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Magonia

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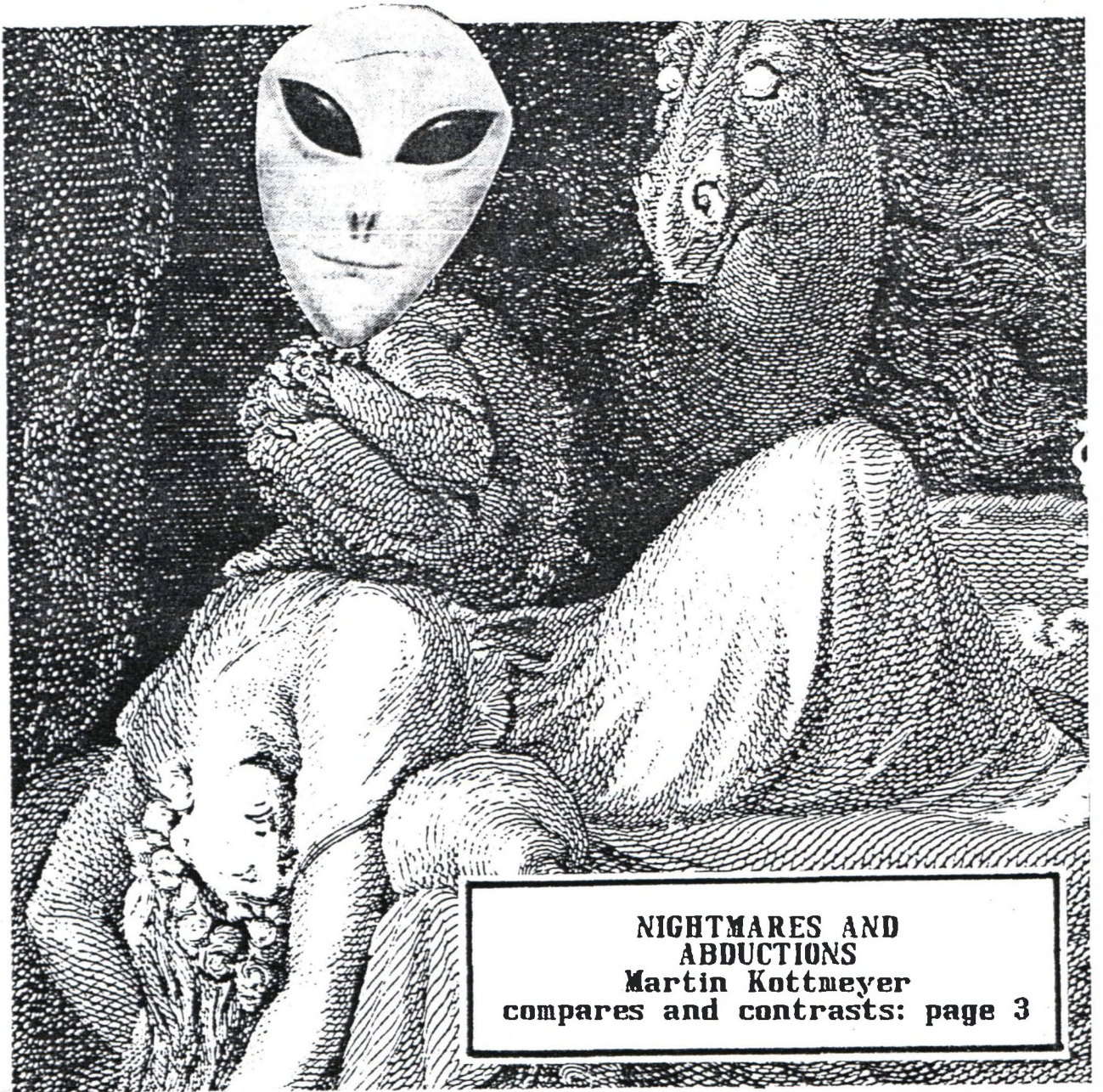
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MR ANGRY OF MORTLAKE WRITES...

