fortean must surely possess, and which also contains other interesting photographs of ball lightning and various other light traces. In this reproduction of the photograph the dark area down the right-hand side of the picture is very evident and is generally considered to be the out-of-focus side of the window frame. As the light trace goes right across this area it clearly indicates that this was produced within the camera and was not something in the sky recorded during the time exposure.

Finally, if this trace had been caused by ball lightning, then it shows that the ball lightning moved below the level of the rooftops and down to the ground-floor window level before moving up to 'earth' itself on the street lamp. It is generally stated that electricity finds the shortest path to earth, but this does not seem to have happened in this case. Also, I can find no other record of ball lightning which was seen to have a regular light pulse. Do any such records exist?

In view of the several competent and independent reports on this photograph which have been published in the past, all of which show that the effect was a result of camera malfunction, it is surprising that

it is still being presented as an example of ball lightning.

Yours faithfully

Colin Bord  
Montgomery,  
Powys

Dear John,

Last night I rediscovered MAGONIA 11 and reminded myself that many weeks ago I intended to comment on the 'BT' debate.

It's a bit late now but I would like to record how pleased I was to read Ian Cresswell's response to Alvin Lawson's article. The Birth Trauma hypothesis seems to be based entirely on data which have suffered from intense subjective validation. I listened to Lawson present his ideas in London last year and was appalled at the way he manipulated information to fit his theory.

Lawson contends that his hypothesis is falsifiable by finding UFO abduction descriptions which do not correlate with birth details as predicted. This is correct but I suggest he has not made the attempt because one of the slides shown at his talk listed detection of hoaxes as an ability of the hypothesis. In other words, any results which do not fit his theory are assumed to be due to hoaxes and therefore ignored. I put this point to Lawson and McCall after the talk but they did not accept it.

I suggest that anyone who does not appreciate that such actions render an argument non-falsifiable deserves no credibility.

Yours sincerely

Dave Simpson  
West Ewell,  
Surrey

Dear John Rimmer,

With reference to Jerome Clark's article in MAGONIA 12 entitled 'Confessions of a Fortean sceptic':

(a) May we at The Unexplained bring the Cottingley Fairy controversy up to date by pointing out that in our issue 117 we publish the 'exclusive', 'first', 'scoop' interview with the two old ladies who perpetrated the original fairy fraud. And we have the tape on which they confess to it.

(b) Yet, curiously, several newspapers including The Times have carried an 'exclusive' about the confessions, and national and local radio stations have also made much of it all. Yet we - a best-selling part-work - have never been given credit

Continued on page 17

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# THE EARTHLIGHTS CONTROVERSY

## JOHN HARNEY REPLIES

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In the previous issue of MAGONIA (No. 12) appeared a long letter from Paul Devereux which was devoted to attacking my review of his book Earth Lights (EL) which was published in MAGONIA TT. He seems annoyed that his work did not inspire me to write pages of gushing prose in fulsome praise of it. However, he more than makes up for my 'bored and dismissive' review in his letter. Its bludgeoning, rhetorical style may make it a good read but I hardly think that it will convince many of our readers. Let me examine a few of the points he raises.

He says that the UFO study can be divided into two halves: 'the core phenomenon which is actually witnessed in the skies' and the 'visionary, psychological and sociological aspects'. The phenomena which are seen in the skies have various causes (see, for example The UFO Handbook (1)), but Devereux insists that they are 'somehow tectonically produced'. No doubt some of them are. Those mysterious phenomena known as 'earthquake lights' are at present being subjected to scientific investigation with the object of discovering how they are generated. However, in a recent paper it is stated that such lights are seen only in association with strong earthquakes and the authors cite a study by Chinese researchers who have found that most occurrences are associated with earthquakes of magnitude 7 or greater and none with earthquakes of magnitude less than 5. (2) Devereux, though, claims that somewhat similar phenomena occur on a smaller scale even in the British Isles and generally not associated with any noticeable seismic activity. It seems that the kinds

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This is the first in our series of articles by leading French researchers. In the next issue we have the first of a two-part article by Thierry Pinvidic, examining the UFO theme in non-Western cultures.

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of UFOs he discusses occur near geological faults - any faults, not just active faults. He tells us that his theory is unfolded primarily in Chapter 7, so let me examine that chapter for accuracy of statement and cogency of argument.

