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In this issue

Magonia Conference Paper:

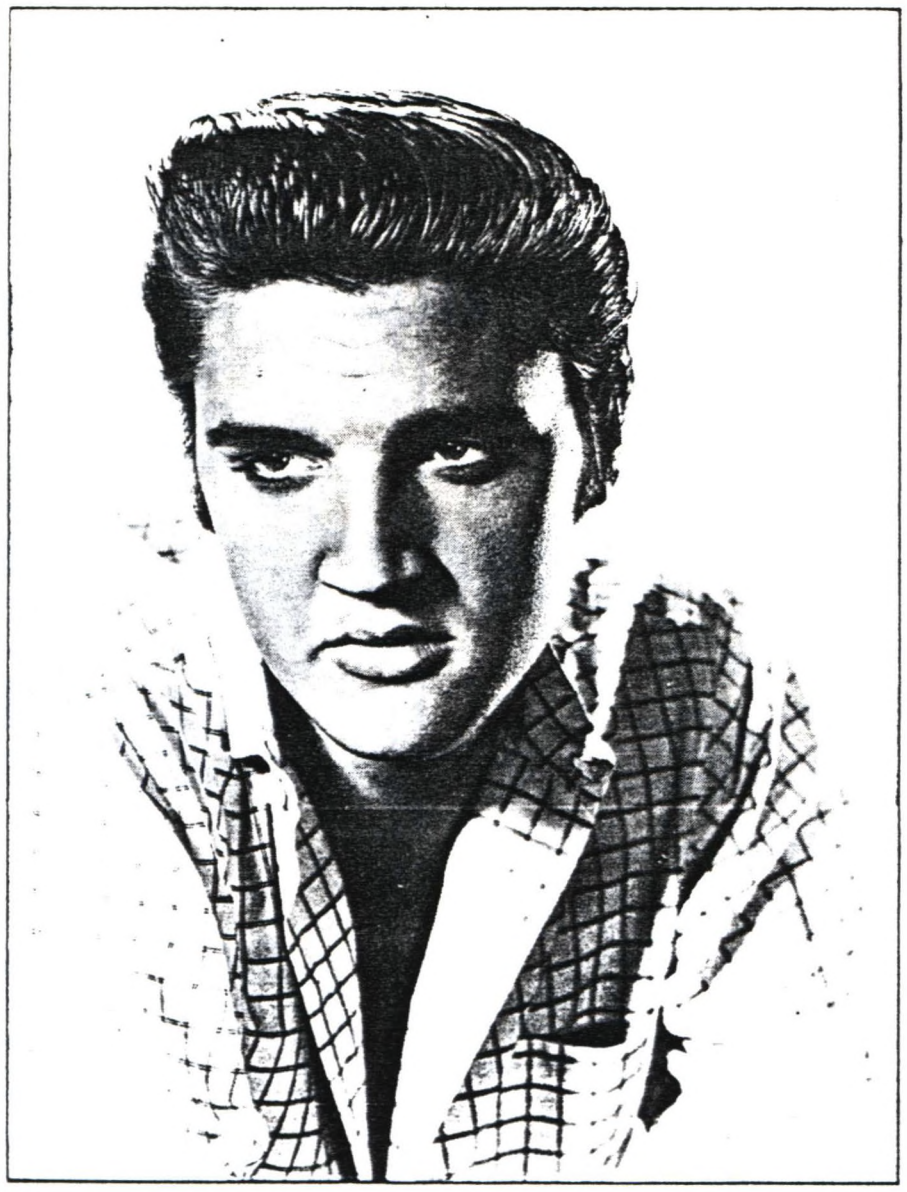
NIGHTMARES SEX AND ABDUCTIONS
MANFRED CASSIRER

PLUS
THE (URBAN) LEGENDARY ELVIS
MICHAEL GOSS

MYSTERY CIRCLES Our Golden Opportunity
PAUL FULLER

BOOKS EXTRA
including:
an abductee reviews Randles *'Abduction'*

REVIEWS
o o o
NORTHERN ECHOES
o o o
LETTERS



Elvis on the cover of Magonia?
It must be an article by Mick Goss! See Page 6

THE FREE MARKET IN UFOLOGY

Magonia and its earlier manifestation *MUFOB* have always shown a strong scepticism to the idea of centralized UFO research organisations. Apart from the fact that most of the grandious plans for them usually come to naught leaving the planners looking rather silly, we have always doubted that such plans were desirable, even if possible.

One of the principles (although not, it would appear, the practice) of Thatcherism is that monopolies, state or private, are a bad thing and serve only to limit the consumers choice. As far as we know The Boss has not yet turned her attention to ufology, but here she would find a fine example of the values of the Free Market!

Although held up as an example of the free enterprise economically, the USA demonstrates monopoly at work in ufology. MUFON now appears to be the dominant force in the UFO market (CUFOS, although influential, is not a mass membership body) and is using its monopoly position to prevent debate on the so-called Gulf Breeze case, a collection of charming photos taken by a gentleman known as 'Mr Ed'; presumably no relation to the famous talking horse. MUFON functionaries who have dared to express doubt over this case have been purged by the Network's own Mrs T., Walt Andrus. The resulting fuss is driving even MJ12 from the pages of the US UFO mags.

In Britain however, we see the benefit of competition in the form of two splendid investigations of the same two cases by both YUFOS and IUN, the group based around *UFO Brigantia*. One case involves a photograph of a small, out of focus image, which may or may not be an alien, or may or may not be a Prudential Insurance agent named Jack McHale.

The other case involves a supposed abduction in the Roundhay Park district of Leeds. IUN first looked at this incident, and felt there was a genuine case there which merited further investigation. YUFOS also investigated, in the true spirit of free enterprise. After a splendidly exciting investigation, involving illicit meetings with members of IUN, stake-outs in Leeds city

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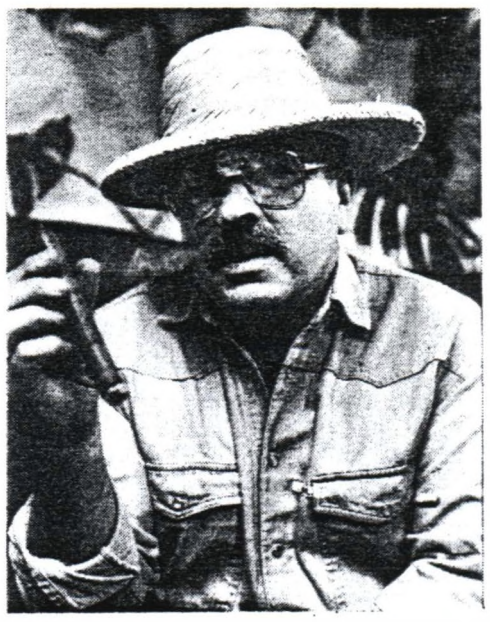
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PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES

Can we predict social panics? There is one we have not heard yet, but I predict we will. It is a variant of the abduction-pregnancy myth, but in a terrestrial rather than an extraterrestrial setting.

Someone will report (or 'remember' or fantasize) or will have a friend who knew about such things (a scientist or hospital worker), that they have been artificially inseminated following an abduction by mysterious scientists (or businessmen or MIB). Later, during another abduction the foetus will be aborted. They will discover that this is to provide brain tissue or other 'spare parts' for a Mafia godfather; or Arab oil sheiks, or President Kennedy (still alive, of course), or Ronald Reagan (still alive, probably), or Nazis in Paraguay, or anybody else you care to name. Remember, when this amazing revelation at last appears in *Sunday Sport*, you read it here first.

As something of a postscript to Manfred Cassirer's article in this issue on the Hag and the Succubus, readers may be interested to learn that this phenomenon is known in Hong Kong as *bei guai chack*, 'being pressed by a ghost'. In the book *Chinese Ghosts and ESP* (Scarecrow, 1982), Charles Emmons lists several cases. I note some selected characteristics which will seem familiar in other contexts to our readers. Numbers refer to the cases as indexed in the book:

- G99: "sense light in front of me through closed eyes"
- G100: "Preternatural darkness - but saw ray of strange green light on top of her shadow..."
- G103: "a short, fat Chinese woman in her thirties floated into the room like the wind, came up to my bed and lay on top of me, face down, looking at me...had bei guai chaak (BGC), semi-conscious for a couple of days"
- G105: BGC ghost gives victim winning numbers for the horses.
- 27X: BGC and other apparitions involve feelings of being cold.

Emmons asimilates BGC to sleep paralysis and lowered body temperature.

'Free Market' from Page One

centre, and car journeys in the dead of night with messages passed by flashing warning lights. The result of this was YUFOS uncovered information which undermined the credibility of both the 'abductee' and the principle witness.

IUN was not impressed by this. They seem to have stuck their colours to the witnesses credibility: they conclude their rebuttal of YUFOS's criticisms by saying "due to new information given by [the witness], the case still remains open, and further investigations will be underway". YUFOS of course also has information which it cannot reveal at present.

YUFOS may be a bit heavy handed on the Yorkshire-macho school of ufology-as-thriller-script, but in this case they are ahead on points, if not yet a knock-out. But the real lesson is that here we have at least two independent viewpoints of what could have been an important case. We also have two critical views of the other investigation, all freely available to the public. This seems to be the benefit of the free market in action, and we would not have it if there was one, all-encompassing 'national' UFO investigation agency. We do not have the situation that seems to be growing in America where dissident views to MUFON have to be distributed in a form of ufological 'samizdat'.

NIGHTMARES, SEX AND ABDUCTIONS

Manfred Cassirer

Demonologists of the Renaissance - generally much less enlightened or humane than one would have expected - subtly distinguish the male incubus from his female counterpart (succubus). The former derives etymologically from *Incubare* ('to lie down'), while the latter is a derivation of *succubare* ('to lie under').

The advantage of using the term 'nightmare is that it is so familiar. It is however misleading in this context since it implies sleep, when in fact the experiences under discussion are always stated to involve full consciousness of one's surroundings, e.g., of a light shining through a door in one of my cases. In Hufford's words: "The victims are awake and ... hear and see and feel odd-sounding things"[2]

Confusion has been created by Freudian interpretations arbitrarily forced on the data. Hufford, evidently ill at ease in this Procrustean bed, has cleared the air by explaining there are "at least three types of nocturnal experiences: a variety of dreams [of the REM-type], sexual encounters with 'supernaturals' ... and attacks of the Old Hag type without any obvious sexuality."[2] It is the latter which are akin to and 'readily assimilated to witchcraft beliefs'.

As Old Hag attacks have attracted less attention than, say, nightmares, I shall start by summarising a typical example. It is of additional interest in incorporating elements suggestive of UFOs and the paranormal in general. It commenced with the sighting of "a light across the Bay" in Canada. 'John', the experient, regards this episode with ill-deserved contempt and practically dismisses it as of no importance. His account meanwhile contains "all four of the primary Old Hag features", including awareness of being awake, immobility with some possible sensation of pressure, and normal perception of the surroundings. Paranormal footsteps (standard features of haunted houses) are incorporated; a self-luminous figure glows in the dark.

Historically by 1100, Christian dogma concerning the gross double-act of demonic molestation and assault was "solidly established as an article of learned faith throughout Western Europe"[3]. Oddly enough, recent study has established a similar syndrome on a more solidly investigated foundation as still flourishing in Newfoundland and elsewhere. Alleged violations of the human body by obscure and sinister entities is said to be all the rage, even if unconnected with black magic rituals. However:



"The precise distinctions which were made ... between voluptuous sleep-related experiences and attacks of the Old Hag type are difficult to determine.[2]

As recorded by Cotton Mather [7], paralysis and fear were are induced through spectral visitation to one Richard Coman, the occult agency working through a New England sorceress being blamed. the attack was nocturnal. the subject - as in some poltergeist cases - was thrown out of bed, or almost so. It is an above average example of 'spectral evidence' brought before the courts.

