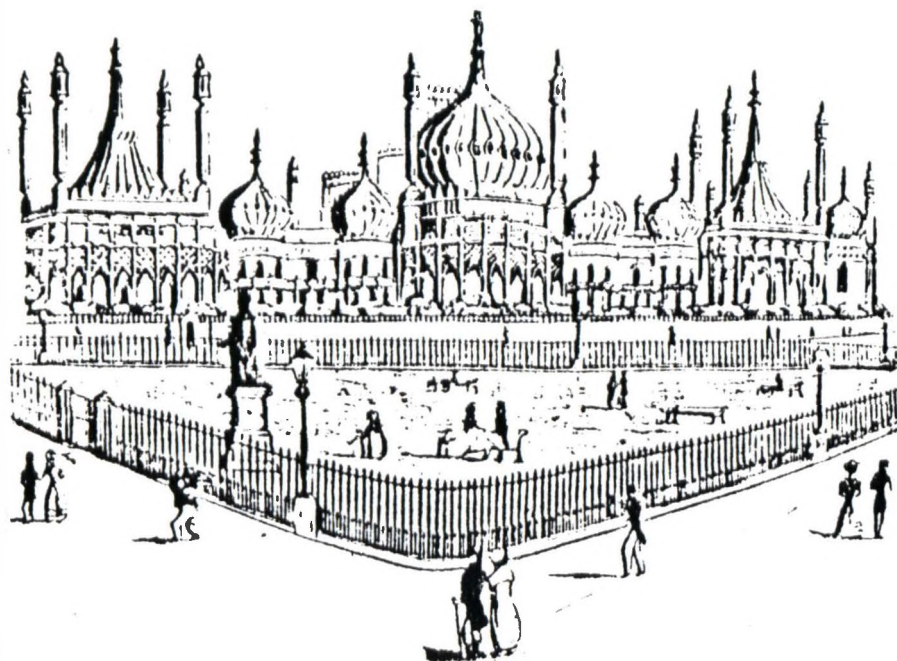


MAGONIA 15 / April 1984

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BRIGHTON '84
Anglo-French UFO Conference

Thierry Pinvidic
UFO's in China

Peter Rogerson
and Jacques Scornaux
**The Rise of the
Psycho-social hypothesis**

Letters §§ Reviews

MAGONIA

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and more importantly to Magonia's readers, it signals the ultimate collapse of Flying Saucer Review as a serious UFO journal. No journal espousing the bizarre beliefs that are now emanating from its pages can be considered worthy to be the literary flagship of British ufology. From now on, it seems, it will be of interest largely to paranoid cultists, conspiracy-mongers, and students of fringe literature.

No doubt this Editorial will itself be seen as part of the 'conspiracy' - unfortunately I do not seem to be receiving generous donations from the CIA, the Illuminati, the Freemasons or the Elementals!

It is sad to see a once influential journal like FSR in its decline. Too many good UFO magazines have closed down over the last few years. They are missed, and it gives us no great cause for gloating to realise that the mantle of Britain's major, serious, independent UFO journal now falls on the shoulders of Magonia. J.R.

EDITORIAL
NOTES

A remarkable letter and an even more remarkable editorial response appears in the latest issue of Flying Saucer Review. We have commented earlier (Magonia 12) on FSR Editor Gordon Creighton's peculiar belief in a conspiracy to remove UFO books from the shelves of public libraries. Now an FSR reader seems to have had some problems in finding books on the shelves of her local library, and launches into the attack. In his reply, Gordon Creighton repeats his allegations, in more specific form. He claims that librarians have received direct instructions from some unspecified (but presumably governmental) authority to prevent the public from gaining access to UFO books. He claims that librarians deliberately mislead the public by maintaining catalogue entries for UFO books which they do not have in stock, presumably in order to cover up their nefarious activities. He alleges that librarians deliberately obstruct people who order UFO books by forcing them to wait an inordinate length of time before providing the book concerned.

I am a senior librarian working in the largest borough in London. I have worked for over twenty years in libraries, including one of the largest municipal systems in Britain. For more than ten years I have been personally responsible for selecting the bookstock for a number of libraries, large and small. In all this time it has never been hinted, whispered, rumoured, or ordered that I should in any way limit the numbers of UFO books that I choose for stock. It is certainly true that you will find catalogue entries for books which are no longer available, probably because they have been stolen. Book theft is a serious problem in many libraries, and unfortunately ufologists seem to be as guilty as the rest.

Gordon Creighton's ludicrous allegations could be dismissed with a patronising smile, but for two things. Librarians are very concerned about attempts to suppress books, whether by 'moral crusaders', religious bigots or political fanatics, and an allegation such as Creighton makes is a serious slur on our professional reputation. But secondly,



The breakthrough of the psycho-sociological hypothesis in French ufology

THE RISING AND THE LIMITS OF A DOUBT

Jacques Scoreneaux

OVER THE past few years a growing number of French ufologists have become increasingly doubtful about the existence of UFOs as a genuinely original physical phenomenon. I should like to analyse briefly the origins and limits of this doubt.

The first French ufologist to have said "the emperor has no clothes" was Michel Monnerie, in two hotly debated books. [1] He was until then a very classical ufologist, and a member of the editorial board of *Lumieres dans la Nuit*, the leading ufo magazine in France, from which post he was fired after publication of his second book. Monnerie's reasons for doubting can be summarized in two main arguments:

1. The non-specificity of the residue of unexplained cases - in other words the lack of distinction between explained and unexplained cases: exactly the same patterns and the same characteristics appear in both sets of cases. Indeed, cases with typical UFO effects have been explained: electromagnetic effects, landing traces, humanoids, effects on animals, physiological effects, etc. I personally have investigated with friends a case which involved two witnesses, a burnt trace in a field and a howling dog - it was the rising moon! The unexplained cases have no unique peculiarities.

2. The continuity between the trivial and the extraordinary: for any phenomenon it is possible to define a set of median, or most probable characteristics (for size, colour, speed, etc.). But all these parameters are distributed about the median, and sometimes the appearance of a phenomenon is very far from the median, because of the inherent variability of the phenomenon,

because of bad sighting conditions or misrepresentation by the witness. It follows that the further the characteristics are from the median, the less will people be able to recognise the true nature of the phenomenon. For Monnerie, UFOs are situated at the ends of the distribution function, at the ends of a bell-shaped curve. They are thus 'fringe phenomena' of a larger set of phenomena, but their peripheral location is not perceived as such because ufologists remove the more central part of the curve, where the less strange phenomena are identified by the witnesses themselves or by the field investigators. Ufologists, Monnerie says, arbitrarily call the minor misinterpretations 'false UFOs' and the major ones 'true UFOs', and do not realise that there is a perfect continuity between the two series, and that the difference between them is of degree not of nature.

But by what process does a well-balanced person (even sceptical ufologists accept that psychological cases are rare) interpret an unrecognised phenomenon as a high strangeness UFO? According to Monnerie, when there is a lessening of attention or if the witness becomes anxious, he lives in a sort of daydream. He distorts the observed phenomenon and transposes it through the unconscious influence of a rumour or myth. One of the great myths of our time,

Monnerie says, is the extraterrestrial concept, because it is so well suited to our scientific and technological civilization. But it must be emphasised that this type of serious misinterpretation is not pathological, and can happen to anyone. A physical support, a real object which is not identified, is always necessary: it is not a perception without object, it is not an hallucination.

Monnerie's hypothesis was not exactly welcomed by French ufologists. But now, some years later, the situation has markedly changed. Why? It happened that as time went by an increasing number of allegedly "hard" cases - great "classics" of ufology - have been explained, not by sceptics, but by ufologists themselves. Let's quote some examples: the well-known Leroy, Kansas, "calfnapping" case of 1897 has been explained by Jerome Clark as a hoax [2]; the famous photograph from Salem, Massachusetts, 1952 has been explained by Hynek as a reflection of lights on a window [3]; the very complex case of San Jose de Valderas, Spain, which involved two allegedly independent photographers and an object left on the ground by the UFO has been explained by Claude Poher and myself as a hoax [4].

There are serious doubts also about the renowned UFO accident case at Ubatuba - it might be an accident indeed, but involving a rocket launched by the Brazilian Army [5]. Almost all of the often quoted sightings by American astronauts have received very mundane explanations, and Hynek himself has admitted it [6]. The complex set of sightings in the north of France on October 3rd, 1954 was in fact caused by the moon (in one of these cases the moon allegedly landed, and later took off!)[7]. As a last example, the intricate French case of Taize in 1972, which had the honour of being published in FSR [8], has recently been explained by Bertrand Meheust as powerful lights around a house on the other side of the valley.

Apart from facts like these, more theoretical studies also reinforced sceptical attitudes. Several authors pointed out the many analogies of UFO sighting details with the occupations, the psychology and the fields of interest of the witnesses involved, or with traditional and classical symbols [9]. Let us also mention Alvin Lawson's experiments: Imaginary abductions induced by hypnosis gave the same details as the allegedly real abductions aboard UFOs [10]; this is a good example of non-specificity [11].

Above all there was, for French ufologists, Bertrand Meheust's book [12]. Meheust is not a sceptic, but the many similarities he points out between science fiction and

UFOs in fact support the psycho-sociological hypothesis: almost all the UFO patterns were already present in SF novels before the Second World War (shapes, behaviour, types of entity, solid lights, physical effects, etc.). Why then search for an exotic explanation, if human symbolism and inventiveness are quite sufficient?