It begins with an account of a study of Leicestershire with the purpose of seeing if there were any correlations between 'the distribution of old stones, meteorological and seismic phenomena, the incidence of UFOs, alleged paranormal events and geological features of the landscape'. (EL, p. 169) Accounts of these phenomena, going back as far as 1580, were extracted from 'the records', these records not being specified. From his comments it is obvious that he takes these accounts literally, without any thought of who originally wrote them, for what purposes or under what circumstances. Devereux accuses me of 'sloppy ufology' but he is obviously guilty here of sloppy history. Let us look at an example.

He quotes from an account of a violent thunderstorm with hail, which occurred at Markfield on 7 September 1659, and which he attributes to Sir George Booth. This account is written in a rather extravagant style which describes the hail as being of the form of 'halberts, swords and daggers' and the thunder as the sound of muskets being discharged. Devereux concludes the description of this incident by remarking: 'Somehow or other, while in formation, some of the hailstones were obliged to follow a blueprint that must have come from the human mind.'

When I read this account three related questions occurred to me: Why were military metaphors employed? What other events were happening in England at that time? Was Sir George Booth involved in them? After intensive research in my local library, lasting all of ten minutes, I had the relevant facts. (3) Sir George Booth (1622-84) was involved in a plot for the restoration of Charles II and the rising which he organized took place in August 1659. His forces were defeated and he attempted to escape but was captured, dressed as a woman, at Newport Pagnell and taken to the Tower. Although the rising was an apparent failure it did hasten the restoration of the monarchy (1660) and Booth, instead of losing his head, was made a baron, taking the title of Lord Delamere.

What has all this got to do with a storm at Markfield? Well, the incident of Booth's capture was the subject of some scurrilous verses entitled 'The Last Observations of Sir George Booth' appended to an account of 'The Dreadful and Most

Prodigious Tempest at Markfield in Leicestershire'. So the account of the storm was not written by Sir George Booth but was written about him and the events he was involved in, which explains the military metaphors which Devereux would apparently have us take literally.

Why does Devereux remark that the hailstones in the Markfield storm must have been shaped by the influence of human minds? Well, this obviously refers to the crankiest of the various themes which are developed in EL. This idea - that the substance which forms the UFO phenomenon is directly manipulated by the human mind - is developed in Chapter 8. It seems that UFO material is 'a very sensitive energy form' and that information is transmitted to it by the observer 'by the process we call "psycho-kinesis" (PK) - the action of the mind-brain on external matter'. PK, of course, is that mysterious power which bends spoons, etc., but many people have other words for it, such as 'fraud' or 'sleight-of-hand'. Devereux asserts that: 'Practical magicians develop their PK expertise by concentrating on a candle flame, as this is matter in a particularly tenuous state susceptible to subtle influences'. This is rubbish. Practical magicians do not achieve their results by using PK, but by spending many hours practising each trick until they can perform it so smoothly and skilfully as to deceive even the most observant members of their audiences. Chapter 8 goes on to develop the PK and related ideas in a somewhat incoherent fashion, with a lot of guff about electromagnetic fields, levels of consciousness, the musings of C G Jung, and so on.

It seems that Devereux's thesis about the human mind's interaction with the UFO 'material' is the central idea of his book, for without it there would be nothing special about seismically generated phenomena as a principal cause of unexplained UFO reports.

To return to Chapter 7 - on his map of Leicestershire, Devereux plotted 'exceptional' or 'abnormal' meteorological events. As he does not define precisely what he means by an abnormal meteorological event, he is thus free to plot them anywhere he likes and he finds that these events are related to faulting. He speculates that 'fault areas somehow interfere with the normal cycles of the atmosphere' and that 'it could be the unusual electromagnetic fields and anomalies surrounding areas of tectonic disturbance and mineral deposits that affect the atmospheric processes, perhaps through the catalyzing effects of solar and lunar influence'. How's that for

pseudo-scientific gobbledygook! I would speculate that it could be that Devereux doesn't know anything about meteorology and is too busy plotting various unrelated and unquantified observations on his maps to have time to find out from one of the many excellent basic texts on the subject, so he just makes it up as he goes along. It isn't geology which affects the local weather, but topography. This will have some effect on the distribution of thunderstorms and their apparent distribution will also be related to the distribution of population and the distribution of weather observing stations. Violent storms are often highly localized, so some of these may not be recorded if they occur in sparsely populated areas.