According to Persona (1328-1421) an unusual incubus-like creature flourished in Germany in the house of a certain "renowned knight", attracted by his beautiful sister. Numerous as the creature's accomplishments were, they did not include visibility, but the hands "slender and soft" were much in evidence, and it is a fact that 'spirit hands', detached from the body and often of a pleasant appearance, are amply attested in the mediumistic literature.

If we can believe Guazzo, females enslaved by the power of darkness were rewarded with an incubus in the form of a "rank goat" - an animal then most unjustly despised. Caietano, who wrote on witchcraft [4], knew of "a woman in love whom the devil anointed naked, promising that he would take her to her lover". In an unconscious state she imagined that she was with

him, but it was only a delusion.

According to Johann Meyfarth (1635) not only hundreds of women, but (he regretfully admits) even men, confessed to having had sex with demons. This however was dismissed as an illusion by no less a scholar than Thummius on account of the anatomical shortcomings of the spirits[3]. Basically a fallen angel, Satan is incorporeal, but can shape a body for himself from a corpse. Having done so he is free to copulate, but first he must collect the semen. Brooding in the solitude of their cells, the undefiled godly bretheren gave vent to their limited imagination, in which one is none too pleasantly reminded of abduction scenarios and rape by semi-human monsters described by Hopkins and Strieber, whether of heaven or earth,[10].

At one time dismissed by Mother Church as salacious dreams, this sort of thing came to be taken deadly seriously, but by the time of Louis XV it was considered a huge joke. Incubi and the like were now considered as at best figments of the imagination, leading the way to the ultimate disinterpretation of the phenomenon as such. Still it could serve a useful purpose as a convenient alibi:

"To conceal sin, a woman, a girl, a nun in name only, a debauchee, who affects the appearance of virtue, will palm off her lover for an incubus spirit which haunts her." [7]
As a cloak for concupiscence it served Bishop Sylvanus, whose physical form was assumed by a certain Sister's incubus, undeterred apparently by the still distant prospects of the jibes of the Elizabethan Regina Scot and, no doubt, of other unsung more contemporary puritanical sceptics.

In a similar vein is Sinistrari's moral tale about the religious who locked herself in after dinner. An inquisitive Sister bored a hole through the wall of her cell, when all was revealed: an all-too-earthly lover was masquerading as a spirit from the deep. On the other hand was it a genuine specimen notorious, it is said, for singing "the most dirty songs" (no examples being given) in which his modest virgin victim refused to join?

For once there is a happy ending, for the girl's prayers and tears drove away the Evil One, and thus Margaret of Cortona was left in peace. When it comes to the question of the sex act, there is a marked lack of consensus of learned opinion among prelates, who had not as yet learned to confine their attention to matters political. Some had felt confident to assert that it gratified the demons themselves, but this is not the considered opinion of Thomas Aquinas, a man of superior authority in all matters relating to witchcraft and demonology.

A similar unresolved dilemma relates to the victims of lewd demonic attention: at times it would be presented as almost rapturous, but at others the very reverse, and Scot quotes Nider to the effect that: "Heretofore... *Incubus* was fain to ravish women against their will". However, after what seems a rather arbitrary watershed in 1400 there was an unexplained change so that now: "Witches consent willingly to their desire" [8]

If Nider was right - and his authority is perhaps too great to be successfully challenged - and morals were no longer what they were before that critical date, it may seem strange that there are nowadays once more so many reported cases of forced intercourse with the demons. Meanwhile, Nider gains support from stories such as that of the seventeenth century girl who, pursued by a fiendish spirit "seemed almost afraid of being delivered from the devil." [7] Worse is to come - a nubile German witch was so depraved that she actually *summoned* her incubus!

What then of the offered pleasures of the *Striacum* or Witches' Sabbath, those secret nocturnal gatherings promising prospects of every indulgence of the flesh? Retrospectively they seem very inviting from almost every point of view. Exceptionally, Petrus Valderma in 1617 depicts the participants sitting at "tables served... with the most delicious dishes and exquisite wines", for those who were not too particular since the very waiters were demons - an experience to which some of us have occasionally been subjected. As if to soften the blow of the sinister catering service,



the refreshments were followed by alluring "sound of the most charming music" (no suggestive ditties here) and, the lights having been put out, the ample gratification of one's every desire. [3]. But Valderma tactfully omits to mention that this "marvellous food" (as it is described elsewhere) could really consist of sickening bits of grass and worms as in the case of the fairy banquets laid on for abductees. [3] The Devil being allergic to the cleansing properties of salt, the goodies were habitually served unseasoned.

The long catalogue of crimes attributed to witches includes ligatures to cause impotence at weddings and other occasions. Christian Stridtbeckh, in his *Van den Hexen* (1723 describes five different ways of achieving this for the over-curious, some apparently too indelicate to narrate. [3], so that for once I can spare your blushes! However, lest you should think that theology is a dry-as-dust affair, I shall quote the eminent divine Adam Tenner who in 1617 published his illuminating *Tractatus Theologicus* dealing with, amongst other matter, the deadly perversions of witchcraft and similar associated enormities.

Tanner "calls attention to the assemblies held of both sexes, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, in which every kind of sexual excess occurs. These may be called true schools of the Devil and seminaries of witches of both sexes, all the more injurious that no-one disapproves of or attaches blame to them. Recently, when a Jesuit happened upon one of these gatherings and reproved it, he scarcely escaped without bodily injury; and when another sought to abolish them he was told that they were the ancient customs of the land" [4]

The phenomenology of the paranormal has an uncanny way of adapting to new developments in culture and philosophy, and of fooling us in the process. Those who study the data of folklore, psychical research and ufology in isolation deprive themselves effectively of all hope of obtaining any profound measure of understanding of the underlying causes of these strange anomalies. None is more obscure and inscrutable than the Incubus/Succubus syndrome, and - in the update of the day - the Old Hag survival, taken with the more unpalatable aspects of the so-called UFO abductions, which retain all the vitality, as well as the mystery, of ancient occult lore.

A recent, and less extreme, example is what happened to Elsa, a young Englishwoman. Some years back she was living in a London hostel. One night in 1973 she awoke to find a girl "pacing up and down". A light was shining through the door of the hall, but Elsa was very scared, especially when the figure lifted the cover of her bed to get in. In her written report Elsa says:

"I then saw the body bearing down on me and at the same time my head crashed back on the pillow very quickly as if it had been pushed. I heard a loud cracking sound as my head hit the pillow and I was unconscious."

Similar cases are numerous, and Scott Rogo cites a recent one of psychological orientation stressing the 'sexual influence' exerted on a middle-aged man by a nocturnal apparition in which Rogo detects overtones of feelings of guilt and frustration.

Wearied with the rehearsal of so many lecheries most horrible and very filthy and fabulous actions and passions... I will end".



MacKenzie has just published something that happened to the late Dr Dewsbury, under the general heading 'Something Under the Bed'. [5]:

At three o'clock in the morning this psychiatrist and SPR council member had also encountered a 'bedroom invader' when he was "violently roused by the mattress being pushed from underneath as if by someone under the bed".

You may say that paranormal interference with beds is old hat; if so I shall be the last to argue with you. As usual, there was nothing to account for the disturbance, any more than for the rocking motion complained of to Hubbard, or in what Professor Kittredge has christened the 'bedclothes trick', in which the covers are pulled off the unwary sleeper, whether by goblins or by marginally more respectable poltergeists.

Andrew MacKenzie, once more, discusses the phenomenon of 'a stranger in the bed', so graphically described by my friend Elsa. This time the location is the French capital.

Mrs Bourget and her husband were staying in a Paris hotel in 1962. Suddenly she woke to the "impression of being between two persons". She became oppressed by a sensation of evil, which she stoutly refused to dismiss as a nightmare. Mrs Hellstræm of the Swedish Society for Psychical Research fared no better when two successive nocturnal phantoms invaded the privacy of a large double-bed.

It may well be argued that prejudice too hastily dismisses ancient records as the worthless superstitions of credulous folk engulfed in an age of unreason in which man's critical faculties were as yet insufficiently evolved; the more so when in one form or an other the beliefs reflected by them have survived in basic substance the shock of intellectual revision of cultural change, and modern obsession with technological advances.

An exceptionally knowledgeable writer has recently suggested that acceptance of UFO reports may be as baseless as those of witchcraft. Before this conclusion becomes part of accepted fact, one must consolidate the

validity of statements on the lines that the whole Black magic syndrome can be adequately explained away as "a plausible fantasy created by the Church... and accepted by the common people", it being in actual fact nothing more than "a combination of social and psychological forces" 9. P. 376

Fashions change, and not only in clothes, though the Emperor's are perennial. At one time it was assumed with confidence that the Reformation had done away with ghosts and apparitions. Few people nowadays think of disarranged beds as pointing towards the mischievous activities of goblins, since goblins are rightly unpopular at the moment. At the same time, it is not considered absurd in certain quarters to envisage the existence of entities hailing from ever-expanding distances of outer space that fly about in preposterous machines for the purpose of impregnating us for reasons best known to themselves. They are no longer the Biblical 'giants' of old, but equally implausible specimens of an assumed advanced state of more fashionable Science.

Meanwhile, let us admit that we are indeed faced with mysteries in many ways beyond our powers of comprehension, but on which psychology, and its more recent parameter parapsychology, can throw much light. It is in the direction of their arcane castramentation that we must look for enlightenment. For the present though, being (like Squire Scot) "wearied with the rehearsal of so many lecheries most horrible and very filthy and fabulous actions and passions... together with spirit *Incubus*, I will end".

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THE (URBAN) LEGENDARY ELVIS

Michael Goss



FREELANCE FOLKLORE PARANORMALIST BOFFIN IN SHODDY SUNDAY SCANDAL SHEET SCAM...

As the late Gilbert Harding used to say of dyspepsia: 'Of course I get it, but I don't suffer from it'. I can take the *Sunday Sport* or leave it alone. Often I leave it alone for weeks at a time until some temptingly outrageous headline like HITLER WAS A WOMAN makes handing over the 35 pence not only justifiable but essential. On grounds of research into contemporary rumour-legend dissemination processes, you understand. But you knew I was bound to say that.

And what happens? I buy the thing, I read the news behind the banner headline and I find I've been conned, taken, deluded, hornswoggled. Actually I'm not sure about having been hornswoggled but...yes, that as well...probably. For *Sunday Sport* stories have a disconcerting way of turning out to be *not quite* what the headline encouraged me to anticipate. After the gross disappointment of MARILYN MONROE IS ALIVE AND WORKING AS A NANNY last June - an *SS* exclusive which disappoints for reasons I can no longer recall - I vowed I Wouldn't let it happen again. Then, only a month afterwards -

I AM ELVIS.

One for the money, two for the show, three to get ready, now go, cat, go. I've bought the paper, I've scooted out of the newsagent's and into the back-alley...quick look to see if anyone's watching...I plunge into the guts of the paper. Skirt the other Monty Python-esque articles, the green aliens, the impossibly endowed earthly females: all I want is to get at the interview with whoever or whatever is claiming to be Elvis Presley, died 1977 as far as most of us are concerned but now ostensibly back from the dead and here exclusively interviewed in Britain's sabbatical sexsational equivalent of Disneyland -

SHOCK. HORROR. Well, a-bless-ma soul.

I'd been prepared for doubt and paradox. How could it be otherwise with *Sunday Sport* alleging the continued exist

ence of Elvis in *this* world when other publications had been aflood with incontrovertible evidence that he has been manifesting to the most lively degree in the *next*? You know the sort of thing: ELVIS SPEAKS but only c/o Fleet Street's latest tame medium.