Our British readers may be puzzled as to why this issue of *Magonia* follows hot on the heels of number 31, which they had to wait nearly six months for: "Typical inefficiency, if the editors spent more time producing the magazine, and less time in the sleazy drinking dens of Richmond upon Thames, we might get a better service..."

The truth however is more strange, indeed inexplicable. Although the magazines were posted on November 9th, for two and a half months all those destined for UK readers lay trapped in a mystery time-warp in Mortlake Post Office (or the South West District Office) where they remained unseen and undetected by crack investigators from the Post Office's amusingly named 'Customer Care' department.

Whilst readers waited, sleepless, tormented, for Mick Goss's revelations about Elvis Presley and Manfred Cassirer's *Sunday Sport*-style sex sensation, their *Magonias* spun endlessly in some Vile Vortex.

I sent off to Emjay (12?) to have them reprinted. By the end of January the GPO's baffled super-sleuths reported they could find no trace, and if I though I was going to get any compensation, you must be joking, chum.

Then suddenly, in the mysterious way these things happen, the space-time vortex imploded, the *Magonias* were released from their paranormal imprisonment, and began dropping through the letterboxes of our dear readers. By some strange anomaly they all bore a Jan. 24th postmark. Of course, this happened just after Emjay had completed the reprint.

So there you have it: strange but true. Did *Magonia* vanish into a Black Hole? Was the space-time continuum in Mortlake distorted by the occult influence of Dr Dee? Or did they fall into the clutches of that lovable cartoon character, Postman Plod the Miserable Sod?

I think we should be told. But I doubt we will.

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Incorporating MUFOB 81

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PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES

Peter Rogerson is unable to contribute his regular 'Northern Echoes' column for this issue, so in lieu of book reviews elsewhere in Magonia, we include here his comments on a recent publication.

This is a profoundly old-fashioned book* on which one must exercise effort to realise that it is written in 1988. This is not so much because of the author's vitalist yearnings, but because of his espousal of a naive form of unilinear progressivism, in which the universe 'evolves' from quarks, through atoms, molecules, unicellular organisms, invertebrates, vertebrates, mammals, primates, hominids, savages, barbarians, onward and upward to Mr Sheldrake himself, who as a member of the white, Anglo-Saxon intelligentsia, is the very pinnacle of earthly evolution. In contradistinction to this, neo-Darwinians argue that it does not make sense to argue that Sheldrake is 'more evolved' than a warthog or tiger: all three are fitted to their environment.

It is obvious that Sheldrake's habit theory - that laws of nature (and of society) are not fixed, but which are habits which have evolved over time - is part of the general Whiggish view. The Morphic Resonance (MR) view allows for change, but slow, gradual change. Furthermore all *really* new things are to be seen as improvements on the past. Evidence to the contrary is the result of atavism, a throwback to earlier barbaric times, as a result of the continued influence of the morphic fields of entities/species/social orders now extinct (how else can one explain Norman Tebbit)[Who he? Ed.].

In the environmental/heredity debate MR clearly lies closer to the hereditarian position, in that people (and other mammals) are not seen as prisoners of unchanging selfish genes, but are seen as influenced less by personal intellectual activity than by transpersonal unconscious fields, forces and zeitgeist. Thus if a new termite-catching technique is established in a chimp population, it can spread without each chimp personally learning it from one who has already mastered the technique.

MR presupposes a collectivist rather than an individualistic view of society, but this is not the rational collectivism of the consciously established co-operative commonwealth, but the collectivism of Burkean or Catholic corporate conservatism of Salazar or Dolfuss. Nations and tribes, Sheldrake assures us, have their own morphic fields, though he admits that this idea was given a bad press by a certain Austrian corporal.

Closely associated with the theory of MR is that of extra-cerebral memory. Quoting a group of now elderly dualists he tries to reject the idea that memory is dependent on the brain. Anyone who has seen, as I have, the results of Alzheimer's Disease, is going to need a lot of convincing on this score, and references to Ian Stevenson are not enough. Indeed if one accepts the theoretical possibilities of ESP and PK Sheldrake's theory becomes dramatically testable. Maybe chimps can learn termite catching by ESP and experimenters can influence crystal growing by PK. For agnostics on that score the possibilities of more 'normal' influences, such as increased self-confidence when it is known a task has been done, must be considered.