I had intended to write a longer article about EL but many of the points I would have raised have already been discussed at some length between Devereux and reviewers of his book in various other British UFO journals. The question of the 'ball lightning' photograph is very ably dealt with by Colin Bord elsewhere in this issue, so I need make no further comments on it. As for the possibility that some UFO events are caused by geophysical activity, this seems to me to be worth further investigation and Devereux assures us that such work is actually being carried out by the Dragon Project and the Gaia Programme. I hope that their findings, as they are published, will show a more restrained and rigorous approach to the evidence, and will eschew such nonsense as 'PK' and other pseudo-scientific notions.

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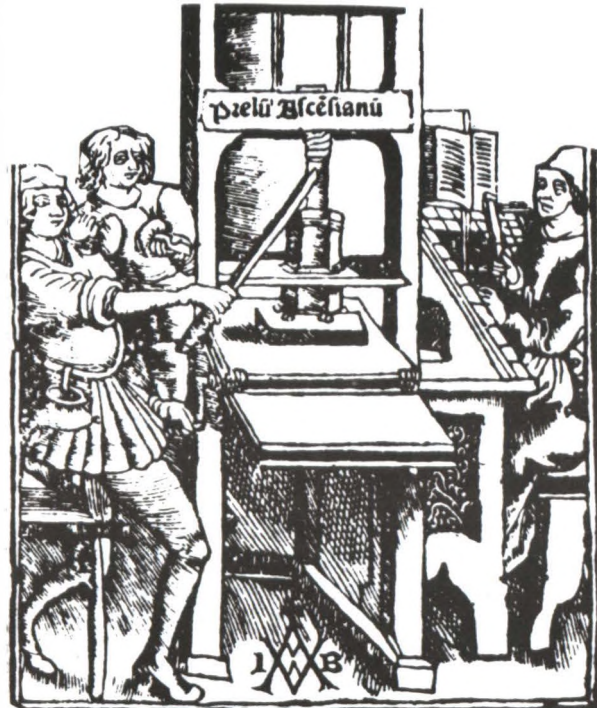
#### LETTERS Continued from page 14

*for exposing the fraud and now, it seems, never will be, unless we write vitriolic letters to umpteen publications.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Lynn Picknett  
Deputy Editor  
The Unexplained  
ORBIS Publishing Ltd  
London*

Letters for publication, commenting on items in *MAGONIA* or any other topic, are welcomed.



## BOOKS

RANDLES, Jenny. *The Pennine UFO Mystery*.  
Frogmore: Granada, 1983. £1.50

This book is an account of MUFORA's investigations into the Alan Godfrey 'abduction' case and other UFO experiences in the Pennine area. Most of these cases are told in insufficient detail for any conclusion to be reached, and the best one can say is 'interesting if true' (though with many of them 'boring if true' may be the more apt phrase). As a work of entertainment it is quite good, and Jenny's writing style has improved though it now resembles that of Arthur Shuttlewood in places.

As a contribution to serious UFO research, however, it is seriously deficient and in parts is grossly counter-productive. The opening chapter is an account of the death of Mr Zigmund Adamski, a coal miner of Polish origin, who disappeared from home while suffering from depression after not getting early retirement, and who was found dead on a coal tip by Todmorden railway station five days later. This has been linked to the UFO myth in various subtle ways. Of course, Jenny doesn't say directly there was a connection; she uses the subtle innuendo of the 'Of course I'm not saying Mr Figgis murdered his wife, and it's probably all coincidence but - 'variety. Jenny calls these innuendos 'pseudo-clues' (Note the neat way of avoiding responsibility). One of these pseudo-clues drags on the Scoriton story and we get: 'The periods between the Mantell death, the George Adamski death and the Zigmund

Adamski's death are almost equal - sixteen years and a couple of months in each case.

'7 January 1948 Thomas Mantell plunged out of the sky in Kentucky USA. His body was burnt and mutilated.

'7 June 1964 (sic) Edward Bryant claims he saw a UFO over Scoriton. It left burn marks on the ground. This led to him reporting the incident and his claimed contact with "Yamski" six weeks earlier.