Only last year, too, he was positively identified by a truck driver as the Phantom Hitch-Hiker who'd thumbed him down outside (yes?) Memphis. Elvis himself did the identifying. 'I'm Elvis Presley, sir', he announced in suitable southern drawl moments prior to the critical vanishing point of the operation. Is that unambiguous or what? Some Hitch-Hikers are like that.

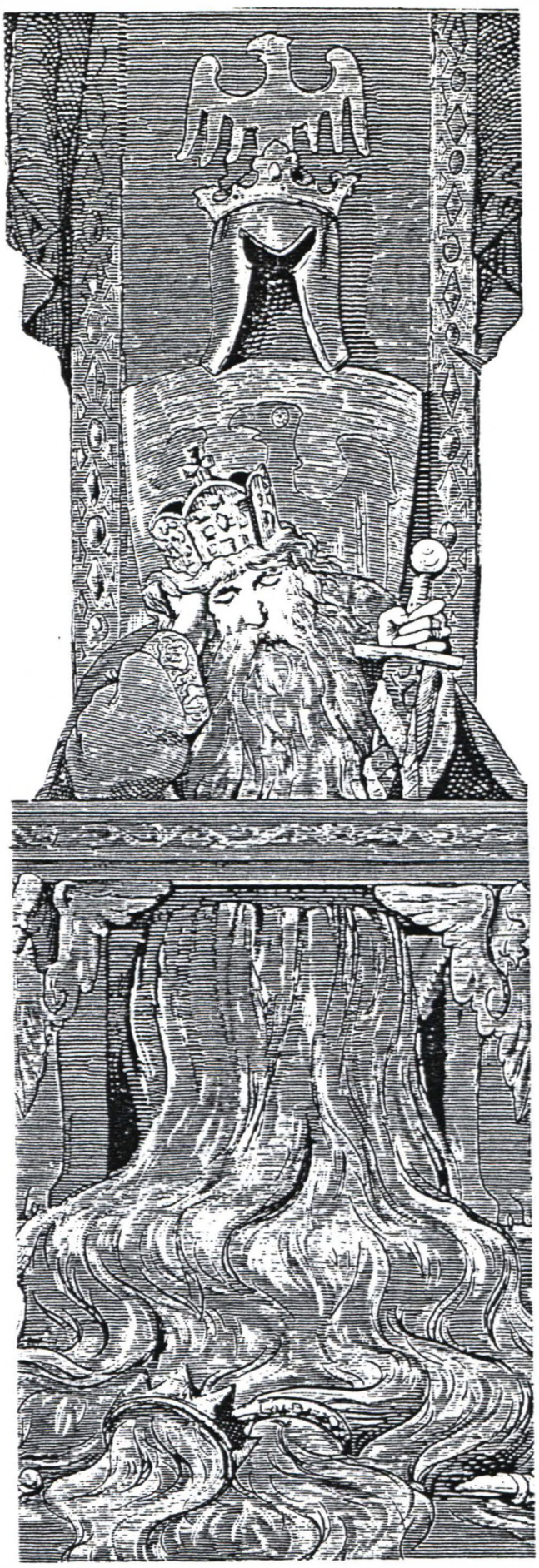
They hate to leave the driver (or the audience) in any doubt as to who they're supposed to be. You can read more of this incident in Raymond Moody Jr's *Elvis - After Life*, an adroit title which alone seems to put the hip-waggler's current status beyond dispute.[1] Not to labour the point: in order to qualify as a Phantom Hitch-Hiker you generally have to be *dead*. Here was the *SS* ostensibly proving that Elvis was alive. But I wasn't prepared to have the paradox resolved so neatly...

Anyhow, I'd bought the paper under the assumption that it contained a variant of a contemporary legend - not the Phantom or Vanishing Hitch-Hiker this time, but the type classifiable as He Is Not Dead. The article would undoubtedly claim that, contrary to all belief and published information, the rock megastar had *not* died back in 1977; *that* would now be revealed as a monumental, marvellously engineered sham which enabled a tired, desperate Elvis to steal away from the voracious limelight into quietly anonymous retirement - from which the *Sunday Sport* had managed, albeit temporarily, to resurrect him. That is what these not-really-deceased megastars always do in popular rumour-legend. Marilyn Monroe (d. 1962) is in a Tibetan monastery. (As was Adolf Hitler, though only in some versions of his survival legend, and I would not categorise *him* as a megastar in the same sense.)[2] Bruce Lee (d. 1973) is alive and well and domiciled in China. Jim Morrison (1971) stepped out of The Doors and into Africa. Buddy Holly, disfigured by the 1959 plane crash, is in...the USA; I can't remember exactly where. Nor can I remember (if indeed I ever knew) the supposed whereabouts of James Dean, but he isn't in Heaven.

These stories, as I just remarked, conform to a type. Someone in the public's adulating eye - focus of unconscionable admiration and gossip - is abruptly taken from us. There is a car crash, a plane crash, a drugs overdose or something similar. There may well be suspicious circumstances surrounding the event - hi ts of assassination, for example - yet on the face of things the *central fact* of the Great One's sudden death cannot be rejected. And yet, given time and circumstances not entirely intelligible, there may come rumours to defy this central fact. The star is not dead after all. The publicised death which appeared so final, so terminal, was a concerted and well-planned cover behind which he or she slipped unobtrusively from a life-style which had become intolerable, even hazardous.

Emphasis upon 'concerted', emphasis upon 'hazardous'. A strong element of conspiracy is innate in these 'Undead' rumours. Logically - and I apply the word to narrative consistency withi the rumour, not in any external or objective sense - the Star needed conspirators to pull off the escape and to sustai the sham-death scenario. It could also be that some crypto-conspiratorial cabal needed to be fooled into quiescence before they had a chance to make the Star's death violent and proper; the FBI/CIA were after poor Marilyn, the Chinese drug-dealing mafiosi had evil eyes on Bruce. Whatever the onus, the Star fakes death - retires to safe anonymity where, relieved from pressures of the old life, he or she can develop artistically and spiritually. Marilyn Monroe becomes a Buddhist adept. Jim Morrison writes poetry. Only Rumour and its infallibly informed narrator with his access to amazing privileged information penetrates the trick.

Survival rumours are more than exercises i creative thinking



These are the lineal descendants of Friedrich Barbarossa and all the past heroes who have been credited with survival beyond their official life-spans

or assays of popular credulity. Rejecting the finality of death, they affirm belief not merely in the survival of a particular person but in a system of values and memorised sensations associated with that person. Back *then*, in the time that the Star represents for *us*, things were better. Our beliefs, our brighter, more optimistic perceptions, are enshrined in the music and image of Jim, Buddy... Elvis. In their own way - and it is no less valid a way for its frequent alliance with the entertainment industry - these are lineal descendants of King Arthur, Friedrich Barbarossa and all the past heroes who have been credited with survival beyond their official life-spans. They are access points to a Golden Age - or at any rate, to an age more golden than the one we're living in at present.[3]

I AM ELVIS. That's what the headline said and it was in the uncertain light of survival rumours like those just sketched that I read it. The *Sunday Sport* could not be indulging in metaphor. Elvis, legend in life, would now be shown to be a legend in pseudo-death. He had not departed in 1977...at least, not so far as we'd been led to believe. Gracelands was not a mausoleum, but a wonderful illusion: Heartbreak Hotel without the heartbreak. I paid the newsagent my 35 pence. I got -

- what I got was an interview with a weighty German woman who claimed that Elvis lived *through her*. Or *as* her. She was Elvis - which was all the headline had undertaken to provide: she was, in short and in fact, the *reincarnation* of Elvis.

Well, that's all right, mamma. I've heard better and I've heard worse. And for certain Elvis, or his non-material form, has shown himself a far from aloof being. No recently defunct superstar bar one has shown greater willingness to communicate via motley mediumistic channels; the single exception, odd to say, is the inestimable Marilyn Monroe.[4]

Of course, there's the old problem of how a person can be addressing us through psychically attuned souls from the spirit world one moment and then be pinpointed alive alive-o in some out-of-the-way corner of this present world, but I can live with that discrepancy as with many another. Didn't so much as blink when a sensitive from London's eastern fringe told me how she'd come home one night to find Elvis materialised in her living room. ('He smiled at me.' Well, he would.) Didn't even worry how Elvis, whose solitary visit to these shores was when his plane touched down for a few brief hours in Scotland, could find his way to Hackney. I know all about it, you see; I am a great fan of 'Randall & Hopkirk (Deceased)'. So I had to concede it was fair enough for him to Return as a large Teutonic *Frau*. But I still felt the *Sunday Sport* had cheated me.

I didn't so much as blink when a sensitive from London's eastern fringe told me how she'd come home one night to find Elvis materialised in her living room.

What you really want nowadays is likeliest to come from the USA. Within 48 hours after my interment of the cozening *SS* deep in our rubbish bin, I received a letter from my American friend and fellow weird-stuff connoisseur George Behe. (Whose forthcoming book on paranormal incidents relating to the *Titanic* threatens to be the most comprehensive so far, but that's enough of that.) George had included his normal quota of Statesside cuttings, including one headlined:

'THE KING IN KALAMAZOO?'

Like George Behe, Kalamazoo can be found in Michigan. It is chiefly (perhaps only) famous for figuring as the place where some crooning balladeer boasted of having a girl, *viz.*,

Igotta *girl* in Kalama*zoo*.[5]

The paper from which the Elvis article came described it as 'this city of time-warped quaintness between Detroit and Michigan', which sounds pretty damning. Unlike George Behe, who resides elsewhere in Michigan, Elvis Presley has now reputedly settled in Kalamazoo. Or rather, he'd allegedly been seen the previous week (which I believe places the adventure somewhere between 10-16 May this year) in a red Ferrari parked outside the Burger King on Westnedge Avenue. You'll acknowledge a certain aptness about this. King of Rock meets King of Burgers. Some close to him testified to Presley' latterday mania for burgers, sometimes in vast inhuman quantities, so... And there's the spiritual development aspect to remember. Marilyn studies Buddhism, Jim Morrison writes poetry...Elvis eats burgers.

The *Detroit News* report set forth staff writer Frank DeCaro's pilgrimage to the city of time-warped quaintness. At Holly's Grill (*Holly's* Grill?) he caught up with his chief informant, 51-year-old Mrs Louise Welling. It was her two 20-year-old kids who'd had the honour of spotting Elvis outside the burger house and they 'wouldn't lie'. The King had spotted them spotting him, though, and 'threw on those dark glasses right away'. Besides which and better: Mrs Welling had seen him for herself - not then nor in Kalamazoo, but the previous September in a supermarket near Vicksburg: 'just as alive as you please. He wore a white jumpsuit and a motorcycle helmet. I was so surprised to see him'. And again the next November at the J.C. Penney entrance of the Crossroads Mall, Portage. She straight-armed any suggestion, tacit or overt, that she might have seen an Elvis imitator. She'd know the real Elvis if she saw him. This was *the* Elvis. She'd seen him. Mrs Welling was a force to be reckoned with, She represented, went on the article, none other than the Michigan connection. To forestall your unvoiced query: Mrs Welling it was who provided some of the crucial Michiganic data in a new book by G(ail) B(rewer) Giorgio of Marietta Ga.: *Did Elvis Presley Die?*

No, he certainly didn't! wrote Ms Giorgio, answering her own question and at some marketable length. Elvis fabricated his death in 1977 - misled his

over-fervent, pressurising fans - retired to a blissfully quiet, ordinary life. (Admit it. You could guess that was coming.) Retired to a blissfully quiet, ordinary life in... Michigan... perhaps in Kalamazoo. (Admit it. Without the build-up, you wouldn't have guessed that *Kalamazoo* was coming.) Her evidence: voice tapes and photos (post-1977); the fact that on his headstone Elvis's middle name is misspelled ('Aaron' for 'Aron'). The singer had fastidiously ducked out of defiling the sanctity of the grave by using his real name on a false tomb. Then there were the *anomalies*. Why (and how?) had Presley's death certificate disappeared? Why hadn't his relatives claimed the insurance? Why had the death certificate - hey, hold on! *what* death certificate? She just said -. Anyway, why did *a* death certificate give the deceased's weight as 170 lb when the world knew that just before his demise Presley's avoirdupois had ballooned to 250 lb? Why had his personal possessions, including jewellery, not been found?