Sheldrake has become something of a 'green' guru in the last couple of years, his transcendentalist anti-materialism suggesting that he implicitly accepts the Cartesian desacralisation of matter. Despite his protestations to the contrary his unilinear evolutionism by which different species clearly do not have equal value suggests points of view far removed from green thought. His is the anti-intellectual, anti-physical, anti-individualist and anti-revolutionary vision of a nineteenth-century transcendentalist reactionary. *Presence of the Past* is not a blinding intellectual breakthrough, it is empirical evidence for morphic atavism. □□□

*SHELDRAKE, Rupert. *The Presence of the Past*. Collins, 1988. £15.00

ABDUCTION

THE BOUNDARY DEFICIT HYPOTHESIS

Martin Kottmeyer

As claims about the reality of alien abductions multiply, the assertion is increasingly heard that psychology offers little or no insight into how such experiences could occur if they are unreal. Abductees are normal people. Tests prove it. How, then, could normal people make such impossible claims as those found in abduction narratives and not be right? If this assertion is true, the theatre version of the UFO phenomenon is in jeopardy. To the extent that the UFO phenomenon is a genre of theatre and an expression of the human imagination, it must be amenable to psychological study. Clearly this is a paradox that needs to be addressed.

Drama is quintessentially involved with conflict, the exercise of power. Aliens and their magical technology represent an elementary extreme in the spectrum of power relationships seen in theatre. The vitality of the UFO mythos lies precisely in its ability to provoke fear and desire over the power symbolised in the role of the alien. Studies of UFO belief repeatedly implicate the frustration of the will to power.¹

The clearest evidence for this fact is Stephen P. Resta's study which found strength of UFO belief is well correlated with externality, a generalised attitude that one has little control over one's life.² The significant correlation between UFO belief and belief in witches, necromancy, and ghosts doubtless derives from this general sense of powerlessness.³ Witchcraft in some form is found in all societies and practised most avidly by those lacking, but desiring, power. A subtle sociological datum worth noting is Donald Warren's Gallup poll analysis which found elevated levels of UFO belief among individuals who failed to achieve the economic level of status that their education would lead society to expect.⁴

UFO reports themselves give ample testimony to the predominance of powerlessness as a shaping factor of UFO experiences. The dominant emotion in reports is fear. If UFOs represent a symbol of wholeness, as Jungians claim, this is assuredly a counterintuitive finding. We should see serenity and fulfilment. UFOs, in the

great majority of cases, behave like agents of chaos. Vehicles lose power. Witnesses are paralysed. Life is disrupted. Entropy reigns. Abduction is so natural an extension of the core of UFO belief, the mystery is not that it appeared, but why it took so long as it did to be accepted.

Even a person totally naive in psychological analysis should be able to satisfy himself that the overarching theme of abduction narratives is powerlessness. This is manifest not in the mere sense of capture and involuntary scrutiny, but in the extraordinary variety of dramatic intrusions imposed on the abductee.

Among the accounts in the literature one will find pain inflicted in many different parts of the body including the head, the neck, the chest, the stomach, the back, and the navel. Needles, absurdly big at times, are used to penetrate a variety of points including the nose, the arm, the navel, an eye socket with the eye removed, and wires have been inserted in one man's penis and anus. Organs have been removed and replaced. Sometimes the body is completely ripped apart and put back together. One abductee had her eye scraped with a knife. Some people have their limbs pulled sharply, their hair pulled, even their head pulled and squeezed by aliens. Abductees are subjected to rape, castration, impregnation, abortion, choking, drowning, freezing, bleeding profusely, temporary blinding, hand cramps, being stripped, having their brains scrambled, and being confronted with their personal phobia.

Abductees have also reported sensations of weakness, of hurtling or tumbling through space, of spinning, of being stuck, of being buried alive, and, once, of crashing to the ground with a saucer. Though there is no reason to be discerned in such a pattern, there is clearly a rhyme with the theme being unfolded.