'9 June 1980 Mrs Lottie Adamski called to report that her husband Zigmund had disappeared. He was to be found with strange burn marks.' (pp 25-26)

Just one problem with this 'coincidence'. George Adamski died on 23 April 1965 and Bryant claimed that his encounter with Yamski took place on 24 April 1965 and the second case on 7 June 1965. I leave it to the reader's imagination whether this convenient error was just carelessness or something else. Elsewhere (p. 172) reference is made to Dr Berthold Schwarz and Dr James Harder, 'two American psychiatrists'. Dr Schwarz is indeed a psychiatrist, but Dr Harder is a 'professor of hydraulic engineering' and is concerned with the development of artificial internal organs (biography from Story's Encyclopedia of UFOs). A few pages on we have 'Seemingly one of the first CE4s of the present century was discovered by Janet and Colin Bord in the course of their folklore research'. Actually (as Janet and Colin make clear in their FSR article) the story, that of the fairy boat of Muck, comes from A A Macgregor's Red Fire Flame and was first published in a UFO context by John Michell in his 1967 book Flying Saucer Vision.

There is throughout the book a reliance on strange coincidences (an obsession with Jenny) and a willingness to take the wilder fantasies of some teenage UFO buffs at face value. When we get Paul Bennett (see Nigel Watson's articles in MUFOR) portrayed as a serious UFO researcher I for one start to get very worried.

The major interest for the serious UFO researcher must be the account of the Alan Godfrey abduction case. Here the author presented one of the psychiatrists who investigated the case with quite a dilemma. Having gone out on a limb and established a professional reputation for the regression of rape victims on behalf of the police and being adamant that 'information he has obtained has led to the capture of rapists, who are prosecuted on the basis of other evidence', he was faced with having to say, in the presence of a senior police officer and a lawyer, whether an incredible story told under regression was true. He said:

'Why complicate things? It is simpler to believe he is telling what happened'. Quite.

Unless large parts of the regression have been omitted, it would appear that important clues have been missed. Godfrey said consciously that he is not afraid of dogs, yet under regression says that there is a black dog like an Alsatian in the 'examination room', and in another session makes an apparently irrelevant comment: 'I don't like dogs'. He also remembers a high-way hallucination of running down a woman and a dog, accompanied by a time loss, and claims that all the dogs his family have owned have 'gone crackers', and that his future wife once saw the ghost of a black Labrador (a former pet) in his house. These seem important clues to me, and I would have thought that this was a line the hypnotist should have pursued.

Jenny makes a major point that UFO percipients have had all sorts of other strange experiences. I don't doubt this, but suspect that a great many people have had 'paranormal' experiences, and only discuss them with sympathetic people.

In chapter 17, Conclusions, Jenny suggests that some of the Pennine experiences have been generated by earth lights (a la Persinger and Devereux). This may or may not be true, but she provides no convincing, reasoned train of evidence. Indeed, a few pages earlier on she was quoting several witnesses as being convinced that they had seen real physical craft. In some of these cases strange objects were seen at close quarters but could not be photographed, suggesting that they were hallucinatory. It is probably impossible to convince witnesses of this, owing to the negative connotations of the word, and the assumption that an hallucination is some sort of nebulous mental image rather than a quasi-sensory perception indistinguishable from a real sensory perception.

Jenny has the interesting idea that misidentifications can lead to an altered state of consciousness in which one has access to the 'UFO message'. What a pity that this is all hedged about with vague talk of 'cosmic communications', etc., and apocalyptic forebodings.

Unfortunately, the sensational tone and rambling structure of the book largely preclude taking it seriously. I hope Jenny will not plead the innocent in the hands of the nasty capitalist publishers again. She must decide whether she wishes to be a serious investigator or popular writer; she cannot be both.

BASTERFIELD, Keith. Close Encounters of an Australian Kind: UFOs the image hypothesis, including a full catalogue of sightings. Sydney, Reed, 1981. £4.15

Basically an expansion of Keith Basterfield's articles on the image hypothesis (published in MUF0B under the title 'Strange awakenings'), this book is a useful brief introduction to some of the ideas which influence the 'new ufology'. The editors of MAGONIA had been speculating along these lines for some time, and were pleased to see how Keith Basterfield had come to similar conclusions by a totally separate route.

The early chapters give a history of Basterfield's involvement with ufology, and the ease with which the 'best evidence' can fall apart. He is clearly sceptical about 'physical evidence' and such matters as the New Zealand film. The refusal of reputable Australian ufologists to take some of the claims for this film at face value is significant in itself - perhaps they know a thing or two!

The whole field of imagery and hallucination is sadly neglected. Despite the evidence of the commonness of these experiences, some academic psychologists still

wish to regard anyone who has had an hallucination as 'mad', and many laboratory-trained psychologists are still too busy giving electric shocks to rats to have much time to devote to subjective human experience.