To be truthful, I learned of the *anomalies* not from the *Detroit News*, but from our own *Sunday People* some weeks later.[6] Grabbing at a neat transatlantic corner-filler, this source spoke of 'Hysteria in America' reaching fever pitch in the aftermath of the Giorgio book's appearance: in response to pleas for truth or confirmation from 'so many nutty Elvis fans', a Los Angeles radio station was said to be offering 'a staggering £1m to anyone who can bring the King into their studios for an interview'. (Some listeners were allegedly prepared to up the price for a personal and private meeting - a pink Cadillac and a four-bedroomed house were among the bribes mentioned. Me, I'd have taken the staggering £1m.) This probably won few friends at Gracelands, where Mr DeCaro had already met a less-than-ecstatic response to his inquiries. 'It's definitely not true', commented a spokesperson for the Presley estate. 'A lot of it has to do with making a buck. And that so many people wish it were true'.

But then, cryptoconspirators being what they are, they would have to say that. It would require complicity on some scale to arrange the star's spurious demise and still more to keep the truth from emerging; frank dismissal of anything contradicting the preplanned fabrication would be obligatory. The scale and logistics of such a mendacious enterprise may raise doubts, but in rumour legends you are not expected to look too closely into the clockwork. Nor should you ponder aloud why the Star is jeopardising the entire operation by swanning around supermarkets in a white jumpsuit and motorcycle helmet.

The *WWN* is one of few publications to give the *Sunday Sport* a two-foot start up a five-foot ladder and still romp home first. Cautious it is not

The immediate catalyst of all the excitement - the irresistible force which drew DeCaro Kalamazoo-wards - had been a boldly worded announcement on the front page of the *Weekly World News* for 24 May. Occasionally castigated as that terrifying American phenomenon the 'supermarket tabloid', the *WWN* is one of few publications to give the *Sunday Sport* a two-foot start up a five-foot ladder and still romp home first. Cautious it is not. Leering from the front page of the issue in question - elbowing aside stories of a dog scared to death by a horror movie and a sex-change woman who now wanted to reverse the surgical trend - was a balding, bearded visage suggestive that the missing decade had not been kind to the King of Rock and Roll. No matter: 'ELVIS IS ALIVE!' shouted the headline, whose emphatic size made the exclamation mark seem somewhat redundant. This was what a *WWN* artist believed he looked like, beard and all. The issue sold exceptionally well in Kalamazoo, perhaps because that was where the article claimed the Alive Elvis now lived.

'If one does not believe Giorgio or Welling', wrote man-on-the-spot DeCaro judiciously, 'one must believe *they* believe Elvis is alive and well and living in Michigan'. But did anyone else believe it? Sadly, no other resident of Kalamazoo appeared to have noticed the celebrity in their midst. There was a polite rebuff waiting when DeCaro visited Columbia Plaza - formerly a hotel, now an office conglomerate in the town's Haymarket district and according to sources not revealed, Elvis's new, calndestine home. 'Categorically and without question, he had not been in this building', said James Bodenner. 'I get really concerned when I hear crazy stories which have no basis in reality.' But then, Mr Bodenner is a property developer, not a folklorist.

Out on the streets, DeCaro found ample proof that the Elvis Lives! issue of the *WWN* had made an impact, though not everybody took it at its famous-face value. One man was prepared to believe that Elvis might be in Kalamazoo on the logical premise that 'I'm from Pittsburgh, and *I'm* here. Kalamazoo is as good a place as any.' Another reasoned that in certain respects Kalamazoo was better than most; it happens to be location of the Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company, manufacturers of the Minoxydil hair-loss treatment. Elvis, according to some gossipy sources, had been worried about his crowning glory and the interviewee apprehended that he might have homed in on Kalamazoo (and the Upjohn Pharm. Co.) to be as close as possible to the remedy for that problem. Still others didn't worry too much over the truth or falsity of the rumour, but regarded the headline as good publicity - for their own enterprises or for the town itself. Needless to add, DeCaro failed to meet Elvis in person. He had to settle for talking to someone who sort-of resembled the *WWN* artist's front-page conception and a record store manager who confided that there was also a Diana Ross running loose in Kalamazoo - 'but *he's* an outpatient'.

Now, there is a slight trend for contemporary folklorists to undervalue audience scepticism and its corollaries. Rephrased: there is a slight tendency to assume that audiences are unfailingly duped by rumorised stories of the Elvis Lives! variety, to suppose that when a story is told as true and

corroborated by devices like 'it was in the papers', the unwary accept it on that literal, uncritical level. The amused, shyly cynical response observed by the *Detroit News* writer suggests otherwise. An audience *may* accept a story as true for the durationof the telling (or reading). It *may* continue to accept it as true afterwards, but there again it may *not*; it may play along by part- or pretend-acceptance and it may not care for the literal truth of the thing one way or another. All of the people are not fooled all of the time.

This necessarily minimises any pernicious effect that wild stories promoted by papers of the *Weekly World News* or *Sunday Sport* ilk might have. Some ten years ago - about the time that Elvis died or didn't - your average paranormalist writer railed at the shabby treatment his/her subject received in the popular press. Revolutionary scientific truths were being devalued as mere entertainment. The People were being misled. Pop journalists were contemptible, perhaps indictable liars. This ignores a most salient fact. One of the paranormal-stroke-anomalous's main sales points has always been its entertainment value. Both parties - narrators and audiences - comprehend this.

The *Sunday Sport* is in show business. 'More out-of-this-world fun every week', is all the paper promises; and I've taken that statement of editorial policy direct from the header to the story of a how a World War II bomber recently discovered on the Moon has magically vanished, remarkable news broken to the breathless British Sabbath readers.[7] Out-of-this-world stories - out-of-this-world-fun - transport readers out of this dull, practical world. But they realise that that the dull, practical world is still there and return to it. No-one is really, seriously misled.

Or look at it another way. When F. Scott Fitzgerald tells us about Jay Gatsby, his incredible grandeur and unrealistic love for a girl who patently cannot be worth all the effort he puts into loving her...we know he's lying. There never *was* a Jay Gatsby, for a start. Yet we don't feel insulted by all the pretence.



Hornswoggled by Marilyn Monroe "alive and working as a nanny!"

After all, Fitzgerald is telling us a story and a story can establish its own brand of truth over and above the usual mundane kind.

Perhaps most of us regard popular anomalistically themed accounts - UFO contacts, ghost encounters, undead dead superstars - in much the same way. Literal truth isn't in it. There is no truth and no fiction, only stories.

NOTES

1. Or you can read it in my 'The King of Rock Back on the Road', for *The Unknown*, November 1987, pp. 22-23. But that filler was merely adapted from the *National Equirer*'s review-cum-excerpt of Raymond A. Moody Jnr's *Elvis - After Life*. Whether the author was aware of the Phantom Hitch-Hiker's folklore heritage I cannot say.

2. Hitler's unlikely sounding escape to the even less-likely sounding refuge of a Tibetan monastery was testified to by another supposedly undead super-Nazi - no less a person than Martin Bormann. The story seems to have been promoted by the proprietor of the pro-Nazi magazine *Tempo der Welt* in May 1950, who claimed to have heard it from Bormann's lips in Morocco; the implications, of course, were that the Fuhrer had escaped both death in the Berlin bunker and Allied vengeance and would return to resurrect the Third Reich at some opportune future time.

3. I analyse and seek historical analogues for some popular survival rumours in 'The Undead', and article for *The Unknown* of October 1987. Incidentally, and unlike the subjects of that article, *The Unknown* is now very much and indubitably dead.

4. The Elvis-MM connection was (allegedly even more intimate - a secret love-affair, no less. Or so claimed the very first issue of *The Sport* (17 August 1988). *The Sport*, as you surely know without telling, is a Wednesday spin-off from the *Sunday Sport*. Ah, but could they keep it up *every* day? (Snigger).

5. No, I can't remember who wrote or sang the original, it used to crop up regularly on Sunday evenings in a programme called Sing Something Simple. In case you're interested, the Girl was also lauded as the '*toast* of Kalamazoo'. I always get the tune mixed up with Chatanooga Choo-Choo, but that's my problem, not yours.

6. "£1m To Bring Us Elvis!", *Sunday People*, 7 August 1988, p.14.

7. The discovery of an American bomber, vintage WWII, in a lunar crater - by means of Russian satellite pictures - originally appeared in the 24 April 1988 issue of *Sunday Sport*. Rivalling but not equalling the "It's Gone!" story in the papers 21 August 1988 issue was a goggle-eyed item on how the new royal baby is believed to have communicated with a Balmoral-transmitting UFO. Not to mention page 15's "Pansy from Planet X". Yes... definitely better not to mention the Pansy from Planet X.

ENVOI: I have just remembered what disappointed me so in that "Marylyn Monroe ia Alive and Working as a Nanny" article, the *Sunday Sport* bore out the headline by saying she was alive (etc.) on the *Other Side*. I'd supposed they meant she was literally alive here, even in Tibet or Alaska or somewhere. This means I've been conned, duped, hornswoggled by the *SS*'s allusive headlines twice. I'm not proud of that. ▯▮▯

MYSTERY CIRCLES

Our Golden Opportunity

Paul Fuller

In *Magonia* 27 (September 1987, page 14) John Harney reviewed 'Mystery of the Circles', BUFORA's 1986 report on those intriguing crop circles which attract so much publicity every year because of their alleged association with UFOs. In this review, Harney comments on the theory first proposed by Dr Terence Meaden of the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation (TORRO) that stationary whirlwinds or vortices are responsible for the phenomenon. Unfortunately, Harney dismisses the theory on the basis of his knowledge of ordinary, ascending vortices (which are generated by insolation) whilst in fact Dr Meaden is proposing a previously unrecognised *descending* vortex as the cause of the circles.

I think that perhaps the time has come for me to explain in more detail why I have continued to promote the Vortex Theory of Circle Origin, and why at this time more than any other I have become so concerned with the activities of some of my colleagues and their less than critical attitude towards the phenomenon.

Most ufologists are already aware that every summer groups of precisely defined 'mystery circles' up to 30 metres in diameter have been appearing without warning in arable crops across southern England. Reports of circles have been published from many parts of the world over the past decade or so but until now no one has suggested a *mundane* explanation for what is occurring. It is this explanation, and the more sensational views being promoted by some ufologists, which forms the basis of this article.

Characteristics

The mystery circles are fascinating, highly complex features which contain an abundance of clues as to their natural (vortex-related) origin. To begin with, each part of the affected area is very precisely defined - as if a giant probe had been used to cut the circle from the surrounding crop. This feature automatically excludes helicopter downwash as a causing agent because downwash spreads out radially and its effects decline gradually with distance. As Harney points out, the effects of ordinary vortices also tend to fade under ordinary circumstances; however the very best close-up photographs of vortices[1] reveal a precisely defined funnel at the core of the vortex. This suggests that, under certain circumstances, vortices *can* produce neatly defined areas of crop damage, and this belief is supported by numerous accounts of vortices which lack severe atmospheric turbulence in the zone immediately surrounding the funnel.