It should be no surprise that intense expressions of powerlessness are not unique to ET settings. Fictive past life regressions are commonly quite dramatic.⁵ In some individuals daytime stream-of-consciousness fantasies can take on embarrassingly vivid facets



that provoke fear.⁶

Alvin Lawson precedes me in noting the striking correspondence between bad LSD trips and abduction experiences in terms not only of emotive engagement, but of bizarre somatic threats such as umbilical pain being a common narrative subplot. Far and away the most useful observation, however, is that nightmares provide the ideal model to map abduction experiences. Nightmares overwhelmingly involve powerlessness. They commonly reflect certain basic fears of childhood: fear of completely dissolving or being destroyed; fear of mutilation, castration, loss of body parts; fear of isolation and abandonment; fear of loss of sustenance and love; and an inability to control the body. They are intensely rendered dramas which utilise numerous motifs familiar among abduction stories: chase, capture, torture, imminent catastrophe, wild kinetic sensations, and eerie background scenes. Regarding the last, it is especially damning how fog frequently finds its way into abduction tales, this being a form of artistic license utilised in dozens of SF movies and programmes and possessing a lineage stretching back to Lovecraft and probably beyond.

The phenomenon of an introductory eerie silence just prior to encountering aliens, a commonplace noted by Raymond Fowler, similarly has a lineage that dates back at least to H. G. Wells and *The War of the Worlds*. As Colin Greenland might say, everyone subconsciously recognises such things as an Indication of Monsters.⁷ It follows that abductionologists' appreciation of the 'emotional authenticity' and validity of abductee writings should not lead us to leap to the conclusion that such accounts are materially authentic and valid. The unconscious can and does invest fictions with expressions of passion.

It seems logical at this point to ask if the psychology of nightmares can throw any light on what is happening in alien abduction experiences. While not all the puzzles of nightmares have been solved, psychology has recently made significant strides in understanding why some people develop them and others do

not. In building a profile of nightmare sufferers Ernest Hartmann developed a conceptual model termed boundary theory which expands on a set of propositions about boundaries in the mind formulated by a handful of earlier psychoanalytic theorists. It is from Hartmann's study *The Nightmare* that we will develop the blueprint of our argument.⁸

Nightmares provide the ideal model to map abduction experiences. Nightmares overwhelmingly involve powerlessness



Boundary theory begins with the axiom that as the mind matures, it categorises experiences. It walls off certain sets to be distinct from other sets. Boundaries become set up between what is self and what is non-self, between sleep and waking experiences, between fantasy and reality, passion and reason, ego and id, masculine and feminine, and a large host of other experiential categories. This drive to categorise is subject to natural variation. The determinants of the strength of that drive

appear to be biochemical and genetic and probably have no environmental component such as trauma. When the drive is weak the boundaries between categories are thinner, more permeable or more fluid. When the boundaries become abnormally thin one sees psychopathologies like schizophrenia. Hartmann discovered individuals who suffer from nightmares have thin boundaries. From this central mental characteristic one can derive a large constellation of traits that set these people apart from the general population.

From earliest childhood, people with thin boundaries are perceived as 'different'. They are regarded as more sensitive than their peers. Thin character armour causes them to be more fragile and easily hurt. They are easily empathic, but dive into relationships too deeply too quickly. Recipients of their affection will regard them as uncomfortably close and clinging and they are thus frequently rejected. Experience with their vulnerability teaches them to be wary of entering into relationships with others. Adolescence tends to be stormy and difficult. Adult relationships - whether sexual, marital or friendships - also tend to be unsettled and variable. A slight tendency to paranoia is common. One-third will have contemplated or attempted suicide.

Experimentation with drugs tends to yield bad trips and is quickly abandoned. They are unusually alert to lights, sounds and sensations. They tend to have fluid sexual identities. Bisexuals are over-represented in the nightmare sufferers' population and it is rare to find manly men or womanly women in it. Macho pigs apparently do not have nightmares. They are not rule followers. Either they reject society or society rejects them. They are rebels and outsiders. There is a striking tendency for these people to find their way into fields involving artistic self-expression; musicians, poets, writers, art teachers, etc. Some develop their empathic tendencies and become therapists. Ordinary blue or white collar jobs are rare.