But this new and pervasive form of scepticism has its limits. Firstly, it goes without saying, but goes even better for saying it, that the kind of doubt I am speaking about has absolutely nothing in common with the attitude of the lifelong sceptics. The doubt of some French ufologists is only based on a thorough analysis of the facts and not on prejudice. No-one amongst these new French ufologists has any scientific or philosophical prejudice against the possible existence of extraterrestrial visitors or paranormal phenomena. I am certain that they are ready to reverse their attitudes if the facts require it.

Secondly, I and most of my colleagues continue to believe that there remains a small residue (although much tinier than we believed some years ago) of unexplained

The doubt of French ufologists is based on a thorough analysis of the facts and not prejudice

sightings (or perhaps we have to say more cautiously "not yet explained sightings"?). But if explained and unexplained cases reveal the same patterns, what distinguishes these residual cases? Well, essential characteristics which are external to the phenomenon: number and quality of witnesses, multiple independent witnesses, psychological circumstances that exclude a hoax, or the absence of a suitable support for a misinterpretation.

Let's recognise that the reasons why we consider such and such a case as genuine are often difficult to make explicit: it is more a feeling than clear-cut reasoning. This is not to say that it is pure belief, but it may alas appear as belief to sceptics, for we have no real proof. Statistical evidence, as presented by Jacques Vallee, James McCampbell, or Claude Poher, is no longer valid, because many cases on which they are based have now been explained, and we often lack sufficient information on the remaining ones [13].

As I wrote some years ago [14], our ufological quest is a quest for the non-transmittable: although we may acquire a personal

conviction, we cannot pass this conviction on to 'good faith' sceptics (or at least not to many of them). All cases, even the 'hardest' ones, contain elements that legitimate a doubt. For instance, the famous Boianai, New Guinea, sightings appear at first glance to be very 'hard': many witnesses, object seen at short distance for some time, with humanoids and many observable details. However, Hlynek had to concede that a doubt remained, because the position in the sky, and the time of disappearance of the main UFO fitted the movement of Venus [15].

This continuing absence of really convincing proof (the problem is the same in parapsychology) is too general in this kind of phenomena to be merely bad luck. To me, it has only two possible explanations: either there is no new physical phenomenon - - this is the psycho-sociological hypothesis described above - or we are faced with a phenomenon which deliberately escapes proof, that is, a phenomenon characterised by what my friend Bertrand Meheust called - in English in his French book! - "elusiveness".

To try and solve this dilemma, I think that one of the most urgent tasks for ufologists is to attempt to determine whether the non-specificity is really total. Are there patterns which would be unique to the unexplained cases? Perhaps some details which do not appear in science fiction may be unique, like some types of physical traces, or sudden disappearances or the fusions and dislocations of UFOs. This is one of the main reasons why French ufologists recently launched the 'Concreting Operation', that consists of defining new and more severe credibility criteria for selecting really solid cases. Indeed it appeared that cases which figured high in the usual credibility scoring were nevertheless explainable.

These new criteria, which are presently being developed by a small group of French researchers, fall into four categories: criteria concerning the phenomenon characteristics, concerning the sighting conditions, concerning witnesses, and concerning the field investigation. As soon as they are finalised, a translation will be made for Magonia and for British field investigators.

More generally speaking, ufologists have now to think about the following question: what methods would allow us, on the basis of UFO sighting reports and without prejudice about the solution, to distinguish phenomena relevant to behavioural sciences from phenomena relevant to physical sciences, and to distinguish, in the two subsets, known from new phenomena?

In any case, there is no reason to despair. I see at least two certainties in the present state of ufology:

1. Ufologists are unanimous, even the most sceptical, on the fact that most UFO sightings have at their base a real physical stimulus that was genuinely not recognised by the witness. Hoaxes and hallucinations are rare.

2. In any event, UFO reports remain an unresolved problem and testify to the existence of at least one unknown phenomenon. Indeed, even if all the reports were triggered by the misperception of a known phenomenon (this is the minimal hypothesis) the distortion of reality would be so great and so frequent that this particular type of misperception would be in its own right an important new phenomenon, which would deserve a thorough study. This remains true even if there is a physically originated residue, because the numerous serious misrepresentations have to be explained in any case.

Ufology would not disappear if there were no new physical phenomenon . . .

Because of this second certainty, ufology would not disappear if there were no new physical phenomenon. A psych-sociological phenomenon of misinterpreted and distorted perception may be less appealing than an extraterrestrial or parapsychological one, but when it has the extent and persistence of the UFO phenomenon, is nevertheless revolutionary from the standpoint of present theories in the behavioural sciences. This is clearly emphasised by the near absence of thorough studies of UFOs in the human sciences literature. Apart from Jung's book, there are practically no books, Ph. D. theses or scientific journal articles about sociological aspects of UFOs [16]. This absence is quite strange in view of the rich study material UFO reports provide for behavioural sciences. Some sociologists even manage to write whole books on modern myths, or rumours in our society, without any allusion to UFOs! It is as if UFOs were put, as Meheust puts it, into "semantic brackets".

I think that this profound reluctance stems from the central dogma of the most influential school of thought in present day sociology, namely that man is an essentially rational being, whose behaviour is in most cases entirely predictable. The UFO phenomenon is an ideal case to point

out the pervasiveness of myths, of irrational behaviour, even in our technological society (and to demonstrate the falseness of this dogma) because it is new (so we can study its origin and development), frequent and perceptible (that is, based on a false perception, contrary to most myths and rumours which are based only on false reasoning and which can be qualified as cognitive). For these reasons it is also ideal for understanding the function that myths fulfil in our society. This is really revolutionary, but perhaps more in a political than a scientific sense, because both capitalist and marxist theories are based on the assumption that man is rational. Both give a pre-eminent role to economic causes in human behaviour, and economic reasons are essentially rational.

Thus we ufologists are in any event revolutionaries! However, let us not exaggerate our power: of course we cannot seriously shake the rationalist or "economistic" dogma of our society, but we may and must be watchers, collecting and preserving as much information as we can, in the hope that sometime in the future mankind will be sufficiently adult to study these data without any prejudice in either direction [17].

REFERENCES: Please excuse me for most of my references being in French. Whenever I know of an English version I have mentioned it. 1. MONNERIE, Michel. Et si les OVNI's n'existaient pas?, Les Humanoïdes Associes, 1978; Le naufrage des Extraterrestres, Nouvelles Editions Rationalistes, 1979. I have published a review of Monnerie's first book, under the title "Et si Michel Monnerie n'avait pas tout a fait tort?" in Lumieres dans la Nuit, no. 177, Aug-Sep 1978 and no. 178, Oct. 1978, and in Infoespace, nos. 39 to 42; and a review of Monnerie's second book under the title "Monnerie persiste et signe" in INFO-OVNI (Groupe OS100 Montlucon) no. 7/8, 1981. An English summary of these two book reviews is to be published in UPIAR (Milan, Italy), vol. V. 2. CLARK, Jerome. "The Leroy, Kansas, Kidnapping Hoax", in FSR, 22,6, April 1977. 3. HYNEK, J Allen. The Hynek UFO Report, Sphere, 1978, pp.231-233. 4. POHER, Claude. Infoespace no. 32, March 1977, pp.3-7; SCORNEAUX, Jacques, Infoespace no. 43, Jan. 1979, p.28. 5. BOURRON, Michel. "Ubatuba, Presil, septembre 1957: suite et peut-être fin" Lumieres dans la Nuit no. 174, April 1978, pp.3-6. 6. OBERG, James. Space World, Feb. 1977; OMNI, 3,5, Feb. 1981, pp.32 & 106. 7. This series of sightings was originally published as real UFOs in Alain Michel's Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery. For the explanation see: CAUDRON, Dominique, "Requiem pour un zigzag". Recherches ufologiques (GNEOVNI, UFO Group of the North of France) no. 6, 1978, and no. 7 1979. Caudron's investigation is summarised in FIGUET, Michel and RUCHON, Jean-Louis, OVNI: le premier dossier complet des rencontres rapproches en France, Alain Lefevre,