A second, definitive characteristic of the phenomenon is the existence of an off-centred swirl pattern within the affected zone. This swirl clearly mirrors the rotation of the vortex and, significantly, roughly equal proportions of circles display clockwise and anti-clockwise swirl patterns - just as in ordinary (minor) vortex events.[2]

This swirl pattern is usually strongly banded as if the responsible vortex was rotating in an irregular, cyclic manner, whilst the affected crop is laid down in several, distinctive layers which tend to point in different and highly divergent directions. This layering is very important because it suggests that the vortex column is moving about the zone of activity and displacing the upper layers of the affected crop on several occasions. If we imagine the vortex as a giant pendulum this layering begins to make sense because the layering is concentrated in the centre of the circle (where most movement will have taken place) and it also explains the off-centred positioning of the spiral centre. Clearly the spiral centre moves with the positioning of the vortex column; its final location within the affected zone depends upon chance factors governing the generation of the vortex column and its (relatively brief) lifetime.

A third, very important characteristic of the circles is the almost total lack of damage to the crop itself. Delgado's research demonstrated how mechanical depression (e.g. with a chain) automatically damages the heads of the crop and snaps the stems. By contrast, air pressure within a vortex would be ideally suited to permanently deforming the crop in a circle and laying it gently flat without causing such damage. In some circles the heads have been firmly pressed into the ground surface by this strong, down current of air, but even then there is minimal damage to the crop itself; the heads are still largely intact.

A fourth, fascinating feature of the circle phenomenon is the sheer variety of different formation types which have been discovered over the past decade or so. Single circles appear by far to be the most common type, but we now know of over a dozen different formations which occur across the English countryside.

These different formations are evocative, beautiful features which stir deep emotions

within many observers. It is for this reason that so many people are willing to believe that the circles represent something exotic and incredible.

It is important to understand that the outer rings and satellites in *all* these formations display the *same* characteristics as their parent (central) circles, whilst the existence of the outer rings confirms their vortex origin because many vortices exhibit tiny sheaths of contra-rotating air surrounding the vortex funnel. Corliss[3] cites many accounts of waterspouts with (up to three) outer sheaths all positioned very close to the funnel at the core of the vortex. These sheaths can descend and ascend during the vortex event and they have been likened to the movements of a wriggling, pulsating animal! Significantly, the outer rings of our mystery circles are *also* positioned very close to the parent circles (although they occasionally bisect the outer circles[4]) and they *also* display a sinuous, wave-like pattern which seems to be the result of this pulsating sheath described by Corliss.

Dr Meaden points out that the direction of spin in the outer rings is always opposite to the direction of spin exhibited by the parent circle; this confirms that - as in ordinary vortex events - some kind of momentum conservation is at work to prevent the vortex from becoming unstable.

It is a significant fact that the majority of these circles appear close to the bases of steeply inclined hill slopes (e.g. at the Cheesefoot Head 'punchbowl' near Winchester and at the Westbury White Horse escarpment in Wiltshire).[5] 'Trailing vortices' have been extensively described in the meteorological literature (e.g. on the lee slope of the Rock of Gibraltar); these vortices are generated by the formation of eddy currents on the lee side of many topographical features. Dr Meaden proposes that most circle formations are created by stationary vortices generated in this way by 'standing waves' of lee-side eddy currents. A fine example of this process is provided by the Cley Hill, Warminster circles, which Dr Meaden cites in the *Journal of Meteorology* (Vol. 13, No. 9, May/June 1988). Five circle formations are known to have appeared at this location between 1982 and 1987 inclusive. All five were located on the eastern side of the hill where the prevailing westerly winds produce lee-side eddies. On two occasions the wind direction at the time of formation was known to be westerly, thus supporting Dr Meaden's hypothesis.

Those mystery circles which do not appear at such locations are obviously created by similar descending vortices which must be generated within the atmospheric boundary layer. These 'descending eddy currents' burrow down from the sky by day or night, under cloudy skies as well as clear skies, and even during heavy precipitation. Their effects are identical to the topographically induced vortices and their lifetimes are also relatively short (possibly less than 10 seconds), hence the lack of reliable eyewitness accounts.

When Jenny Randles and I wrote 'Mystery of the Circles' we were well aware of the two eyewitness accounts of vortices creating circles cited by Dr Meaden. We nearly decided to omit these accounts because we were not fully convinced of their value (one involved well-known UFO writer Arthur Shuttlewood!). However, during 1987 a correspondent wrote to the London *Daily Telegraph* to describe his observation of a vortex 'bouncing' across a wheat field adjacent to his home in the Malvern Hills. This vortex created *two* circles according to the witness, but like so many UFO events, it was reported far too late to be adequately investigated.

Clearly an abundance of evidence exists which supports Dr Meaden's highly original Vortex Theory of Circle Origin. It would be quite wrong for the ufological community to dismiss the vortex theory simply because it does not provide us with an exciting, exotic explanation for the circles. Indeed, the ufologist's paradigm *must* include the acceptance of a mundane, 'natural' hypothesis for UFO phenomena when such hypotheses become available, despite our willingness to search for more sensational explanatory models for the phenomena we study.

The Vortex Theory offers a unique challenge to ufologists because it tests our ability to evaluate theories and to investigate anomalies in the real world. The theory is a *golden opportunity* for us all to demonstrate our more mature approach to the scientific study of anomalous phenomena and a chance to persuade a sceptical world to take a fresh look at ufology and our data. Regretfully, some ufologists have not recognised this and take every opportunity to dismiss the theory (even *before* it has been published) and to discredit its promoters. It is *this* approach, and the cost to our movement, which I will discuss next.

NOTES

1. See for example 'The Guinness Book of Weather Facts and Feats', by Ingrid Holford (1977), page 193 and cover.

2. During 1987 Dr Meaden inspected and measured 66 circles (*not* formations); of these 30 displayed clockwise swirls and 36 displayed anti-clockwise swirls.

3. See 'Tornadoes, Dark Days, Anomalous Precipitation and Related Weather Phenomena', by William R Corliss, The Sourcebook Project (1983), pages 154-156.

4. See for example *FSR*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1983), page 15.

5. Of course, depending on wind speed and the size of the hill slope, eddies can generate vortices well away from the *base* of the hill - perhaps as far as 2 or 3 km from the feature responsible.

□■□

The vortex theory is
a golden opportunity
for us all to demonstrate
our more mature approach
to the scientific study
of anomalous phenomena

I have explained in some depth why I find the vortex theory of circle origin so convincing and so plausible, given the nature of the evidence before us and the existence of recognised meteorological mechanisms capable of creating 'mystery circles'. My description of these mechanisms represents more than three years of research and investigation into the phenomenon which culminated in 1987 with the joint funding of the BUFORA/TORRO' Sample Survey which aimed to establish certain, quantifiable aspects of the phenomenon and the beliefs of the landowners concerned.

The aims of the survey were to find out how *many* circle formations were appearing, how many were being *reported*, and to establish whether those formations which were being reported constituted a representative (random) sample of those formations which were actually appearing. We were particularly concerned with the way that the formation types being reported seemed to evolve into ever more complex patterns with every passing summer. Such a non-random characteristic seemed quite inconsistent with a purely 'natural' theory and suggested that the more complicated formations were really (very clever) hoaxes.[2]

The postal survey was carried out in January 1987 in the English counties of Hampshire and Wiltshire. Ninety valid responses were received from cereal farmers in an area with a high incidence of circle formations. Our findings were:

1. There was virtually no support whatsoever amongst the landowners that UFOs were creating the circles. Only 3 of the survey respondents indicated a willingness to agree with this belief whilst significantly higher proportions of the respondents agreed with Hoaxing and The Weather as likely explanations. Because of the small sample size and a low response rate to this question there was no significant difference between the proportions of respondents who agreed/disagreed with Hoaxing and The Weather as perceived causes of the phenomenon.

2. The 90 survey respondents produced accounts of 19 circle formations on 11 cereal holdings. Significantly, 13 (68%) of these formations and 2 of the 7 formation *types* were unknown prior to the survey. Only 2 of the 19 formations (11%) had ever received publicity, thus confirming that the true number of formations appearing must be about ten times the number being reported.

3. The survey predicted that on average a circle forming event was occurring once every 34,800 hectares (86,100 acres) per year. This implies that every year over 400 circle-forming events are occurring in England and Wales alone.[3]

4. A *different*, non-random distribution of formation types was reported to the distribution known before. This confirmed that *media bias* to report only the more exciting (or accessible) formation types was distorting our knowledge of the phenomenon and producing the apparent evolution of formation types.

Perhaps most importantly of all, the survey *failed* to produce a single account of a 'paranormal' UFO creating a circle formation in front of startled farmers. *All* the survey findings were consistent with the hypothesis that a rare, natural phenomenon was responsible for the circles.

The BUFORA/TORRO Survey was the first such venture between British ufologists and a respected scientific organisation and must represent a minor breakthrough in our (somewhat frosty) relationship with the scientific community. Whilst the survey findings do not make giant conceptual leaps in our understanding of the circles phenomenon, they *do* confirm those aspects which suggest that a natural (vortex related) mechanism is at work, and as such the survey provides one small piece in the jigsaw of science.

All the survey findings were consistent with the hypothesis that a rare, natural phenomenon was responsible for the circles.

With the success of the survey in mind, I must say how frustrated I have been to see that some ufologists still continue to pander to sensationalism by promoting their wildly speculative theories about 'paranormal' UFOs (?), 'invisible earth forces' and 'ley lines'! These ufologists dismiss my more rational approach to the study of the circles with a wave of their hand as if *they* were experts in vortex generation and *we* were fools just released from the asylum. Their obsession with finding an exotic explanation for the mystery circles can only result in the dismissal of *all* the UFO data by our detractors and the assumption that *all* ufologists are equally willing to discover incredible causes for anomalous events.

Quite apart from the philosophical problems we face when trying to account for one unexplained phenomenon (the circles) with another unexplained phenomenon (UFOs), these ufologists seem to accept every media-generated UFO report as a bona fide truly unexplained UFO report with the minimum of criticism or investigation. Take for example their 'eyewitness account' of a giant UFO creating a circle at Cheesefoot Head near Winchester, affecting three bystanders' vehicles and being photographed by the primary witness.

When I wrote to this witness he made no mention of the alleged photograph of this extraordinary event despite my form specifically asking 'If you took a photograph...give details'. In addition I find it difficult to believe that any person observing and photographing an event of this magnitude (creating extensive ground traces and affecting mechanical apparatus for an appreciable length of time) would wait several *years* before sending the only

existing negative of this priceless photograph to their local freebie (*The Winchester Gazette & Extra*) and then simply forget about it when that newspaper mislaid such an important piece of evidence in the rather dubious manner described in *Flying Saucer Review*, Vol. 32, No. 6!

Furthermore, I note with some concern that this witness could *not* have observed a UFO creating ground traces in the Cheesefoot Head 'punchbowl' way back in 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 or 1985 (he's not sure which year) if he had been standing (as he claims) in the car park at this well-known beauty spot. Even the most unobservant UFO investigator should have noticed that circles appearing in the 'punchbowl' are simply not visible from the car park due to the lie of the land and intervening obstacles.[4]

Despite appreciable publicity, the two corroborating witnesses (whose names and addresses were rather inconveniently unrecorded) have not come forward to confirm this amazing encounter and, in the meantime, our 'repeater' witness has observed two more UFOs, this time above Winchester city centre (along with two rather elusive policemen).

In my opinion this case cannot be judged as a credible and objective account of a truly incredible (and totally unprecedented) event. It illustrates only too well the dangers of accepting media-generated UFO stories at face value and the *cost* to the UFO movement without careful forethought and a degree of soul searching.

I must emphasise that I too believe there are 'novel new phenomena' in the UFO data and that I would be perfectly happy to consider *FSR*'s view that ('paranormal') UFOs were creating the mystery circles if I thought that *FSR*'s 'honoured consultants' understood the ufological facts of life. But when they enthusiastically promote such a dubious and frankly unbelievable claim like this I just throw up my hands in horror at the damage they are inflicting on the ufologist's cause.