Hartmann believes the predominance of artists results from the fact that thin boundaries

allow them to experience the world more directly and painfully than others. The ability to experience their inner life in a very direct fashion contributes to the authenticity of their creations. They become lost in daydreaming quite easily and are even experience daymares - a phenomenon people with thick boundaries won't even realise exists. This trait of imaginative absorption should also make nightmare sufferers good hypnotic subjects.⁹ Boundary deficits also contribute to fluid memories and a fluid time sense.

To be considered a candidate for the hypothesis that one is a victim of alien abduction a person must present certain symptoms. Among the factors which are looked for are conscious memories of an abduction, revealing nightmares, missing time, forgotten scars, or dramatic reactions to seemingly trivial stimuli like distant nocturnal lights. The last four factors act as screening devices to yield a population of boundary deficit individuals. This is blatant in the case of people whose candidacy is based on nightmares of aliens. It is subtler in the other symptoms.

People who have thin boundaries in their time sense virtually by definition will experience episodes of missing time. People with fluid memories could easily lose track of the event that led to the creation of a scar. People with weak ego-id boundaries and a sense of powerlessness probably would over-react to distant inexplicable lights as symbols of power. These candidates, in turn, are subject to further screening by their performance under hypnosis. The thicker the boundary, the less likely it is that a convincing narrative will emerge or be accepted as emotionally valid. We would predict the final population of abduction claimants would be biased in favour of a high proportion of boundary-deficit personalities.

The evidence that abductees have boundary-deficit personalities is, if not definitive, reasonably convincing. The points of correspondence between abductees and nightmare sufferers are several and consistent.

Ufology regards the Slater psychological study of nine abductees as an experimentum crucis for the view that abductees are victims of real extraterrestrial intrusions. It affirmed not only the normality of abductees, but offered a hint of traumatisation in the finding that abductees showed a tendency to display distrust and interpersonal caution. It is time to remind everyone, however, of what Slater's full results were reported to be. Slater found abductees had rich inner lives; a relatively weak sense of identity, particularly a weak sexual identity; vulnerability; and an alertness characteristic of both perceptual sophistication and interpersonal caution.¹⁰

All four of these traits are characteristic of boundary-deficit minds. Clearly the abduction-reality hypothesis is, in this instance, unparsimonious. It fails to explain the presence of rich inner lives, weak identities, and vulnerability. (I reject Slater's post-hoc attempt to account for the weak sexual identity via childhood trauma induced by involuntary surgical penetrations as undocumented, and just plain weird.) It should not be overlooked that Slater volunteered the opinion that her test subjects did not represent an ordinary cross-section of the population. She found some were 'downright eccentric or odd' and that the group as a whole was 'very distinctive, unusual, and interesting'.¹¹

This nicely parallels Hartmann's observation that boundary-deficit personalities are perceived as 'different' from 'normal' people. Slater's study does indeed seem to be an experimentum crucis, but the conclusion it points toward is perfectly opposite from what ufologists have been assuming.

The boundary-deficit hypothesis evidently can also be invoked to explain the unusual proportion of artist-type individuals that I discovered in testing Rimmer's hypothesis. Roughly one-third of abductees showed evidence of artistic self-expression in their backgrounds in my sample population, as you may recall. Hartmann's study would also lead us to expect an unusual number of psychotherapists among abduc-

tees. In a recent paper, Budd Hopkins reported that in a population of 180 probable abductees he found many mental health professionals: two psychiatrists, three PhD psychologists and an unstated number of psychotherapists with Master's degrees.¹²

It would obviously be child's play to pick and choose isolated bits of confirming or discordant biographical information from the abductee literature and argue about the fit of Hartmann's boundary-deficit profile to various individual cases. It would be a pleasant diversion, but would ultimately not prove much one way or the other given the scanty nature of background information in almost all abduction narratives. I exempt Whitley Strieber's autobiography from dismissal, however, for it is both detailed and highly revealing.