1979, pp.657-665. 8. TYRODE, Jean, "Talez a case right out of the ordinary", FSR 19,4, 1973, pp.16-21. The explanation by Meheust is not yet published. 9. See various articles by Jean-Jacques IARLAT in Lumieres dans la Nuit, nos. 163, 164, 170, 176, 177; and in La Revue des Soucoupes Volantes, no.2, 1977, pp.16-17. See also, concerning more specifically the abduction patterns: Josiane and Jan D'AIGUIRE, "l'affaire 'Antonin' - les elements", La Revue des Soucoupes Volantes, no.5, 1978. 10. LAWSON, Alvin H. "What can we learn from hypnosis of Imaginary abductees?" MUFON UFO Symposium Proceedings, pp. 106-115; "Hypnosis of Imaginary UFO 'abductees'", UPIAR, Vol. III, 1978-79, pp.219-258; "A testable hypothesis for the origin of fallacious abduction reports: birth trauma Imagery in CF III narratives", Proceedings of the 1981 CUFO'S Conference. See also Magonia 10. 11. It is far from being the only one. Let us mention also Holmes' work on UFO drawings: there is practically no difference between drawings by witnesses and non-witnesses. In particular the dimensional characteristics are the same. Witness drawings have no specific pattern and are even less detailed than non-witness drawings. See: HAINES, Richard F. "UFO drawings by witnesses and non-witnesses: is there something in common?" UPIAR, Vol. II, 1977, pp.123-151 and Vol. III, 1978/79, pp.259-271; "What do UFO drawings by alleged eyewitnesses and non-eyewitnesses have in common?", chapter 12 of UFO Phenomena and the Behavioural Scientist, Scarecrow Press, 1979, pp.358-395. 12. MEHEUST, Bertrand. Science-fiction et les Soucoupes Volantes, Mercure de France, 1978. A real must for all those who read French! 13. For a critical appreciation of statistical aspects of ufology, see MAUGE, Claude, OVNI-OVI: "Sur un certain etat de la question", Chapter 5.c, Infoespace, no.64, Sept. 1983. My friend Claude Mauge has made the effort, for which he is to be congratulated, to write for Magonia an English summary of his long article, published under the title "Questioning the 'Real' Phenomenon", Magonia 13. 14. SCORNEAUX, Jacques, "Les sauteurs de branche", Infoespace, no.43, Jan. 1979, pp. 21-29, and no. 44, March 1979, pp.25-29. 15. International UFO Reporter, 2,11, Nov. 1979, pp.4-7 and no. 12, Dec. 1977, pp.4-7. 16. Of course, there are exceptions, like Marcello Truzzi's research team on anomalies (Eastern Michigan University) and the magazine Zetetic Scholar in the United States, Shirley Melver in the UK or Jean-Bruno Renard in France, but the number of these courageous sociologists is greatly disproportionate to the importance of the problem. 17. The ideas outlined in the last paragraph are developed in more detail in an article entitled "L'hypothese psycho-sociologique: commencement de la fin ou fin du commencement?" that I shall publish in the Belgian UFO magazine Infoespace.

From the next issue of Magonia we shall have to increase our subscription rate to £2.50 for four issues. Up to now we have been able to absorb increased costs and kept our price steady since 1981. The US rate will remain at \$5.00 for the time being - unchanged since 1979.

FLYING SAUCER IMAGERY IN CHINA

Thierry Pinvidic reviews a recent book about UFOs in China and examines the background to the current interest in UFOs in China.

Since the middle of the 1970's China has been opening itself to the Western world, both for business and geo-political purposes. But progressively the young people of the bigger towns felt attracted by the Western way of life. In spite of the official reticence of the Chinese Government mass sensitisation to the West increased tremendously. The incredible success of such products as jeans, Coke, and pop music gave evidence that they are seen by Chinese citizens as the best means of cultural emancipation, even synonymous with emancipation.

What I personally suggest, and will try to defend here, is the idea that UFOs can be seen in China as a 'cultural artifact' entering the Chinese 'market' in the wake of Coca-Cola and the other most appreciated products of American 'culture'. I will try to show how the new political game itself has contributed to the penetration of UFOs into the 'Celestial Empire'.

Recently a book dealing with UFOs in China has been published in France by a Chinese diplomat and 'ufologist' named Shi Bo [25]. UFOs in China... How fascinating it seemed. Alas the reality is less exciting! These Chinese UFO sightings appeared far more dependent on those occurring in the western world than anyone would have previously thought them to be.

First: Reading the book we find that at the end of WWII, the Chinese press echoed the UFO sightings which took place in Europe and the US. Second: On September 21st 1979, M. Zhou Xingyian, who is the scientific editor of the central Chinese radio, edited a paper on the UFO subject in the Guangmin Ribao [27]. The debate had been open for one year, Shi Bo adds, and admits that the year 1980 is a crucial one for UFOs in China. In that year a review was founded in China dealing with UFOs. Since the first issue of this magazine, called "Exploration UFO", the Chinese people learned of the characteristics of UFOs and began to pay attention to the problem [28]. And then the sensitisation went on, even in Taiwan where the debate began on August 10th 1978 [29].

Since 1980 more than 3000 testimonies have been collected [30]. Of the 124 cases reported by Shi Bo in his book, 86 allegedly took place before 1980, and 74 before 1978, date of the first UFO paper in the Chinese press. However we can easily point out the fact that they all have been reported after this first Chinese publication on UFOs, due to the fact that at this date Mr Shi Bo had not yet entered the UFO scene! [31] Even if we take some of these cases as very accurate and bona-fide reports which actually occurred before 1978 (though we are of course not aware of their real reliability) they can nevertheless be seen as a possible inheritance of the papers published in the Chinese press in the early 50's. Let us be kind and avoid such possibility; we must anyway point out the fact that only ten cases are allegedly dated before 1947. From 1947 to 1978, date of the first 'paper' in the press, Shi Bo reports 61 cases only. For the 1978-1980 period 20 cases are reported... and more than three thousand cases are now known after the publication of ufological papers in the newspapers, and mostly after the publication

of "Exploration UFO". The principle interest of the 'old' cases is largely outweighed by the overwhelming development of the 'wave' which started in 1981, and evidently illustrates the initiation of a social contagion process [32].

As for the 'sightings' pertaining to the subject of 'UFOs in history' or 'archaeo-astronomy' evoked by Shi Bo, they may well correspond to a new and 'technologized' reading of the old chronicles by a naive ufologist willing to get absolute proof of E.T. manifestations in the Chinese ancient time [33]. Similarly, we learn that before the work of Shi Bo, Chinese peasants and other rural inhabitants drew no distinction between UFOs and Yeti stories [34]; but fortunately Shi Bo, as an objective servant of the E.T. 'just cause', taught them to make that distinction, so that they might make no future confusion between the Yet and the E.T! A new illustration of the 'Zorro Syndrome'.

In one single year the review "Exploration UFO" got 300000 subscriptions! The French equivalent would have been a circulation figure of 16,500, and we all know that this number is about five times bigger than the number of subscriptions ever reached by "Lumieres dans la Nuit" in 25 years! [And about four times the circulation of FSR at its height - J.R.]

I personally think that it is not unfair to conclude that the UFO found an audience in China as a byproduct of Western, and mainly American, 'exoticism'. No proper reading of that kind of experience referred to as 'UFOs' previously existed in China. Confucianism, which would have offered its own reading of these events has now been officially deprecated for some years in China. At the opposite end of the 'cultural permeability scale' Algeria currently lives in the 'Islamic Revival'. So if we have no Algerian UFOs, China, to the contrary, has since 1980 and mostly in 1981, known the biggest UFO wave ever reported in the world. As a consequence Chinese people now have their abductions [35], their humanoid encounters [36], their stories of MIB [37], their contactee case [38], and even seven UFO photographs [39]. Furthermore, the ufological reading adopted by Shi Bo for some ancient texts provides him with UFO cases in history. I suggest that we had better take these historical cases and the legends and fairy-tales they actually are, and consider them as the right UFO imagery ancestor in China they probably are. Shi Bo himself confesses they are universally known in China, and says that such texts can be found in a majority of the private libraries in China [40]. I am tempted

to consider them as of decisive influence in the social construction of UFO knowledge in China, and therefore as the potential social foundation on which the stereotype grew up [41].

What Conclusions?

I hope that this paper offers evidence to support the idea that the 'distance' between a specific culture and the Western one is the main, decisive characteristic that lets the UFO stereotype enter the culture in question. Of course this distance should not be seen and understood purely in a geographical sense. This concept has nothing to do with either geography or even 'common-sense'. It can be far better defined as a combination of conjuncturals, socio-economic, political and religious factors which adjust the permeability of a specific culture to the products of the Western one [42]. May I add that I am inclined to think that such an idea can be detailed, and that it would probably be possible in a given culture, to modulate this concept of 'distance' and adjust it with reference to the main specificity and characteristics of the various social groups. I will also suggest that we learn in the future how to make a difference, when accepting or rejecting a given UFO case between those which may well have been influenced by Western culture in one sense another, and those which seem not to be. Cases occurring in countries influenced by the Western culture will surely be criticised by the UFO debunkers. But bona-fide reports coming from very isolated areas safe from any form of Western influence are far more interesting. We have few cases which respond to this criterium, and they generally are ill-investigated. We need to search for other such cases, and conduct real objective investigation on them. If such cases really exist, though we are not yet aware of their existence, they open up really fascinating perspectives. In these circumstances we would have a minima to explain how they managed to occur without any Western 'contamination'. At the same time, and for the same reason, we need to improve drastically our techniques of investigation, for we need to be very careful when accepting a so-called 'non-occidentally influenced case' [43]. If we do not really behave in such a manner I think that we are condemned to become or to remain like Mr Shi Bo, what we may call "naive vectors of the UFO myth"

Some presumably unbeaten tracks for the future

If no really puzzling and unexplained sighting ever emerges in the future from a 'reliable'

country, we will have to admit that the UFO stereotype which grew up in Western civilization and culture, and spread into other countries, may account for the UFO cases throughout the world. Though I do not know whether this hypothesis is the correct one, or even if it is too farfetched or not, it is not my intention to dismiss it, no matter how improbable it may appear.

If some bona-fide reports of well documented UFO sightings come in the future from 'ufologically virgin' countries (if any), we would have to take into consideration at least the possible existence of a specific trans-cultural constellation of folkloric motifs deeply rooted in each tradition. The other term of the alternative would lead us to admit the actual existence of a specific, original, and even physical kind of events named UFOs. Though I do not presently believe that this second term of the alternative may be the right one, I do not feel we are allowed to avoid it. Furthermore we have to objectively inform the scientists who will eventually inherit this UFO problem in the future that if, 'by chance', they prove the folkloric track is not the right one, they will then be objectively forced to look at the second possibility, even if they take a very dim view of it.