When *FSR* carries a full, unedited description of the Vortex Theory of Circle Formation to add a more balanced view to the circles debate, and when *FSR*'s 'honoured consultants' learn to familiarise themselves with the established meteorological literature instead of dismissing the Vortex Theory out of hand (because they prefer a more exciting, exotic explanation), *then* perhaps ufologists will begin to persuade the scientific community to take ufologists and our data more seriously.

At the end of the day, what concerns me most about the mystery circles is not so much their *cause* (after all, I could be wrong) but their *treatment* by ufologists and the media. I believe that most ufologists appreciate only too well that the reason why science has ignored our data for over forty years is because of this obsession by large numbers of ufologists with wildly exciting and exotic interpretations of our data. This uncritical approach gives our enemies all the ammunition they need to discredit ufology and the fascinating phenomena we study.

It saddens me to see such naive and emotive support for the UFO theory being promoted again and again in *FSR* - a magazine which was once the champion of our cause under Charles Bowen, but which has now descended into a fantasy world of MIB and sinister government plots to suppress The Truth. *FSR*'s current contributors really have no concept of the damage they are inflicting on their own credibility (let alone the credibility of our infant science), and they seem to interpret the Vortex Theory as some kind of *threat* to their established order, instead of a theory which will stand or fall on its merits alone.

For ufology to progress we must learn to adopt more stringent investigative criteria before we rush to proclaim anomalies as unexplained. We must learn to discard all those outdated theories which brought so much ridicule down on our predecessors, and we must be *seen* by the scientific community to be co-operating with established, respected scientists in a common quest for knowledge without recourse to the emotive and quite unnecessary comments being made in *FSR* about those of us who support the Vortex Theory.

Regretfully, some ufologists do not accept these honourable values. To these people I have a simple, direct message. Leave us ufologists alone and take your obsessions elsewhere.

NOTES

1. TORRO, The Tornado and Storm Research Organisation, 54 Frome Road, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1LD UK.
2. Readers should note that two circle formations are known to be *proven* hoaxes (Westbury, August 1983; and Froxfield, September 1986).
3. The 90% confidence interval for this estimate is 63 to 745.
4. We know of no circles in the immediate vicinity of the car park over the past decade; the nearest circles would have been in the 'punchbowl'.

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MAGONIA BACK ISSUES

The following Back Issues of *Magonia* magazine are available, price £1.00 ($3.00) each, post paid:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PECKHAM WRY

Dear Sir

I note with growing dismay within the pages of *Magonia* and especially in the writings of Peter Rogerson a certain misplaced smugness which, whether actual or imagined, does little to further the psychological theories of ufology.

While psychology obviously does have a place, and an important one at that, in helping to address the problem of UFOs, it is seen by some as the answer to *all* the issue and to explain everything - from 'Valerie of Peckham' to Near Death Experiences (having myself been born in Peckham, I feel Valerie might need the protection of a fellow Peckhamite). Psychologists may be able to throw some light on why a Valerie or a Carl Higdon interpret what they see and experience as being alien but this knowledge is hardly a solution in itself: perceiving a double helix down an electron microscope without an understanding of cellular biology does little by way of adding to man's knowledge.

Patients faced with an incompetent or ignorant physician are told to 'pull themselves together' in much the same way as Rogerson tells us (like big daddy) to stop playing at geology and 'grow up'. More enquiring and concerned physicians, whilst realising that what the patient describes may not be the true physiological basis for their symptoms, nonetheless avail themselves of a more positive attitude in the search for a solution. For too long physicians and folklorist-theorists have viewed the more extraordinary manifestations of their respective as reasons to ignore the possible underlying physiological or physical basis of such reports. If the story seems fantastic than it's all in the mind, or is folklore.

Instead of seeking to denigrate other researchers honest attempts at solutions perhaps the more hide-bound proponents of the folklore/psychological schools of thought would be better employed finding a solution along more productive lines.

There are many passing references in the UFO literature to, for example, hallucinations, but I see precious little evidence that these same folklorists and psychology-theorists even bother to aquaint themselves with the neural mechanism of hallucinations and perception, and the current debate on intentionality. This is all the more regrettable in view of the position that hallucinations hold as one of the major cornerstones of psychology.

Qualified psychologists are far more cautious in the application of their knowledge to problems of human belief and behaviour - they are too painfully aware that seemingly innocuous questions put to them by the public are too often the ones to which they have no answer: what is memory?, what makes someone turn mass killer?

I do not think that any rational UFO researcher would deny that all the theories that try to explain the UFO phenomenon do have a role to play in research. It is these theories that solve many cases - by a process of elimination. However, some folklorists/psychology-theorists try to explain 'Valerie of Peckham's' sightings in terms of 'grandma psychology'; an attempt to explain the mechanisms of geology, physics or NDEs in what seems very like so much mumbo-jumbo. Like the patient's symptoms, the percipient's psychological reaction to their experience is seen as sufficient of itself to account for the sighting or sickness.

I would ask all those who claim that UFO sightings are explicable solely in terms of folklore and psychology to read Barry Greenwood's article 'The Luke Air Force Base UFO Sighting' (*FSR*, 24, 2, p.11), or Richard Haines's 'Commercial Jet Crew Sights Unidentified Object' (*FSR*, 27, 4 and 5). A more enquiring mind may extend our knowledge - this attitude of open-mindedness is well illustrated in the article 'More Pieces for the Jigsaw' by Hilary Evans in the same issue of *Magonia* as Peter Rogerson's piece.

Oh, by the way, I bumped into Val down Rye Lane Market last week and she says: "Cor blimey, mate! It's the last time I gonna bovver to tell any of you lot what I seen - even if I sees a fousand of 'em bleedin' flyin' sorcerers. Ere, you seen this scar on me leg? No, funny you should mention that... me mum's got one an' all..."

Yours faithfully

Anthony R Brown, Strathglass-by-Beauly, Invernessshire.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...

Dear John,

Just received your most excellent edition of *Magonia*. Very, very good article by Rogerson and I must regret not having made it to your conference.

Best regards

Dennis Stillings, *Archaeus Project*, St Paul, MN.

ALL RIGHT, JACQUES

Dear John

I have no quarrel with your comments on *Dimensions* in *Magonia* of August 1988 - it is your prerogative to like or dislike any book you review - but some points of clarification are needed in view of the imminent publication of the book by Souvenir in the UK.

First, regarding the fact that *Dimensions* summarizes and updates earlier works, it would have been fair to note that both my introduction and the dust jacket make it absolutely clear to the reader that some of the material was published before.

Second, it would have also been fair to point out that *Passport to Magonia*, *Invisible College* and *Messengers of Deception*

have been out of print for 5 to 10 years. Not every Briton had the foresight, as you evidently did, to purchase them as soon as they came out. Yet the information they brought to light is still very current, so much so that you will find it extensively reprinted (without attribution or credit) in numerous 'new' books where it is presented as original research.

Third, some facts which have been published before do bear repeating lest they be forgotten in the shuffle: for instance, *Invisible College* pointed out for the first time 13 years ago that the structure of many abduction reports was identical to that of initiation rituals. yet this fundamental observation has not yet percolated into the consciousness of American UFO researchers, who are still charging ahead with speculation about the clinical and genetic motives of the 'alien' scientists aboard UFOs. What may seem obvious and *passé* to you in England is not necessarily obsolete in the United States.

Fourth, I do think the reader will find much that is novel in *Dimensions* because it articulates clearly for the first time the full extent of the bankruptcy of the ETH.

As for the organisation that brought me to London a few years ago and "had not been heard of before or since" it was, very simply, the organisation founded by Dr Hynek when he moved to Arizona. It is still in existence under the name ICUFOR, although Allen's death has obviously shattered its once-ambitious plans for international research. My only link with it, for which I feel no need to apologise, is one of continuing friendship.

It is true that I have never spoken publicly about my own research of the past ten years. Your criticism on this point is well taken: I acknowledge it, and will try to remedy it. My only rejoinder is that here, as in the UFO matter generally, it is rash to construe the absence of evidence as evidence of absence.

With warm regards

Jacques Vallée, San Francisco.

BOOKS EXTRA

RANDLES' "ABDUCTION"

as seen by one who's been there

Daryl Collins

This new book is a very important compilation of cases and facts which any successful theory of abductions will somehow have to explain. It deserves to be much more widely read and studied than is likely to happen. To the general reader, perhaps the most important message is that one can be abducted anywhere, just as easily in Britain as in Upstate New York. To the specialist it provides a display of some of the complex patterns hidden within the abduction phenomenon.

It is not clear that these patterns are quite consistent with the easy answers sometimes put forward by some of the contributors to *Magonia*. Of course, some of this confusing complexity may be an illusory by-product of the inclusion in one category of phenomena that don't really belong together - missing time cases, entity cases, contacts, various types of abductions. Yet the pattern of resemblances among these would still remain to be explained.

I will proceed by giving a quick summary of some of the main points of the book, adding comments from my own perspective as I go along. It opens with some old cases - from as far back as 1803 and 1912 - with modern features, alongside some modern cases with old or even mythological features. There follows some remarks on the SF connection pointed out by Méheust, with the interesting suggestion that films, novels and music may constitute some kind of 'back-door contacts'. To these I could add that the classical strange doors can also be found in SF stories from the 1920s and 1930s by such authors as Robert E Howard and Clark Ashton Smith of *Weird Tales*, and the story on which the film *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was based. Yet, many of these were little read, and contained many features that don't appear in abductions. Not mentioned are other films that from my own perspective are even more relevant, such as *The Never Ending Story*, and *The Land of Faraway*.

The core of the book is the display of cases and common features in chapters 5, 6, and 7. Chapter 5 is devoted to 29 British cases. Notable features include the prevalence of visions of coming disasters, which appears several times in the book. There is the strange drink often given to abductees, which I remember from my own experience. And the bizarre Appleton case includes a sample of alleged alien skin that resembled the skin of an animal, a detail unpleasantly reminiscent of some of the sensational rumours currently circulating among US ufologists. And note the case on page 60, where a car was found in a muddy field but left no tracks. It should be remembered at the end of the book.

A word should be addressed to the question on page 158 as to why there seem to be few abduction reports amongst non-Caucasians. There is a good chance that this is primarily a selection effect due to cultural biases. For example,

several of Budd Hopkins's cases have involved blacks, but they are not publicly known. Probably many blacks perceive UFOs as an area pre-empted by whites, and fear that their input may not be welcome. Unfortunately, this may not be totally unjustified; some white news editors, police officers, etc. may take reports from black witnesses less seriously.

On page 172 there is a case involving a device placed to the forehead of an abductee. I found this particularly striking, as I remember it from one of my own experiences, back in 1948. It seems to be rare in UFO literature, though interestingly it appears in one of Whitley Strieber's novels, *The Night Church*.

Of much current interest is the discussion on pages 175-6 and 180-3 of the way the phenomenon seems to try to present itself as involving two alien races. While the true significance of this feature is not at all clear, speculation about conflicts between the 'swedes' and the 'Greys' are raging in many circles of US ufology. Usually the 'Grays' are seen as hostile, or at least as amoral predators. But as Hopkins has pointed out, the supposed enemies are often described as seeming to work together. Clearly, one should avoid jumping to conclusions in the face of a phenomenon as confusing as this one.

In Chapter 8 Randles briefly summarises the results of Eddie Bullard's massive two-volume study, probably the most important work done on the phenomenon to date. Any adequate theory must account for the patterns he has found, such as the coherence in the order of the component events of the abduction, and 'doorway amnesia'. The latter feature is very nicely illustrated by the very important 1980 US abduction of 'Megan Elliott', which I helped to investigate, and which is not in Randles's book, Megan recalled most of her experience consciously, except for a few moments around the entry into the object, and a longer time around the departure from it. these had to be recovered under hypnosis, which otherwise did little more than confirm her conscious recollections. just why these particular components should be singled out for amnesia is not at all clear.