Strieber's experiences resound with emotions of powerlessness. He speaks eloquently of the despair, extreme dread, crazed terror and panic inspired by his experience. The incident with the faecal probe is recognisably a pseudo-homosexual rape fantasy of the form discussed in Ovesey's studies.¹³ As the emotions prove, the incident has nothing to do with eroticism but everything to do with the expression of powerlessness. Psychiatrists would predict that Strieber was repressing resentment and hostility from having to be subordinate in an undesired social relationship. The incident with the mind wand - 'You'll ruin a beautiful mind' - is more interesting since it reflects the childhood fear of the dissolution of self. This was very much on Strieber's mind at the time. We can see it in his story 'Pain' where his narrator dreams of friendly tormentors with a high-powered rifle who he asks to hug him. The core of the narrator's identity ebbs away and he suffers through the torture of the tearing down of his personality.¹⁴ Strieber's picture-drama of the world blowing up with horns of smoke streaking out from it similarly bespeaks the fear of dissolution, since world destructions commonly precede the onset of psychosis as the mind projects the internal catastrophe into the world at large.¹⁵

The evidence for thin boundaries in Strieber's personality is highly convincing. Strieber's curious assessment that he is '80% convinced' of the reality of his experiences immediately impresses one that his demarcation between reality and fantasy is rather fluid. Strieber's memory is disturbingly fluid as revealed in his willingness to accept another person's word that he wasn't present at the historic bell-tower sniper incident at the University of Texas - an event he elsewhere discusses in gruesome detail.¹⁶ The manner in which he strips away his memory of past anomalies and tosses them out as screen memory fictions covering alien encounters has an almost ghoul-like self-mutilation quality like making his identity self-destruct before our eyes.

Strieber is an outsider. This is less indicated by his questioning of Catholic faith than by his seeking spiritual values in witchcraft, mysticism and Gurdjieff. Strieber's wife volunteered the opinion that her husband has 'a very unique head' and is openly distressed over the vulnerability he manifests at one point. Strieber confessed he contemplated suicide before contacting Budd Hopkins about his fears. Paranoid mentation is clearly evident in his book and has at times led to bizarre speculations. In a radio interview with Tom Snyder, Strieber wondered aloud if a gagster who was selling alien abduction insurance wasn't a dishonest dupe of Cosmic Watergate because ridicule was a known M.O. of the UFO cover-up.¹⁷ Strieber's encounters with critics consistently show projective hostility and a thin character armour, probably best shown in his pre-emptive strike to Thomas Disch when he found he would be reviewing his book *Communion* for *The Nation*. Strieber's success as a writer of horror fiction lastly clinches the argument that he is a boundary-deficit personality.

It is interesting to note, parenthetically, that Strieber also manifests a constellation of traits that object-relations theory explains as resulting from traumas early in childhood when the child is first developing the character armour during the phase of

separation and individuation. Prominent among these traits are threats of inner fragmentation like those cited above; primitive emotional defences including paranoia and, most primitive of all, splitting; archaic narcissistic formations involving grandiosity; inability to integrate the hostile and loving aspects of parental introjects; and a tendency to project hostility.