But for the present, I suggest that our main direction of research in this field should be twofold:

1. A thorough study trying to correlate local folkloric motifs and the local characteristics of UFO events. This can be called the 'ethno-folkloric' track.
2. A trial to put in evidence in some UFO experiences (namely those which are probably correlated with altered states of consciousness, like the CEIII, CEIV, abductions, contacts and missing-time) the role played by some neurophysical and/or neuro-anatomical determinants which can be applied for the explanation of the emergence of the imagery. Such imagery constituting what is known under the name of 'Archaic-Sacred' can be seen, as Bertrand Meheust shows it in his second book, as the ancestor of UFO experiences and imagery [44]. This second track has been awkwardly explored by Lawson in his last paper [45], more surely by Schmitt [46] and Meheust in their forthcoming respective works, and has to channel the work done in a wide range of fields like ethno-psychiatry [47], psychoanalytical anthropology [48], history of religion [49], social anthropology, toward a socio-biological understanding of this puzzling question, avoiding its ideological pre-suppositions. We can call this other direction the 'socio-biological' track.

Of course, this doesn't dismiss the possibility that ET do visit us, as Carl Sagan himself, the famous ufo debunker, admitted. But such a question is not yet legitimate, it's not yet time to examine it. 'Classical' ufology, as Meheust says (we can say 'orthodox') has mostly engineers and physical scientists in her net. However, a definite answer supposes that before then they will become folklorists or social scientists. [52] It is not yet time for the study of 'systems of UFO propulsion' or any other 'magnetic effects'. I pray that 'ET' may keep believing in us quite a bit yet! The study of the UFO phenomenon will, no doubt, contribute to the general progress of mankind; for this progress can be evaluated, as Jean Jaures said, with reference to the concessions the 'madness' of the wise makes to the wisdom of the 'mad'.

As this article is a summary of a longer paper, some of my most striking arguments may seem to be insufficiently supported by facts. I must apologise for this, and add that further evidence and materials add convincingly to the arguments developed in the longer paper, which is to be published in French. This was scheduled for delivery at the Anglo-French UFO meeting in Boulogne, but was deferred due to lack of time. It was delivered subsequently at the FFU (French UFO Federation) meeting in Lyon, May 7th-8th, 1983. J.J.

After the publication of the first part of this paper in the last issue of *Magonia*, we heard from Thierry Pinvidic that in his opinion his text and illustrations had been too severely edited and abridged. The full-text will be published in the near future in a British or American journal. We will inform our readers of when this happens. We apologise for any inconvenience we may have inadvertently caused to M. Pinvidic. The second part of the paper, published above, is as submitted by M. Pinvidic in English translation. J.R.

REFERENCES: [References 12 to 24 refer to part one of this paper published in *Magonia* 14.]

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IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

Peter Rogerson records 'the rise and limits' of his own doubt in a short paper presented to the second Anglo-French UFO meeting, Brighton, 30th March - 1st April, 1984.

IT WOULD APPEAR that in certain quarters this magazine has gained the reputation of being part of the 'it's all in the mind brigade', whatever that might mean. It seems worthwhile therefore to give a resumé of the sort of ideas about which Magonia Editors are speculating.

First, it must be realised that Magonia is not a monolith. Although we exchange ideas so much that it sometimes becomes impossible to say with certainty who first thought of what, the Editors do have different views, and in what follows I can therefore only speak for myself.

When I first became interested in the subject as a schoolboy in the early 1960's I naturally supported the ETH, and was a hardcore supporter of the 'nuts and bolts' school. Having been weaned on Aime Michel and Donald Kehoe I had no time for contactees. During these early years I read most of the old books on the subject, and swallowed most of the ufological clichés.

My parents were none too happy about my chosen hobby, and warned that many people who believed in 'flying saucers' were cranks. With the rashness of youth I disregarded their warnings; but when, in the autumn of 1968, I and a couple of other school-friends joined the local flying saucer society I found my parents were right, and that many ufologists were cranks! Not only that, but I soon discovered that by reading a dozen or so books on the subject I had obtained as good, or better, a grasp on the subject as people who had allegedly been studying UFOs for 25 years. Many of the members appeared to have read nothing beyond George Adamski, and appeared to have been entranced since about 1952. It occurred to me that many seemingly impressive cases may actually have been investigated by people like this. My doubts grew. It was probably the Appollo 8 moonshot that destroyed my naive faith in the ETH. The idea of electromagnetic spaceships visiting the Earth seemed somehow absurd.

My disillusionment made me increasingly open to the ideas of John Keel, whose articles had been appearing in FSR; and John Michel's Flying Saucer Vision had reawakened an interest in folklore. It was in this climate that I encountered MUFORG Bulletin, and its successor, MUFOP. I was an instant convert!

By now I had also examined Fort's data for 1904/05, which set UFO reports in a radically new context. I had also begun to take a serious interest in parapsychology, and I soon realised that serious psychic researchers thought along very different lines from the occult gibberish which circulated in UFO groups. The final synthesis was easy. Ufologists had argued that the UFOs had always been with us, and deeply involved with human culture, and acted like apparitions. The answer seemed simple: UFOs were created by people, they were products of the human imagination, and were hallucinatory, like apparitions.

I still thought along fairly radical lines, involving collective hallucinations, psi, idea patterns and a collective unconscious possibly able to alter the physical environment. Over the intervening years I have been forced to de-escalate hypotheses as it became clear that a far wider range of cases can be explained in 'normal' terms than was once thought possible.

There are however still a fair number of cases among the 5000 or so in INTCAT which resist interpretation in terms of simple misidentification. These are cases in which an object (with or without humanoids) is observed in someone's backyard for example, where if the record is a true one, and the report is not a hoax, then it must be either a subjectively real or an objectively real occurrence.

At this point it might be useful to lay aside one of the great red herrings which still crop up in such discussions; the notion that only the mentally ill have hallucinations. There is little evidence to support this idea, which has recently been resurrected by Ian Crosswell [1]. On the contrary, it is generally recognised that psychotic subjects tend to have auditory hallucinations [2], rather than visual.

Though interpretation is a matter of dispute, there is no doubt that many people have apparitional experiences [see 3,4,5,6]. Similarly, there is no doubt that people have 'out of the body' experiences [see 7,8] which are also best thought of as being hallucinatory in nature.

The hallucinatory theory of apparitions developed historically because ghosts wore clothes, and were sometimes accompanied by animals or artifacts. Also ghosts could sometimes be seen by one person but not by another. Clearly this tended to dispute the traditional idea of ghosts as temporarily materialised spirit forms, as spirit clothes and spirit carriages are most unlikely. Furthermore, anything actually perceived by means of photons reaching the retina would be visible to all ably sighted people in the vicinity. So if apparitions are not perceived by means of photons, they are by definition hallucinatory. Various psychic researchers have tried to find ways of accounting for apparitions by non-hallucinatory means [9,10] but without success. On critical examination their theories turn out either to mean nothing at all, or to introduce hallucinations by the back door, albeit hallucinations of a rather particular kind.

Everyone has one kind of hallucination-dreams, which can be intensely vivid. It is usually assumed that one can tell the difference between sleep and waking, but this might well depend on context. If one wakes up in bed, the previous out-of-context experiences can easily be judged to be dreams.

Certain kinds of hallucinatory experience account for a high proportion of apparitional lore. The most common of these are hypnogogic and hypnopompic imagery, and false awakening. These experiences are discussed in the various works of Dr. Peter McKellar [11,12,13]. They were perhaps

first extensively treated in a ufological context by John Rimmer and myself in the study of 'Miss Z' [14]. The most complete exposition of hypnogogic and hypnopompic experiences in a UFO context is that by the Australian researcher Keith Basterfield [15]. Though Basterfield's argument is probably too compressed to convince those who have not closely followed the same lines of reasoning, they are still impressive.

Some critics of Basterfield have tried to argue that hypnogogic and hypnopompic experiences are so fleeting that they could not possibly generate UFO experiences. However, an examination of both the standard works by McKellar, and the literature on apparitions, clearly suggests that some of these experiences can be quite prolonged. One critic has gone so far as to suggest, apropos of false awakenings, that people who can't tell the difference between their dreams and being awake are stark staring bonkers - or words to that effect! Not having had a vivid false awakening myself, I put this view to a friend who has. He was quite emphatic that the only way to distinguish a false awakening from 'reality' was by context. A false awakening was not a hazy dream, but absolutely realistic.

My friend's false awakening involved him getting up, shaving, having breakfast, going to work, exactly as in 'real life'. Eventually he became able to recognise minute differences in a clock. He then realised he was dreaming, and was able to initiate a 'lucid dream'. If such a false awakening had happened whilst he was sleeping in a chair, and the dream had ended with him 'returning' to the chair, there would have been no way in which he could have determined that it was in fact a false awakening.

Other circumstances in which hallucinatory effects can occur include driving at night, piloting a jet plane and watching a radar screen [16,17,18]; all circumstances in which UFO experiences are known to occur. 'Highway Hypnosis' is a recognised psychological description, as is the 'time-loss' which leads motorists to fear UFO abduction.