There is a useful catalogue of Australian sightings. My main complaint about this book (apart from the absurdly inflated price) is that it is far too short and hurried to do justice to the theme. A book about three times the length of this one is called for.

- PR

FOGARTY, Quentin. Let's hope they're friendly! The remarkable story behind the world's first verified film encounter with an unidentified flying object. London, Angus and Robertson, 1983. £4.95

This book deals less with Fogarty's UFO experience than with the mutual back-stabbing and copyright wrangles which went on afterwards. These suggest that right from the start money rather than science was a main motivator behind the participants.

A great deal is made by author and publisher of the film's endorsement by NICAP. This is rather less impressive if one re-

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calls that NICAP had by 1978 no connection with serious UFO research, most of its leading members having left several years before, and that earlier in the year its Director had happily sold its mailing list to a branch of Canadian neo-Nazis. For a near-bankrupt shell of an organization, Channel O's naive trust and the resulting ballyhoo must have seemed a godsend.

Exactly what would have happened if the film had been passed to serious Australian ufologists like Keith Basterfield and Bill Chalker is difficult to answer.

Perhaps not a definite answer, but a reasoned debate one suspects.

The trouble with this case is that as usual 'believers' and 'sceptics' shout abuse at one another (and no one who reads the contributions of Phil Klass and a certain Robert Lanigan-O'Keefe can doubt that there are cranks and wild publicity-seekers among the sceptics too!) and everyone sees in the film what they want to see. I still have no idea what appears on that film, and this book leads me no further forward.

- PR

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DE MILLE, Richard (editor). The Don Juan Papers: Further Castaneda Controversies. Santa Barbara, Ross-Erikson, 1980. \$8.95

This massive and impressive list of essays deals with far more than Castaneda, as it covers the nature of knowledge, the ethics of sociology, the circumstances in which the scientific community closes ranks to protect its own. Most of the essays will be of great relevance and profit to MAGONIA readers. The discussions of the concepts of authenticity and validity, the relationship of science to religion, and the limits of relativism are especially important. An excellent writing style helps considerably.

- PR

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HAYNES, Renee. The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982, a history. London, Macdonald, 1982. £7.95

The worst kind of 'official' history is that which tells you nothing and which presents far too many people as plaster saints. Historical controversy after historical controversy is either ignored completely or swept under the carpet in a few lines. The reason is that far too many leaders of the SPR see that organization as a sort of Victoriana appreciation society, and have no wish to critically examine their past, or to promote new research.

After 100 years the SPR is no further

forward in getting general acceptance for its ideas, and still presents the appearance of an ageing defensive in-group.

Miss Haynes attacks the SPR dissidents who formed ASSAP for their lack of critical spirit. It is sadly true that many members of ASSAP seem uncritical and naive, but then this book is not noted for its critical spirit. However, Miss Hayes not only dislikes popularizers, she also dislikes academics; in fact she would really like the SPR to remain an upper middle class tea-room set, from which exorbitant subscriptions keep out the lower orders who, not sharing their 'sense of honour' might actually cheat! Is it too unkind to suggest that, had he so wished, Anthony Blunt would have had no difficulty in entering the SPR's charmed circle?

To be fair one must say that the SPR has always had more faces than the one presented by Miss Hayes, and has been ill-served in this 'history' which can only enrich sceptics in their prejudices.

- PR

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BARKER, Gray (compiler) A UFO Guide to 'Fate'. Saucerian Press, 1981

This invaluable compilation is a comprehensive index to UFO-orientated articles published in Fate magazine from its beginning in 1948 up to the end of 1980, and must represent the culmination of a great deal of hard work. The original listings have been computerized, so that a variety of printouts can be produced arranging the data in different formats. This allows the index to be used in a number of very useful ways. For example, lists are provided of articles arranged chronologically from the earliest to the latest. This is particularly useful in demonstrating the development of UFO literature. It is interesting to note, for instance, that the last use of the phrase 'flying saucer' in a Fate title was in January 1963, just before the appearance of the first abduction report in June of the same year.

Other lists give alphabetical arrangements by author, subject and title, as well as sample listings of photographs, illustrations and 'typical' advertisements.

In all a well-produced and useful compilation that will be of great value to all serious researchers wishing to access one of the key sources of UFO information, with the added bonus of an informative and humorous introduction to each section by Gray Barker.

- JR