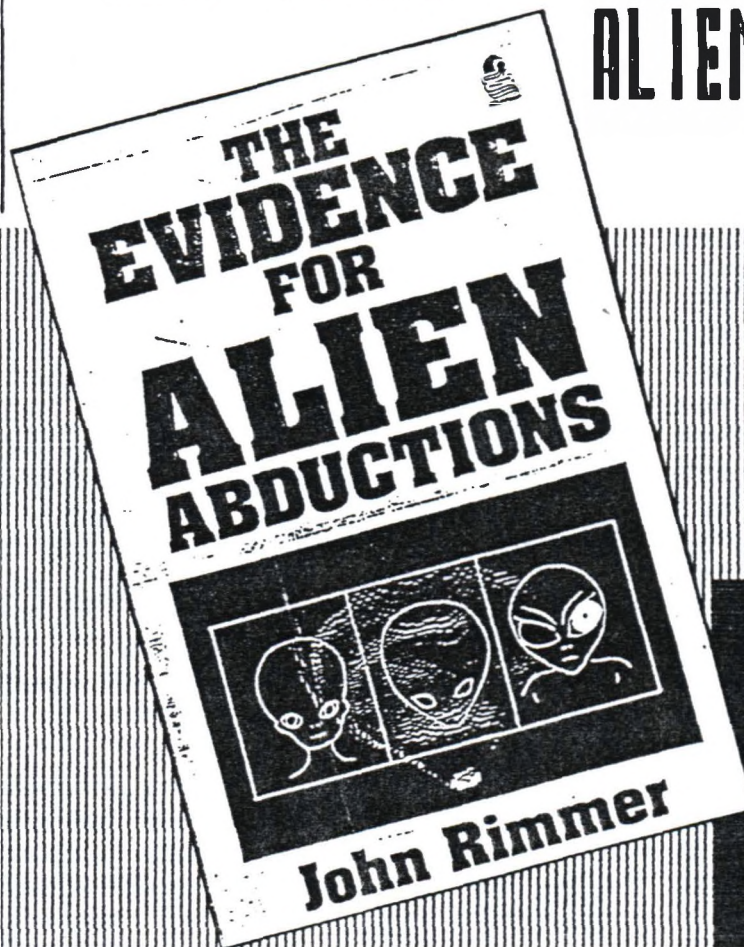
A couple of reviewers of *Communion* were quite confused as to how Strieber failed to be repelled by the prospect of communion with aliens who threatened his beautiful mind and caused such body terror as he described. The answer is found in the trait of splitting which allows the individual to hold contradictory emotional stances and not see the contradiction. Strieber never developed the higher forms of emotional defence found in

those with thicker boundaries in adulthood. If Strieber has indeed suffered separation trauma as a child, it is apparent that is why communion is such a central concern to him. He never resolved the problem of separating his self from his parental object relations. The upshot of all these observations is that Strieber's alien experiences form a unity with the issues of his unconscious. I am 0% convinced of the objective reality of his abduction.¹⁸

In addition to forming a coherent assembly of the known facts about the psychology of abductees, the boundary-deficit hypothesis is richly testable. Hartmann's profile offers numerous predictions about the inner world of abductees. Those listed above are just a fraction of the possibilities. If you want to know if missing time derives from a fluid time

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sense or a fluid memory, you can test people who report this for concomitant phenomena: frequent episodes of *déjà vu* or *jamais vu*, primal repression dated to two or three years of age as opposed to four or five, days organised according to flexible rather than rigid schedules, future plans lacking specific time frames, and a tendency to not answer questions in a temporally structured pattern. The core claim about a low categorisation drive can be tested by cognitive tests like those cited in a book by Theodore Sarbin.¹⁹

The boundary-deficit proposition has in it the implicit resolution of the paradox of how people without significant psychopathology can entertain the belief that they are victims of alien abduction. The abduction myth has opportunistic features wherein boundary-deficit traits act to justify id material crossing ego boundaries being considered real. Whether the crossing is prompted by leaky sleep/wake boundaries (as in *Communion's* hypnopompic nightmares) or by the opening of the boundary for role-taking behaviour, the narrative material is no more evidence of pathology than an LSD trip is proof that LSD is a toxin,²⁰ or a symphony arising from a composer's unconscious can be called a product of psychosis. Belief in the reality of the material need not evoke thin reality/fantasy boundaries, since a logic is present within the received myth which requires on a trusting, or rather distrusting, demeanour for its acceptance. If you have a forgotten scar and a ufologist unleashes a creative id to pull together a dramatic nightmare, is it illogical to wonder if the myth is right and the nightmare explains the scar? In the context of a belief in furtive extra-terrestrials, it is not.