As Graham Reed points out: "After a long drive the motorist will commonly report that at some point in the journey he 'woke up' to realise that he had no awareness of some preceding period of time" [19, p.18]. Reed relates this experience to a loss of attention to surrounding scenery which tends to occur on long, straight stretches of road. It is not difficult to envisage this happening if the subject's mind was preoccupied with other topics - a frightening UFO experience, say?

A very high percentage of close encounter cases involve people driving through rural

areas at night, when conditions are just right for illusions, distortions of judgement, and hallucinations. Although very few such cases are publicised, conversations with motorists will often elicit details of a variety of hallucinatory/illusory effects, including bizarre distortions of the landscape (compare with the Niet Bridge case), hallucinations of figures crossing the road, etc. No doubt the famous 'phantom hitch-hiker' of popular folklore has its origins in the 'phantom companions' experienced by fatigued drivers [23].

The nocturnal driver's UFO experience is often initiated by a sense of either physical danger (a plane's going to crash on me) or social danger (the cops are after me). In such situations an explanation in terms of 'flying saucers' can be a temporary relief. Since the publicity given to the Betty and Barney Hill story, however, the fear of abduction by space people has grown considerably, and may run in definite, media inspired, social panics.

As Allen Hendry has shown [20] the presence of multiple witnesses in closed groups can lead to mutually reinforced fantasies and panic. In many such cases the published summaries may obscure rather than illuminate the process of mutual reinforcement. An excellent example of this is provided by the Travis Walton case [21]. My interpretation of this is simple: I believe that Walton and colleagues saw some sort of light. Walton jumped out to investigate, whereupon the others, seeing a flash of light and Walton fall, drove off. They then began, probably unconsciously, to escalate the solidity and ominous nature of the threat, in order to justify their panic. By the time they reached the authorities they had no doubt convinced themselves they had seen a detailed, structured object.

The explanation of Walton's own experience, I would suggest, was rather similar. Clearly he received a shock of some kind and went into a fugue state, from which he recovered a couple of days later. The abduction sequence was probably a dream triggered by the same fears - though it was probably embellished and polished at a later date.

The emotional reactions encountered in the regression of 'abduction' victims is very closely paralleled by those who have undergone regression to 'past-lives' [22]. In both these cases such fantasies can generate real physical effects - weals, scars, etc.

Celia Green and Colin McCarthy, in their studies of apparitions, out of the body experiences and lucid dreams, connected these together as examples of 'metachoric experiences', in which the percipient's whole

environment is replaced by an hallucinatory one. It is interesting to divide these experiences into two types:

1. 'Magonia' intruding into the percipient's real (apparitions, religious visions, CEIII's), and

2. Percipient intruding into 'Magonia' (OOB's, near-death experiences, abductions, past lives).

The second type involves a much more complete break with consensus reality, and can generate profound symbolism and powerful emotional responses.

If metachoric experience can be generated by external stimuli then we may have a clue to some of the truly extraordinary cases of misperception in which the moon and Venus appear to generate extreme effects. Could a misperception of the moon induce a metachoric experience in which all sorts of bizarre effects could be encountered? I think it highly probable that the 'true' UFO experience is this subjective experience which manifests itself along a continuum from misperception, triggered hallucination, metachoric experience, dream, hoax, fiction.

Before outraged readers object that this does not account for XYZ, let me make it clear that I am not placing any great limitation on the kind of phenomena (both physical and psychological) which might trigger such experiences. If profound subjective responses can be generated by the moon or advertising planes, then they can equally be produced by plasmas, earthquake lights, or a wide spectrum of poorly understood natural phenomena. If so, then scientific advance may be able to isolate further 'core' phenomena.

Nor can a discussion of mechanism really dispose of matters of ultimate causation. I cannot prove, for example, that demons are not giving people metachoric experiences, or causing them to misinterpret the moon as a spaceship; although I don't think they are. Nor could anyone prove it: some areas are beyond rational analysis, and must presumably be taken as articles of religious faith.

It must be further emphasised that the UFO experience is not 'all in the mind' in the sense of being the product of the imagination of isolated individuals. It is a social and cultural phenomenon much more than a psychological one. The whole problem of the content of the kind of experiences I have been discussing is wholly unresolved. Why, for example, should hypnogogic imagery involve 'faces in the dark'? What are the reasons behind the transcultural stereotyping in UFO experiences?

In recent years the interests of the Editors of this magazine have been increas-

ingly concentrated, not on individual anomalous experiences, but on the social context within which such experiences take place, and which generates them. The experiences both condition, and are conditioned by, the beliefs of society by a process of mutual feedback. Within a social context many apparently 'absurd' beliefs and experiences have depth and meaning.

Research along these lines is still severely hampered because so many people in different academic disciplines remain ignorant of each others work and ideas. So long as this situation persists there will be a role for the non-specialist, who is not tied to a rota of routine professional reading, and who can speculate freely where academic reputations fear to tread! \$\$\$

REFERENCES: 1. CRESWELL, Ian S. 'Objections to the ET Hypothesis', *Magonia* 11. 2. WEST, Donald I. 'Visions and Hallucinatory Experiences: a comparative appraisal', *International Journal of Parapsychology*, Winter, 1960. 3. TYRRELL, G N M *Apparitions*, Duckworth, 1953. 4. GREEN, Celia and Colin McCREERY, *Apparitions*, Hamilton, 1975. 5. MCKENZIE, Andrew, *Apparitions and Ghosts*, Barker, 1971. 6. MCKENZIE, Andrew, *Hauntings and Apparitions*, Heinemann, 1982. 7. GREEN, Collin. *Out of the Body Experiences*, Ballantine, 1973. 8. BLACKMORE, Susan I. *Beyond the Body*, Heinemann, 1982. 9. HART, Horrel, et al. *Six Theories of Apparitions*. 10. RORD, D Scott. *An Experience of Phantoms*, Toplinger, 1974. 11. McKELLAR, Peter. *Imagination and Thinking*, Cohen & West, 1958. 12. McKELLAR, Peter. *Experience and Behaviour*, Penguin, 1968. 13. McKELLAR, Peter. *Mindsplit*, Dent, 1979. 14. ROGERSON, Peter and John RIMMER. 'Visions in the Night', *MIFON*, n.s.4. 15. BASTERFIELD, Keith. *Close Encounters of an Australian Kind*, Reed, 1981. 16. WILLIAMS, H W 'Highway Hypnosis: an hypothesis', *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, 1963. 17. LIWIG, Arnold M. In TART, Charles (ed.) *Altered States of Consciousness*, Wiley, 1967. 18. BROWNFIELD, G. *Isolation: Clinical and Experimental Approaches*, Random House, 1968. 19. REED, Graham. 'The Psychology of Anomalous Experiences'. 20. HENDRY, Allan. *The UFO Handbook*, Doubleday, 1979. 21. BARRY, Bill. *Ultimate Encounter*, Pocket Books, 1978. 22. WILSON, Ian. *Reincarnation*, Penguin, 1982.

published. 47. LAPLANTINE, F. *Les Trois Voix de l'Imaginaire*, Editions Universitaires, 1974. The author takes Messianism, possession and utopia for the three main expressions of the sacred, which become entangled to serve as a matrix for the social imagination. 48. ROHEIM, Geza. *Les Portes de Reve*, PRP, Payot 1973.

49. Namely through the most recent studies on shamanism, which are more relevant than the work of Eliade. E.g.: HARNER, M. *Chamanisme, or the original text in English under the title Hallucination and Shamanism*. 50. Better than *Human Nature* by Wilson, see: LORENZ, K. *L'Envers de l'histoire naturelle de la connaissance*. Nouvelle bibliotherapie scientifique, 1975.

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poll in 'Infant' magazine, Dec. 1982. 22. See note 19. 23. SOFFRES--Bonne Soiree, op cit. 24. This model may be applied even to the intellectuals who can easily share their minds between scientific knowledge and 'supernatural' Islamic beliefs, and therefore experience the effect of the Islamic barrier like other citizens. Jahoda, for instance, shows that supernatural beliefs may persist in a person's mind no matter how scientifically trained they may become: JAHODA, G. 'Supernatural beliefs and changing cognitive structures amongst Ghanaian university students', in *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 1,2 (1970), p.115-130. 25. SHI BO, *La Chine et les Extra-terrestres*, Le Mercure de France, Gallimard 1983. 26. *Ibid*, p.277. 27. *Ibid*, p.277+300. 28. *Ibid*, p.73. 29. *Ibid*, p.288-89. As for the Chinese debate itself, see the whole fourth part of the book, 'Le debate est a peine commence', pp.277-294. 30. *Ibid*, p.15. 31. Shi Bo says he entered the UFO arena in September 1978. 32. For details on how contagion processes work see 'Mechanism of contagion', by Kurt Gladys in *Collective Dynamics*, 1961. 33. Shi Bo has carefully studied the UFO literature: "Since this date [Sept 1978] friends of mine in France and the USA sent me numerous books dealing with UFOs". 34. Shi Bo, *op cit*, p.11, see the fact emphasised by Alme Michel. 35 - 39 Shi Bo, *op cit*. 40. *Ibid*, pp.26-47. Such statements are made after each text presented by Shi Bo: either the writer of the text is well-known in China, or the text itself is famous, though the name of the writer is not generally kept in memory. See the whole chapter entitled 'Depuys quand?' 41. May I suggest the reading of a more comprehensive paper pertaining to the subject of UFOs and ancient sightings in China: 'Engins volant et humanoïdes dans les legendes de la Chine antique', by Jacques Scoreaux in *Infospace*, 61, Sept. 1982; and for English readers a thorough analysis by the famous sinologist Joseph Needham: 'The prehistory of aeronautical engineering' in *Mechanical Engineering, Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. IV, 2, pp.568-572. 42. This can lead us to the future definition of what I would call the PISM: Probability that the Influence of the Stereotype is Minimal. The more we know about a given country the greater the chance of getting a worthwhile estimate of the PISM. If this objectively defined value is close to one, it means that the case is coming from a reliable country quite free from western influence. 43. In order to see how much a bad amateur investigator can interact with the UFO material and influence the witness, I highly recommend the reading of a small paper by Elizabeth F. Loftus and Gailin Zanni: 'Eyewitness Testimony: the influence of the wording of a question', in *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*. [Urban Mass Transportation, USA Department of Transportation] 1975, 5, no. 1, pp.86-88. This paper clearly shows that the use of one article rather than another before a particular word can influence the response of witnesses to traffic accidents. 44. MEHEUST, D. *La Transe Apartheid*, Le Mercure de France. To be published. 45. LAWSON, A. 'A Testable Hypothesis...' In *CUFOS Second UFO Convention Proceedings*. 46. His thorough and very comprehensive study of the ET leitmotif from the Middle Ages to the 20th century is not yet