Hypnosis is a dirty word in some circles. but as Randles points out, something like 20% to 30% of all cases involve no hypnosis. yet there is little if any systematic differences between them and those recalled mostly or entirely under hypnosis. "It is simply not tenable to claim the hypnotic state as a cause for the abduction experience", she concludes (p.190).

In fact one could go much further in this direction. It is often charged that abductees are merely responding to leading questions from the hypnotist. Quite the contrary; in many cases the subject stubbornly resists following the lead of the therapist, even under considerable pressure. This is particularly prominent, for example, in the second phase of the Andreasson case, and I remember it very vividly in my own. I have seen a paper, recently drawn up by a practising psychiatrist, which cites this feature and others, including the occurrence of post-traumatic stress disorder which is only known to follow externally-induced trauma. It would be easy to interpret these points as evidence for the objective reality of abductions.

Similarly, in her final chapter, Randles cites the study carried out by Hopkins and Clamar in which psychologist Elizabeth Slater concluded that "there is no apparent psychological explanation" (p.208). An interesting experiment carried out by Randles herself is reported on pp. 204-5, and leads to similar conclusions.

In default of a psychological explanation. it is perhaps too easy to fall back on the ETH, mainly because, as Randles remarks, "this is the guise in which the abductors appear" (p.213). Not all Americans who lean towards the ETH are hypnotised by loyalty toKeyhoe. Indeed, for myself, the theory is tempting exactly because the beings told me they were from outer space!

During a long experience in 1946 I was taken into a sort of auditorium, where scenes were shown on a wall of what the beings claimed to be their own world - a devastated planet, where the cities were burnt out wrecks and rivers of lava flowed everywhere.

No explanation was offered for all this destruction. "We have had to go out into space to search for places were there was the kind of life that could help us," came the lecture, telepathically. "Earth was one of the places we found". (Implication: there were others.) Much of this went over my head, since, at the age of five, I knew nothing of stars and planets.

Immediately I became obsessed with space and science in an attempt to make sense of what I had been shown and told. (Perhaps this awakening to science was akin to the artistic awakenings pointed out by Randles - a different kind of experience from many others with horrific consequences?) I was also left with a lifelong obsession with UFOs, trying to make sense of my experience. I have read all I can in search of answers.

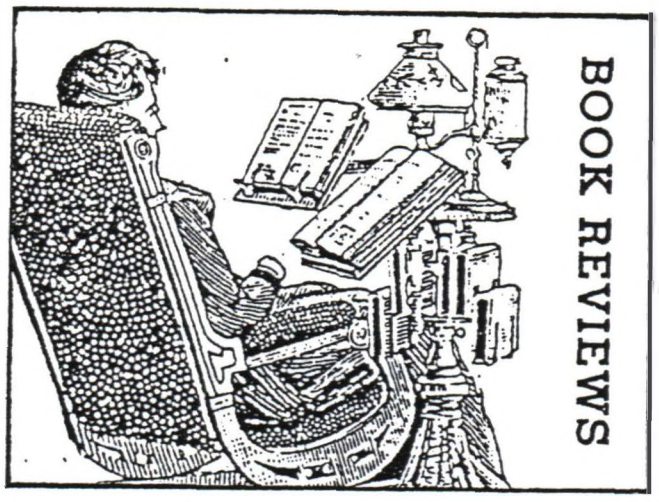
Did I find my answers in this book? Randles tries hard. At the end of the book, after a brief look at the enigmatic links to OOBEs and NDEs, she proposes a 'best guess' which looks as if it might have been inspired by *Chocky*. Unfortunately, this theory presupposes that abductees will be returned to their starting places - contrary to the cases on pages 60 and 137 of this very book, not to mention the Megan Elliott case, and others amongst Hopkins cases and elsewhere.

So I still don't know what abductions are. I only know that, though they may feel strange compared to everyday experience, they do not thereby feel any less real. □■□

'Daryl Collins' is the pseudonym of an American correspondent who has undergone an abduction experience in childhood. He does not, at this stage, wish his name to be published. In accordance with our policy on naming witnesses we are happy to accede to this request.

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* RANDLES, Jenny. *Abduction*. Published by Hale, 1988.
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FAWLEY, John, and ALLISON, William. *The Monocled Mutineer.* Quartet, £2.50

WASSERSTEIN, *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch Lincoln.* Yale, 1988. £16.95

Barefaced Messiah; the L Ron Hubbard Story.

Edwardian England seems to have been a happy hunting-ground for con-men and charlatans, including two of the three chronicled in these books. The first traces the career of Percy Topliss, the 'monocled mutineer' of a somewhat fictionalised TV drama series, recently repeated. He graduated from mining village petty criminal to spending World War I posing as an officer, who may or may not (controversy rages) have enjoyed a brief moment of glory as a ringleader of the mutiny at the army base-camp of Etaples in 1917. After the war he took to armed crime and eventually murder, dying in a police ambush in 1920.

Mysterious and bizarre as the Percy Topliss story is, it appears almost mundane beside that of Trebitsch Lincoln, a Hungarian Jewish adventurer who arrived in Britain in the early years of this century. He became, in rapid succession, and with the aid of bogus credentials, an Anglican clergyman; a Liberal MP (at a time when anti-semitism was rife and in spite of not being able to speak English without a strong accent, and indeed possibly not even being a British citizen); then a shady financier. Like Percy Topliss, he was quick to exploit World War I by peddling bogus military secrets to the Germans from the safety of New York.

By 1920 he had followed this move onto the international stage by resurfacing in Berlin as a leading activist in the underworld of German militarists, Russian emigres and East European anti-semites from which Nazism would later emerge. Even here he found his origins no more of a handicap to his schemes than his possession of what a journalist who encountered him described as "a face on which deceit and brutality are inscribed for all to read".

Remarkable as this story is, it seems at this point to have little to do with the concerns of *Magonia.* Indeed, it is not without contemporary parallels, since modern Britain can boast at least two figures who have obtained considerable success on highly dubious credentials and in spite of similar facial handicaps to Trebitsch Lincoln. (in view of both of their remarkable successes with the law of libel perhaps it is unwise to pursue the analogies).

However Lincoln's next port of call was China. After a period as advisor to a warlord he adopted the name of Abbot Kao Chu and became the spiritual leader of a small community of Europeans seeking enlightenment in the East. Here the story becomes familiar to those who have followed the careers of contemporary cult leaders such as the Bhagwan or, in the political field, Gerry Healy of the Workers' Revolutionary Party, or the US ultra-right cultist Lyndon LaRouche.

People leading wealthy but spiritually impoverished lives signed away their cash to the Perfect Master, and in return were humiliated, sexually exploited, and accused of conspiring against him. Finally Trebitsch Lincoln died in 1943 combining his activities as a Buddhist monk with writing as a pro-Axis propagandist and corresponding with Nazi Intelligence assuring them that he could enlist the Hidden Masters on the German side.

Judgements on Percy Topliss and Trebitsch Lincoln may perhaps be tempered by the thought that had they lived the everyday respectable lives of their contemporaries one of them would probably have died on the Western front and the other as a victim of the Holocaust. However it is not easy to find anything to say in mitigation of L Ron Hubbard, other than to acknowledge the skill with he identified his market.

In the 1920's and 30's various dubious occultists had realised that it was possible to make money not simply by exploiting a few members of the wealthy classes, on the lines of Cagliostro or Alastair Crowley, but to go for quantity of victims via ads in pulp magazines (the Rosicrucians are of course still at it, and the TV evangelists have brought the techniques into the electronic age). Hubbard's rise to fame and fortune in this way, although more spectacular than any of his predecessors, was not unique. What is distinctive is the mythology with which he made his play for his audience.

The imaginary world of Ron Hubbard is recognisably that of the 1930's film serial. The biographical works produced by the scientologists depict him as a two-fisted adventurer in exotic lands, on the lines revived in the Indiana Jones films. There is apparently little factual basis for this beyond a brief and inglorious term of service on a patrol vessel in the Caribbean in World War II, where he apparently managed to shell Mexico! (One wonders if he ever came into contact with Ivan T Sanderson the Fortean writer and, one suspects, another great embellisher of stories, who was also patrolling these waters at the same time.)

When Hubbard went on to found Dianetics the off-hand pseudo-science and half-digested occultism of the old film serials were faithfully reproduced in the E-meters with which the mental states of devotees were monitored. These recalled the cardboard and tin death-ray machines of these films, and when he turned to scientology's complete cosmology and memories of life on other planets, the results recalled the worlds of Flash Gordon and the Emperor Ming. However, this mixture seemed to appeal to a US public enjoying unparalleled affluence but plagued by insecurity. A public furthermore impressed by attempts, such as Velikovsky's, to underwrite religion with vaguely understood science.

Finally, having become wealthy he used his money in best serial-hero style to buy an Indian Maharajah's Sussex home and cruise the world on his private yacht, apparently searching for extraterrestrial bases, buried treasure and Atlantis.

The description given of life on the Hubbard vessel, as in Trebitsch Lincoln's commune, will be familiar to those with any knowledge of cultist behaviour (curiously enough, Trebitsch lincoln was at one time trying to raise money to but a boat on which he and his disciples might cruise the world). However the description of life aboard the Hubbard yacht is enlivened by an air of grotesque comedy (indiscipline was punished by perpetrators being thrown into harbours) reminiscent of the Marx Brothers films in which Groucho, although supposedly a con-man, makes no attempt to ingratiate himself with his victims, but insults and humiliates them. Certainly this episode is good evidence for Peter Rogerson's suggestion that the motivation of cult leaders may not simply be a desire for money or power but a fascination to know how far it is possible to go before their disciples revolt.

Among the fascinating sidelights provided in this book is the fact that in the 1950's Hubbard was simultaneously denouncing opponents of scientology as communists, whilst privately attempting to

work out schemes to interest communist governments in the cult. It seems he was the real author of *Textbook of Psychopolitics* - a forgery purporting to be a Soviet document on mind-control , still hawked by the ultra-right in Britain and the UK.

The biographers of Lincoln and Hubbard make extensive use of official files that bemused policeman and civil servants prepared on their subjects, and in this way have clarified much that the two sought to conceal, even though much remains obscure (Hubbard in particular seems to rise from penury to wealth in a chapter with little explanation). By contrast Allison and Fairly have given us Percy Topliss as recalled by elderly miners and soldiers. Valuable and vivid as much of the results are, especially in the picture of the hushed-up mutiny at Etaples, it is a pity that it is presented without index or proper footnoting (so that one cannot even find out the circumstances in which the photo they reproduce of Topliss dressed as a officer were taken) and one should not underestimate the extent to which sincere testimony can be tidied up with time so that wartime apocryphal stories become established fact.

What comes out of this testimony is a picture of Topliss as a rare example of a twentieth century legendary figure whose tale has been maintained in limited communities without the aid of the mass-media. His exploits were a proof that even in the harshness of the mines or on the Western Front it was nonetheless possible for the individual to break the system. Ironically, though Topliss's deceptions never encompassed the occult mumbo-jumbo of Trebitsch Lincoln or Hubbard, it is he, not they, who emerges as a figure with the mythic status they sought in vain. *Roger Sandell*

HOAGLAND, Richard C. *The Monuments of Mars; a city on the edge of forever.* North Atlantic Books, 1987. $14.95.