LETTERS



To the Editor:

As an editor of FATE, I must take exception to what I consider a really unfair assertion Peter Rogerson makes in his rejoinder to Jenny Randles (*Magonia* 14, p.10). Attempting, I gather from the context, to prove she is peddling sensationalistic nonsense, Peter remarks that Jenny "writes an article in FATE headed 'Case of the UFO Murder'... 'perplexed by a death seemingly without rational explanation, investigators consider a fantastic possibility: extraterrestrials did it.'"

Those who haven't read the FATE article (which appears in the September 1983 issue) are likely to get a wholly misleading impression of what Jenny did and did not say in it.

First, Peter misquotes the title, which was "Case of the 'UFO Murder.'" Without the quotation marks around "UFO Murder" the implication is that Jenny is presenting the incident as a literal instance of homicide by extraterrestrials - which in fact she is not doing. The reason for the quotation marks is clear to anyone who reads the article - they reflect press and popular speculation (which Jenny treats critically) that Zigmund Adamski died at the hands (or tentacles, or whatever) of murderous ufonauts. In any case, the title was thought up by me, not by Jenny.

Second, I, not she, wrote the subhead for which Peter apparently is trying to hold Jenny responsible. A subhead, as a teaser whose purpose is to seduce one into reading the copy following, always states matters in the most dramatic way possible; even so, there is nothing inaccurate about this one. Adamski's death is very puzzling and some people could

not deny themselves delicious fantasies about a bungled UFO abduction.

Jenny's admirably balanced and sane review of the episode never strays from what can be established from the evidence (the same, I might point out, cannot be said for Peter's reconstruction of the event). Her article concludes, "The sad truth is that we don't know what happened and we may never know. But it would be unwise to jump to conclusions about the cause of Mr Adamski's death, since the very existence, let alone the murderous intentions, of alien beings is still a long way from being proven."

This is sensationalism? If it is, ufology needs all the sensationalism it can get.

Sincerely

Jerome Clarke, Lake Bluff, Illinois, USA.

Dear John,

I was very surprised - and very pleased - to notice in the last issue of *Magonia* a reference to the BAA Meteor Section in the Woodbridge UFO article by Ian Ridpath.

I joined the BAA in the early 1940's, and worked for three years with the meteor section 1945-47. I think this was the best training anyone could ever have to become a competent observer of UFOs. I can still identify all stars brighter than 5th magnitude, and I know how to determine brightness of objects, accurately locate their track on the star background and to measure times within about 1/5 sec.

Some additional work I did for the BAA included meteor orbit calculations from three or more simultaneous observations. I can also determine whether a meteor was moving on a solar orbit or was a visitor from interstellar space. I was also privileged to analyse thousands of meteor observations from about 1932 to 1944 in an effort to determine the fine structure of the Perseid radiant.

During the hundreds of hours that I spent observing the night sky, objects such as fireballs, comets, planets, the aurora and gegenschein became old friends. I shall never forget a report in the *Daily Mirror* sometime in 1947 when a 'Senior Police Officer' saw a strange glowing object at dawn in the eastern sky. This got quite a play in the papers, but I can assure you it was Venus, since I was observing at the same time in the same area. Since then I have become quite sceptical of reports of UFOs by policemen and other officials whose knowledge of the night sky is essentially zero.

This is not to imply that I have not seen anything unusual or unexplainable in the night (or daytime) sky. But I am confident

that my long exposure to the BAA Meteor Section enables me to determine what is and what is not a UFO, to a much higher degree of certainty than 'qualified' observers such as Army colonels and police officers.

By checking with the BAA Meteor Section, Ian has shown an unusual degree of plain common sense which I heartily applaud. We need more people like him working in the UFO field; and I am pleased that his report was printed in *Magonia*.

Keep up the good work, especially the book reviews, which are excellent.

Ray D Manners, INFO, Arlington, VA, USA.

Dear John,

Could you explain why close encounter cases seem to have ceased plaguing us after 18th May 1963? The reason I ask is due to my rather belated perception that Peter Rogerson's international catalogue of Type I UFO reports, INTCAT, had its last entry allocated to that date. Since *Magonia 9* his ambitious project has failed to see the light of day. What has happened? Did you run out of the pink, blue or yellow paper you were so fond of printing his catalogue on? Did the MIB get to Peter before he had a chance to write anymore? Did an offended author clobber him for writing one of his infamous book reviews? Or, in the light of two current ufological fancies, did the rocks beneath Urmston shudder one night and induce a birth-trauma in our intrepid catalogue which he has yet to recover from?

Whatever the reason for the disappearance of INTCAT I think Peter Rogerson should have due recognition for creating probably one of the best pieces of ufological work in this country in the past few years. The fact that many ufologists seem to be unaware of its existence, even when it is published, is probably due to the tendency of many people interested in the UFO subject to be attracted to 'new' avenues of speculation rather than in genuine research and investigation work. Perhaps to counteract this trend we can expect to see the return of INTCAT to *Magonia*? Or do we have to remain content with the abrupt end of Peter's magnum opus?

Regards,
Nigel Watson, Althorpe, Humberside.

Publication of INTCAT has been suspended since Magonia 9 largely due to pressure of other material. In the years it has been published we have had little positive feedback from our readers, and some critical comment. A complete manuscript of INTCAT up to the end of 1980 now exists, and we are considering ways of publishing it. We would welcome readers comments.

Dear Mr Rimmer

To Mr Hilary Evans' tourist advertising article for Norway, I must say that he is giving a distorted picture of the real situation: the case is more complicated than Mr Evans tells. Several stories - not necessarily observations, but hoaxes and psychic incidents - have been identified or cleared up by the Norsk Institutt for Vitenskapelig Forskning og Opplysning (NIVFO)

It seems to be a turn for the worse when ufologists say things like: "...no known natural phenomenon offers so complex a form and conducts itself in so complex a way over so great a distance and over so sustained a period of time." What basis does the writer have to say anything like this? Does he know that the most interesting reports have been explained or toned down greatly? For instance, Lars Lillevold, mentioned in the article, has not observed any structured object about 30 metres from his house. When I met him on November 27th, 1883, he told me the object he saw was like "burning gas", and he could not see any doors or markings, not even a metallic colour was mentioned. The estimated distance at present seems to be 50-60 metres, but this statement varies from time to time.

The colour photographs by Arne W. Wisth are strongly doubted by NIVFO, and they are currently at Ground Saucer Watch. Mr Wisth's statements have been proven by NIVFO on a number of occasions to be false.

The case mention of the two sisters, in 1954, must be regarded as a hoax, and the so-called 'colour changed car' has been explained many times in the media. But ufologists will go on forever regarding IFOs as UFOs, because they are fantastic tales, not because they need to be studied scientifically.

Back to the Hessdalen case: NIVFO has launched a theory of plasma phenomenon, which we are working on, in contact with the University of Trondheim, and which we hope to publish in English as soon as possible.

With best regards from our organisations,
Yours faithfully,

Jan Krogh, NIVFO, Trondheim, Norway.

Dear John,
As *Magonia* goes truly international it is interesting to see how reports on ufology in Algeria and Norway compare, and how the subject rests within the context of their respective cultures.

Thierry Pinvidic points out the Islamic slant wherein a relatively undeveloped country

with its own non-western history, has its own interpretation of Sohone Taira, their own flying saucer archtypes which fit into their own cultural heritage. This I do not see as suppression but as part of the evolution of both culture and religion. Where the westernised idea of UFOs exists in Algeria it is through the cross-cultural exchange with the French, who these days seem to lead European thinking on UFOs.

Hilary Evans in Northern Lights highlights the state of play for an emerging European country under very different circumstances. Norway, as stated, is of large area and small population, a high standard of living and completely within the western tradition. It may be that this explosion of UFOs is part of some 'technological revolution'; that is, part of the cultural evolution of an emerging nation (their football team, after all, beat England not so long ago). Drawbacks I see to the veracity of these reports are the sheer size of the country and sparsity of population, which must be a hindrance to getting any clear picture of the real situation.

Where Norway is still, perhaps, 30 years behind other western countries is in its fear of the 'Red Menace'. This is very understandable when one considers the frequent violation of its sovereign territory. They feel threatened, and who wouldn't be in the same position? To imagine an invasion of airspace, as well of the proven invasion of territorial waters, is part of the same condition - particularly when one takes into account the 'Ghost Rockets' so recent in Scandinavian history.

Both of these factors show interesting asides to the increasingly diminishing field of ufology. Algeria and Norway, both with little history of such phenomena but for different reasons, now heading in opposite directions. The Islamic influence will continue to damp down the 'Sohone Taira', so UFOs are unlikely to panic the Algerians unduly; while in Norway, the ever-present and real fear of Russian invasion will prove enough incentive to doubt what one sees in the sky, even in a prosperous, under-populated country, where affluence and increased leisure time lend themselves to speculation.

Thus in two wholly separate articles we see a neat summing up of the contemporary popular extremes on UFOs.

Yours sincerely,
Alan Gardiner, South Chailey, East Sussex.

Letters for publication, commenting on items in Magonia or any other topic, are welcome.

BOOKS



RANDLES, Jenny. UFO Reality. Hale, 1983.

Although subtitled 'A Critical Look at the Evidence', and acknowledging that 'scepticism is the only path to true understanding', I found the book both disappointing and irritating; it is based on poor arguments and wishful thinking. Its conclusion is that some UFOs (or rather UAPs) are intelligently controlled, physical, alien devices which emit harmful radiation, cause cancers, alter the minds of witnesses and even kill. Let out clauses of the 'some would say that...' type abound, but the author's beliefs are clear.

Evidence comes from the well-known residue of sightings left after weeding out identifiable (IFOs) and The UFO Handbook by Hendry is referenced. (He was able to identify about 90% of UFOs despite gross distortions in testimony submitted by even the most respectable of witnesses.) Randles forgets that he did not manage to show that the residue sightings are reported any more accurately than the 90%, and she goes on to say: 'There does seem to be an intuitive difference between the best of the unexplained cases and those exaggerated IFOs...' [p.37]. Contradicting Hendry, she argues that UFO reports are generally accurate observations. I remember Randles once asking (after showing that two people suffered severe physiological effects by observing the moon) 'If a straightforward stimulus can be distorted as grossly as this by two witnesses, how can we ever be sure that any UFO report is valid?' [Probe Report, 3,1, July 1982]. Now she uses the naive assertion that the only alternative to accepting witnesses' reports literally is to call them liars.

The book frequently presents the (again old) idea that 'The phenomenon could be deliberately implanting false evidence...' This explains why UFO witnesses make 'slips' in their interrogation and discredit themselves.

Few of the cases quoted were investigated personally by the author who seems to accept second-hand reports without question. She credits the ridiculous book by Ray Stanford, Socorro Saucer in a Pentagon Pantry (Blueapple Books, 1976, see review in MUF0B new series 4, 1976) as leaving '...little doubt that a material craft of some kind had been present.' [p.143] The 1980-81 Rendlesham Forest incident (in which she has become involved) represents '...what may be the most amazing UFO incident ever in Britain...' [p.147] Having read the SCUFORI report by Affleck and Shipp written before the case gained notoriety in a Sunday newspaper, I find the Randles version sensational rubbish.

Curious statements which hint at deep significance but mean nothing useful are often used: 'There was no indication that the lantern [damaged by a UFO] had been struck by a coherent beam of radiation (e.g. a laser).' [p.149] is an example. How could you tell if it had been so struck?

Some other topics raised in the book are: it would be useful for Washoe (the American chimp learning sign language) to see a UFO and then interrogate him [p.111]; cats may be able to see through solid objects using their whiskers [p.113]; car-stop cases may be due to time-warps [p.137]; UFOs disguise themselves as birds just to make things difficult for us.

Throughout the book anonymous scientists are ascribed stereotype attitudes expressly for the purpose of insulting them. Presumably Randles thinks her arguments are based on scientific deductions not just gossip. A quotation from chapter 12: 'From all these points, plus a subjective evaluation of all the rumours I have heard and the general level of UFO reports themselves (some of which must surely have been recorded on radar), I have to reach a startling conclusion. It would not surprise me in the least to learn that cases of the calibre of Lakenheath have occurred dozens of times...' [p.163]

In chapter 15 we meet an old friend: 'But I think there are clear indications within the records...that data enter the subconscious of the witness and are being deliberately placed there by the phenomena...at some future date 'they' will release simultaneous 'triggers' which will enable the information to flow into our subconscious mind... There is only one way to solve the puzzle

bring everyone together and co-operate... that would require global unity.'

The author has previously show great appreciation of the high uncertainties associated with UFO reports. This understanding seems to have conflicted with her wish that the subject remain emotionally satisfying to her and her emotions have won the battle. That is understandable, but if she continues to parade inconsistent and irrational figments of her imagination as factually backed theories whilst hurling evangelising insults at anyone who does not agree with her, she can only look sillier by the book.

I think that all the UFO stories cited by her including 'radar visuals', cine films, close encounters and physiological effects etc., are generated without the help of alien forces, 'mind-melds' and so on. It is obviously time I demonstrated the correctness of my theory. David I Simpson. (—)

McCLURE, Kevin. The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary. Aquarian Press for ASSAP, 1983. £2.50.

In a field where almost all the previous literature has been sectarian, pietistic or polemic, this book is especially welcome. It provides an excellent summary, critical but always sensitive, of Marian visions.

One of the tests for any introductory book is whether it illuminates a subject for those with little previous knowledge of it. As my own knowledge of such visions was largely limited to accounts from predominantly UFO-oriented writers I was certainly reading this book as a novice, and I most certainly found it extremely educative. McClure writes with clarity and deliberation, and never strays into that appalling condescending style that mars some 'introductory' work.

The author sees the Marian visions as human experiences, to be examined in their psychological and sociological context. From these, interesting patterns emerge. The border between the religious visions and those of ghost, fairies, and other figures of popular folklore appears to be very thin. The Lourdes apparition was initially believed to be the ghost of a local girl. One of the witnesses of Pontmain at first thought the figure to be a presentiment of the death of his soldier brother. The apparition at La Salette warned against bad harvests had more than the echoes of some pre-Christian earth goddess or corn-maiden.

The percipients were often children living in extremely stressful conditions, in communities which were themselves under stress. The problems of modernisation and secularization appear to be common features

in many accounts up to the present, with the use of the visions by ultra-traditionalist groups in their struggle against reforming elements in the Church.

The author concludes that there is no evidence for miraculous intervention in such cases, but that there is evidence for paranormal powers on the part of some of the children, and their apparent abilities to respond simultaneously to undetected stimuli. There are curious hints such as the claim by the French ufologist Cornu, that the number of meteorological anomalies interpreted as divine omens rose dramatically from 1947 on. Further details would be most welcome.

Recommended as essential reading to all Magonia readers. (+) P.R.

EVANS, Hilary. *The Evidence for UFOs*. Aquarian Press for ASSAP, 1983. £2.50

To cover 'all about UFOs, the universe and everything' in about 140 pages is a fairly tall order and it is to the author's credit that he has made a good stab at it.

Most aspects of the subject are given fair treatment, and the presentation of many of the new ideas coming from France to a British readership is welcomed. The sociological, psychological and physical facets of the UFO experience are all dealt with, and something of the bewildering complexity of the subject comes through.

However, I do not think that the book puts across the often extreme ambiguity of individual cases. Hilary clearly sees that collectively the cases are ambiguous, yet individually he would like to slot them into neat categories - this one a craft, that an intelligent light, this a misidentification, and so forth. Perhaps this is caused by the lack of space to discuss individual cases at length.

The author may be rather too sanguine about the possibility of truly exotic origins for 'UFOs'; and it must be said that his occasional rash talk of "many thousands of [alleged] UFO sightings have been investigated sufficiently thoroughly to establish that no easy solution is forthcoming" (p.36), "there are tens of thousands of alleged photographs in existence" (p.65) leaves one with serious doubts. The most comprehensive catalogues of UFO photographs tend towards the 1000 mark, and much the same must surely be said about "sufficiently thoroughly" (whatever that might mean) investigated UFO reports.

The use of the term "sufficiently thoroughly" illustrates a particular difficulty of the subject. How, unless one knows every single UFO investigator, and their foibles, biases and special interests, can one gauge whether or not they have investigated a

case "sufficiently thoroughly"? What possible reason could, say, a Norwegian ufologist with a reasonable command of English have for doubting that Randall Jones-Pugh had "sufficiently investigated" the Ripperston affair? But we all know what Hilary found.

At one point Hilary comes to a tentative pro-ETH solution, which did not seem to be indicated by the main text, or his earlier writings, and which came as something of a surprise. Naturally, I was interested to see which cases had impressed him so looked back on the ones he offered as possible evidence of ET intervention. It is my contention that these cases do not provide such unequivocal testimony, and I outline a few briefly:

The sighting of a huge, illuminated object over Partington, Greater Manchester in 1977 was made by a handful of people in a single group, despite it passing over a densely populated area. Jenny Randles, one of the investigators, has cited it as an example of a 'subjective UFO'. The evidence seems consistent with extreme distortion of a view of an aircraft from Manchester Airport.