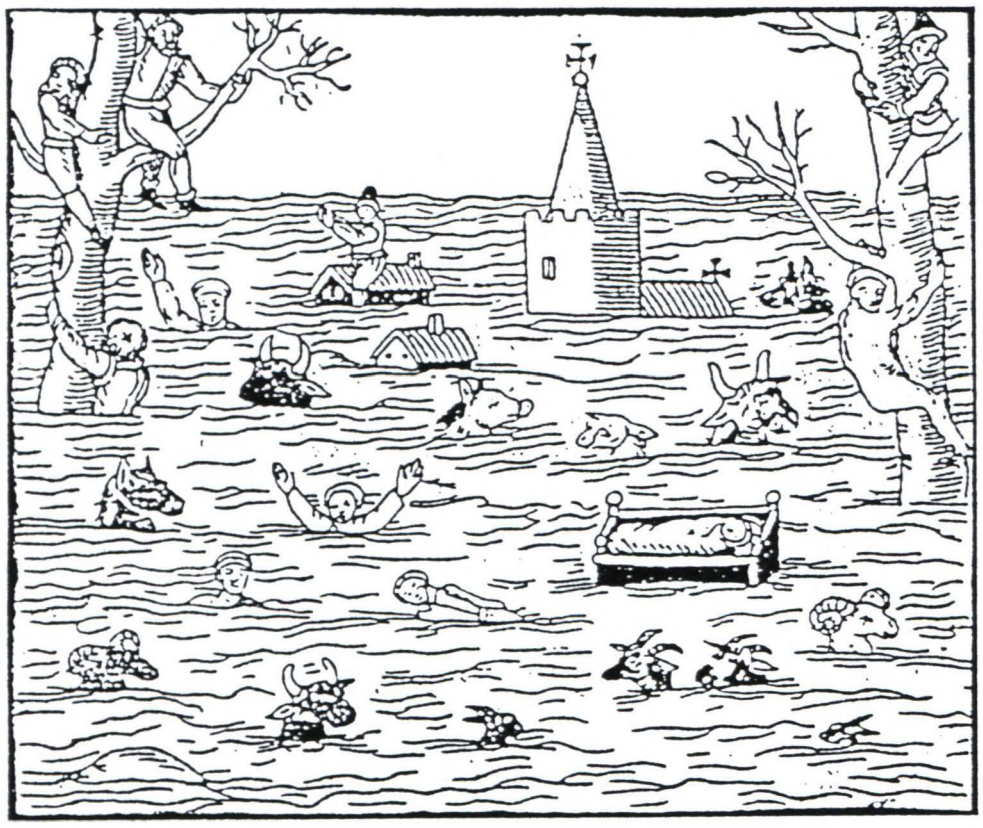
Dear Sir, I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between the so-called 'Face on Mars' and an artifical structured object. I haven't. *John Rimmer*

PENNICK, Nigel. *Lost Lands and Sunken Cities.* Fortean Tomes, 1988. £8.50.

Nigel Pennick is Forteana's Renaissance Man, with a scope of expertise ranging from the earth mysteries of medieval Germany to the tramways of Cambridge. In this, the second volume from Fortean Tomes (a considerable improvement technically from the first release, *UFOs 1947-1987*, the computer typesetting bugs appear to have been eliminated) he looks at the forces which have altered the coastline of Britain, from prehistoric times to this century; from legendary lands to historical record.

There seems to be no coastal county which has not been affected by innundation from the sea, losing in the process houses, villages, even whole cities. Although some of this will be familiar to most readers - the lost town of Dunwich off the coast of Suffolk, semi-mythical Lyonesse - there is also much that will be unfamiliar. Although a native of the area, I was unaware of the history of the land of Meols, Merseyside's lost realm.

Besides covering the British coast area by area, Nigel Pennick is also careful to put these stories of flood and deluge into a broader historical and mythic context, with chapters on Atlantis and deluge myths and man's relationship to the sea and its terrible power. Lavishly illustrated with contemporary maps, prints and drawings this book should be on every *Magonia* readers bookshelf. *JR*



The great floods in Monmouthshire, 1607.

KEEL, John. *Disneyland of the Gods.* Amok Press, 1988. $8.95.

Again we have to report a sense of disappointment on picking up the latest offering from one of the great ufological gurus of our formative years. John Keel, whose *Operation Trojan Horse* formed, with *Passport To Magonia*, the twin pillars of the 'new ufology', here presents us with a warmed-over pan of scouse. Some good meaty bits, it's true, but by and large it's a bitty, picky rehash of a book. Keel is still trotting out the defunct and debunked tales that once set the blood racing when we read his Ohio Valley Notebook in the pages of dear, dead FSR twenty years ago. Nothing much in this book seems to be later than the early seventies: the world has moved on, leaving John Keel in a quaint time warp.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Magonia* Jacques Vallée defends himself against my somewhat similar strictures against his recent book *Dimensions*, and some of his points are well taken. It is quite a while since any of Keel's books have been in print. Maybe he has been involved in more recent research (we know he runs an active Fortean group in New York), so perhaps this is just a taster of better things to come. On the other hand I observe the attempted return of psychedelia, and I hear that flared trousers have been noted in some of the more outré venues around town. Perhaps this book is another harbinger of the long-threatened sixties revival. Oh dear. *John Rimmer*

GARDNER, Martin. *The New Age; notes of a fringe watcher.* Prometheus Books, 1988.

Largely comprising selections from the author's column in *Skeptical Enquirer*, Martin Gardner takes an uncompromisingly sceptical look a the whole gamut of paranormal and 'new age' preoccupations. Although some of the writing which has arisen from the group of people gathered around CSICOP has shown much of the closed-mindedness associated with the topics they criticise, Gardner has always been prepared to take a wider view. Here, for example, he attacks the non-scientific basis of much of psychoanalysis with a well-targeted attack on Freud and his working relationship with Fleiss, the originator of biorhythms.

It is always difficult for the sceptic to judge what line to take on such obvious nonsense as the 'face' on Mars or channeling (which must be the laziest paranormal scan yet, you don't even have to do any simple conjoring tricks or practice talking in funny voices). To go on at too much length risks accusations of pedantry and taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. To ignore it risks allegations that "scientists have no answers". Here Gardner takes the risk of pedantry, by easily avoids it by the liveliness and humour of his writing. His extended review of Shirley MacLaine's numerous autobiagraphical experiences of channeling are hilarious (Shirl, it appears, is now threatening Prometheus with a libel suit over another book, not by Gardner, which they recently published). Although I suspect that some of our

readers will disagree violently with some of Gardner's views it is still of value that they should read this book, if only to practice their own critical faculties on some of the author's generalisations. *John Rimmer*

RANKIN, Robert. *The Sprouts of Wrath.* Abacus, 1988. £3.99.

Our elusive corresponding editor Robert Rankin has at last produced the long-awaited fourth part of his thrilling Brentford Trilogy. It was well worth the wait. Robert Rankin's books have been described as 'Alastair Crowley meets Minder', as low-life Brentford, personified by those legendary patrons of the Flying Swan, Pooley and Omalley, meets the forces of darkness and evil personified by almost everything else, aided only by the infinite wisdom of the great and good Professor Slocombe and the powerful pints of Large served up by the noble Neville. The usual cast of Brentonian worthies is here augmented by such stout characters as Old Sandell, Brentford's almanac-maker, the monosyllabic P.C. John Harney, stalwart of the Met., and the legendary Able John Rimmer, historical owner of all Brentford. Obviously a book for every Magonian. *JR*

KLASS, Philip J. *UFO Abductions; a dangerous game.* Prometheus Books.

In the course of his book, Philip Klass quotes from Budd Hopkins *Intruders*: "These fellow human beings who have endured such profoundly unsettling, unfathomable truly alien experiences... are in every sanse of the word, victims."

"Indeed they are," Klass agrees, adding, "but needlessly so." To put us in the picture he takes us rapidly through the history of UFO reports, starting with the Hill case then via the Pascagoula and Walton cases. Klass has elsewhere demonstrated that there are serious grounds for not taking any of them at face value.

Most of his present book is therfore directed at the present outbreak, best known



Philip J. Klass: *"I am happy to endorse every word he writes"*

to the public through Hopkins' and Strieber's books. Strieber's story stands or falls by his personal credibility. Klass has little difficulty in showing from Strieber's own words how little credibility we can give a man who by his own admission has not only told lies, but told them publicly, on many occasions in the past. This exhibitionist compulsion both to lie and to admit lying would itself be sufficient to make us question both his story and the cited testimony of an expert psychiatrist: "I see no evidence of an anxiety state, mind disorder or personality disorder". Klass provides many other instances which make it evident to him - as it must do to any open-minded reader of *Communion* - that Strieber is a confused and unstable person, whose story it would be absurd to take at face value.

What about Hopkins? After approving my assessment of the abductees at the 1987 Washington Conference as being subconsciously motivated by psychological need, Klass reasonably reproaches me for not going on to consider "the possible 'psychological needs' of abductionists like Hopkins and Jacobs, who seem to revel in the discovery of new 'victims.'" He finds no difficulty in finding innumerable instances in Hopkins utterances and writings of tendentious conduct, whether it be in the use he makes of his witnesses' testimony or the way he interprets the results of his investigations, or the way his handles the witness him/herself - in particular the 'buddy' system which Hopkins believes gives the witness much-needed emotional support, but which Klass sees as more likely to cause the witness to embroider and hype up his/her story. His conclusions is that Hopkins, Jacobs and their kind are themselves spreading the epidemic they profess to be treating: "In my opinion, that fear and uncertainty is the completely unnecessary procuct of Hopkins own UFO fantasies which he unwittingly implants in his subjects' minds."

Klass is concerned too about the uncritical reception given to Hopkins' work by ufologists, notably by Jacobs, who from being a respected historian of the UFO phenomenon has become "caught up in the excitement of his new, active role as an 'abductionist.'" In contrast Klass chides American ufologists for dismissing contemptuously the work of Alvin Lawson, whose 'imaginary contactee' experiment he rightly sees as of the greatest importance for our understanding of the abduction phenomenon.

Klass's ability to distinguish the underlying currents of personal behaviour is further displayed in the affectionate respect he accords to Leo Sprinkle, who hosts annual contactee conferences at his University of Wyoming at Laramie. While he is far from sharing Sprinkles' views, he notes with amusement that:

"...the ufonauts who allegedly abduct [Sprinkle's] subjects are a much more benign breed that doesn't engage in the sort of terrible physical indignities Hopkins reports ... Is is possible that two basically different types of ufonauts are visiting earth - a warm, gentle type whose victims later seek out Sprinkle, and a more cruel breed whose victims seek counsel from Hopkins...? Or is it possible that the character of the alleged experience... reflects not only the personal UFO beliefs of the abductionist... but also some elements of his personality as well?"

Klass admits "this is pure speculation", but I have no doubt that he is right. I have attended one of Sprinkle's Rocky Mountain Conferences, and found him a delightful and sympathetic person, whose support is evidently of great value to his abductee delegates, whether or not they truly underwent the experiences they report. But then, if Sprinkle is a believer, he is also a professionally trained psychologist and counsellor.

Hopkins professes a sincere concern for his subjects. But it is Klass whose concern is more realistically founded. He quotes Hopkins as saying he has never found details in any abduction report to indicate the ufonauts are malevolent, and comments: "I can conceive of no more malevolent act than removing a flesh sample from a young child that would leave a life-long scar, impregnating a 13-year-old , or removing a woman's unborn child."

This is a concerned book, but it is at the same time a calmly reasoned study: every conclusion is founded, not on any *a priori* ideas that Klass himself may hold, but on what the abductees and abductionists have actually said, written and done. Klass has a right to be angry at what Hopkins, Jacobs and Co. are doing to their witnesses, but I found not a single instance of unfairness or exaggeration in his book, and I am happy both to endorse every word he writes and to recommend it as required reading, not only for everyone involved in trying to understand the UFO phenomenon, but for everyone who seeks to understand why people behave the way they do. *Hilary Evans. Reprinted with permission, from British & Irish Skeptic,* PO Box 20, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Rep. of Ireland.