The Exeter incidents of 1965 seem just the sort of case which is destined to remain ambiguous. Things seen at night by frightened people do not seem the best of evidence.

A classic cloud cigar case from Vernon, France, 1954. I had thought these cases had been retired some years ago with the recognition that they may well be peculiar cloud effects; furthermore, it is not at all clear just what investigation, if any, took place on this case. Can anything be salvaged from the wreckage of the French wave of 1954?

I am not suggesting that these cases, and the other that Hilary cites, and which I submit are subject to similar criticisms, are not interesting, or indeed that they are not illustrative of the type of case which can incline people towards the ETH, but saying "I can see no other way to account for such cases" is pitching it far too high.

Having made these criticisms, I would not wish them to be taken as indicating that I regard this as a poor book. I commend its treatment of the social background to the phenomenon. The general treatment is calm and considered, and the author's openly stated commitments never prevent him presenting evidence which may seem to contradict them. The style is pleasant and easy to read. I just feel that if some of the hyperbole had been cut out it would have been even better. P.R.

(+/-)

KING, Francis and SUTHERLAND, Isabel. *The Rebirth of Magic*. Corgi, 1982.

An amusing, generally sceptical, but by no means unsympathetic summary of the rise of modern ritual magic. The world of the ritual magician clearly has some resemblance to that of some modern ufologists - encounters with mysterious beings, psychic battles and strange treasure hunts. This is of course no coincidence, but part of a continuing cultural tradition.

Francis King is a recognised authority on the history of contemporary occult movements, and though this book lacks the massive detail of James Webb's works, it is much more readable, and makes an excellent introduction to the subject.

In the final chapter the authors comment that the growth of magic is part of a wider esoteric revival. They could have gone on to suggest that this itself is but part of a global revival of fundamentalism in all religions and ideological movements.

ROLL, William G. et al. *Research in Parapsychology: abstracts and papers from the 24th Annual Convention of the Parapsychology Association, 1981*. Scarecrow Press, Metuchen, 1982. Distributed in the UK by Baily Bros. and Swinfen)

A vast range of topics is covered in this volume. Major themes at this conference were PK using computers and Ganzfeld experiments. While many papers are chiefly of interest to academic parapsychologists, others have a wider appeal. Paul Schneck and Stanley Krippener discuss a case of fake photography from Haiti (p. 29), Patric Geisler (p. 37) reports on poltergeist-like incidents centred on the shrines of the Candomble (Afro-Brazilian) possession trance cult.

An important paper by Theodore X. Barber and Sheryl C. Wilson (p. 41) is of particular interest to ufologists. They show that excellent hypnotic subjects are 'fantasy-prone' personalities. During childhood they live for much of the time in a make-believe world and spend up to half their time fantasising. These fantasies are often so vivid as to be 'hallucinatory', have an automatic quality, and can give rise to physical effects. As children these subjects believed in fairies etc., and are still not sure they don't exist. They see themselves as psychic, with faculties of precognition, and telepathic encounters. Two-thirds of the sample had vivid OOBIE's, about half had apparitional experiences. They tended to 'become' the roles they played.

In a follow-up paper, William Roll (p. 212) shows how three well known mediums (Eileen Garret, Gladys Leonard and Leonore

Piper) fit this pattern. Fantasy-prone subjects tended to be encouraged in fantasy by significant adults, loneliness and isolation, and a need to escape from a bad environment. Poltergeist subjects tended to be fantasy-prone, and Roll suggests that fantasy may be expressed in the physical form of PK effects.

I cannot think that John Beloff (p. 129) would be so keen to call for a committee of enquiry into psi if he had examined the sad history of the Condon enquiry! P.R.

JENKINS, Elizabeth. *The Shadow and the Light a defence of Daniel Dunglas Home the medium*. Hamish Hamilton, 1982. £12.95

This book introduces us to Home by saying: "As his birthday was March 20th, he was on the cusp of the zodiacal sign Pisces." The reader is thus immediately warned that this is hardly likely to be a critical, scholarly biography. Repeated references to "wonderful phenomena", an almost total willingness to take Home's own autobiography at face value, and an apparent ability to consider the notorious Davenport brothers as genuine psychics makes it clear that we are in for a diet of credulity.

Home was clearly an extraordinary social phenomenon, almost a nineteenth century equivalent of a pop-star, who managed to reach into the top drawer of Victorian society. His ability to marry well-placed Russian ladies must have aroused envious thoughts, and no doubt increased the bitterness of the polemics against him.

It is clear that, if accurately reported, many of Home's feats would be difficult to explain by trickery. In some cases conventional explanations would seem to require far greater physical stamina than the consumptive Home possessed. The difficulty lies with the 'accurately reported', a difficulty compounded by the fact that much of the evidence about Home, and other nineteenth century spiritualists, comes from polemical literature from either credulous believers or fire-breathing debunkers. Both sides often used statements having only a tangential connection with the truth, and with a total disregard for the libel laws which seems incredible in our present pussyfooting age. P.R.

BRANDON, Ruth. *The Spiritualists; the passion for the occult in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, £12.50.

The reader who buys this book looking for a serious analysis of nineteenth century spiritualism and its social and intellectual background will be disappointed. It is in fact a work of polemical scepticism; as

oversimplistic and misleading in its own way as Brian Inglis's credulous Natural and Supernatural is in its way.

Ruth Brandon's central thesis is that those who took alleged paranormal phenomena seriously were acting from religious motives. But this point is never expanded properly, and there is no detailed discussion as to why religious doubts attracted people towards spiritualism. The attraction which psychic research had for 'anti-materialist' intellectuals in the 1880s was very different from the attractions of table-tilting in the 1850s. Indeed, early spiritualists saw themselves as part of a progressive movement, a 'scientific' investigation into areas previously reserved for religion.

Indeed, Ruth Brandon's thesis breaks down very rapidly because the truly massive credulities of psychic research - the 'materialisation' phenomena - were not championed by survivalists. Richet and Schrenck-Notzing for example were vehement materialists, as are two of the most important of today's champions of materialisation, George Zorals and Manfred Cassirer. Anyone reading either the original, or Miss Brandon's very amusing account of Bien Boa or the Miroir faces, can see that what took these investigators over the top was their pursuit of the scientific methods into areas where it was totally inapplicable - along with that common failing of sophisticated psychic researchers (and ufologists), a deep conviction that none of the lower orders could put anything over on the 'great professor'!

Unfortunately, Miss Brandon's distaste for her subject leads her into a number of factual errors (for example claiming that Mrs Piper the medium died in 1919, when in fact she died in 1950), and a tendency to wrench events and comments out of context. Coupled with the very heavy editorialising, and a tendency to 'guilt by association', these attitudes gradually begin to erode confidence in what she is saying. One example might suffice, returning to Mrs Piper, the most celebrated of the nineteenth century mental mediums.

During the course of an interview with the New York Herald she indicated that she had no real idea of the source of her information, but preferred telepathy as an explanation, to spirits. The Herald ran a rather sensational headline, and Mrs P. later had an article in the Boston Advertiser, clarifying her position. This might seem to indicate an admirable open-mindedness, but Miss Brandon uses the word 'confession', and includes the story in a context of fraudulent mediums escaping through windows and the like. Significantly, both the context, and the contentious use of the word 'confession' come from Joseph Rinn's Searchlight on

Psychical Research, a wildly inaccurate book published in 1953 by an earlier version of James Randi.

However, to Miss Brandon and other 'sceptics' the claims of magicians are as sacrosanct and the claims of an medium is to the true believers. Perish the thought that magicians might embellish their achievements as 'the man who fooled the physicists', or attempt to jump on publicity bandwagons.

The dialogues between Brian Inglis and Ruth Brandon which have appeared in New Scientist and elsewhere have generated as much heat and as little light as a dialogue between Arthur Scargill and Margaret Thatcher! Inglis knows that it is all true and only vicious sceptics blinded by gross materialism could deny it. Brandon knows it is all nonsense, and that only religious monomaniacs and credulous fools could accept it. Neither is prepared to concede that nothing is as simple as that. P.R.

MACKAL, Roy P. Searching for hidden animals; an enquiry into zoological mysteries. Cadogan Books, 1983. £8.95.

Mackal, who heads an institute of Cryptozoology, was in the news a few years ago when searching for dinosaurs in central Africa. Little that exciting in this book however, as Mackal plumps for some rather dull but worthy contenders for 'hidden animals'. However it has been a long time since the okapi was discovered, and one gets the feeling that Mackal's hopes are pretty forlorn nowadays. Some of the stories have a distinct whiff of the sort of 'Boys Own Paper' adventure story which started: "It's those damned drums, Carruthers, and the heat...". Thanks for our own dear Nessie - at least you don't get malaria at Fort Augustus! P.R.

BOOK NEWS: We have received the first catalogue of an excellent new postal bookseller dealing in second-hand and antiquarian books in a range of subjects which will be of interest to Magonia readers. ALPHA BOOKS, operated by Tony Maddock, of 60 Langdon Park Road, London N6 5QG, specialises in folklore, occultism, mythology and magic. Catalogue 1 includes a good selection of early UFO material. A second catalogue should be out soon. Strongly recommended.

John Trotter, of Middle East Books, London NW7, who has sold a wide range of occult, paranormal and UFO-related books, is now leaving this field to concentrate on topics more closely related to the title of his enterprise.