As developmental psychologists well understand, uncomformative behaviour and absurd beliefs often owe more to pathological contexts than organic dysfunction. If there is any pathology to abduction belief it is within the science of ufology itself - a point I explore elsewhere.²¹ Normal people will necessarily not waste their time or the money needed to develop a thoroughgoing

scientific judgement on all the facts and systems of belief they are exposed to in life. Since it has been a relatively harmless and a glorious entertainment (in Jacques Barzun's sense of science as a glorious entertainment) the concept of UFOs survives to haunt the imaginations of millions and attract the attention of individuals who have been the victims of life's conflicts. From the alchemy of ideas and passions transformed by the human unconscious emerges the fertile and labyrinthine myth and mystery of the UFO drama.

NOTES

●● 1. For the best treatment of the will to power concept I recommend Kaufmann, Walter; *Discovering the Mind*, Vol. 2; McGraw-Hill, 1980. ●● 2. Resta, Stephen P.; 'The relationship of anomie and externality to the strength of belief in unidentified flying objects'; dissertation, Loyola College Graduate School, Baltimore, Maryland, 30 October 1975. Resta failed to find a significant correlation between anomie and UFO belief. This could be consistent with a paranoid orientation. Paranoia acts as a defence against depression and meaninglessness. ●● 3. Zusne, Leonard and Jones, Warren H.; *Anomalistic psychology*; Lawrence Erlbaum, 1982, pp. 184-185. ●● 4. Warren, Donald I.; 'Status inconsistency theory and flying saucer sightings'; *Science*; 170 (6 November 1970), p. 137. ●● 5. Watson, Ian; *All in the mind*; Doubleday, 1984, p. 137. ●● 6. Caughey, John L.; 'Fantasy worlds and self-maintenance in contemporary American life'; *Zygon*, 23, No. 2 (June 1988), p. 138, n. 3. ●● 7. Greenland, Colin; 'An indication of monsters'; in Slusser, George E. and Rabkin, Eric S.; *Aliens; The anthropology of science fiction*; Southern Illinois University, 1987, pp. 208-217. ●● 8. Hartmann, Ernest; *The nightmare; The psychology and biology of terrifying dreams*; Basic Books, 1984. ●● 9. Sarbin, Theodore R. and Coe, William C.; *Hypnosis; A social psychological analysis of influence communication*; Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1972. ●● 10. 'Abductees are "normal" people'; *Inter-*

national UFO Reporter, 9, No. 4 (July/August 1984), pp. 10-12. ●● 11. Bloecher, Ted, Clamar, Aphrodite and Hopkins, Budd; *Final report on the psychological testing of UFO abductees*; Fund for UFO Research, 1985. ●● 12. Hopkins, Budd; 'UFO abductions - the skeleton key'; *MUFON 1988 International UFO Symposium Proceedings*, p. 105. ●● 13. Karlen, Arno; *Sexuality and homosexuality; A new view*; W. W. Norton, 1971. ●● 14. Etchison, Dennis; *Cutting edge*; Doubleday, 1986, pp. 279-280. ●● 15. Eidelberg, Ludwig; *Encyclopedia of psychoanalysis*; Free Press, 1968, p. 351. ●● 16. Strieber, Whitley; 'On the road (with visitors)'; *IUR*, January/February 1987, p. 9. Winter, Douglas; *Faces of fear*; Berkeley Books, 1985, pp. 192-206. ●● 17. Tom Snyder interview with Whitley Strieber, WIS Radio, Chicago, 2 March 1988. ●● 18. Meissner, W. W.; 'Narcissistic personalities and borderline conditions; A differential diagnosis'; in Morrison, Andrew P. (ed.); *Essential papers on narcissism*; New York University Press, 1966, pp. 403-437. ●● Rinsley, Donald B.; *Borderline and self disorders; A developmental and object relations perspective*; Jason Aronson, 1982. ●● 19. Sarbin, Theodore and Mancuso, James C.; *Schizophrenia; Medical diagnosis or moral verdict?*; Pergamon, 1980, pp. 203-206. ●● 20. LSD acts specifically on the dissolution of mental boundaries. Stanislaw Grof's studies of LSD experiences reveal systematic correspondence to Hartmann's profile of boundary-deficit experience. Hartmann even reports that some of the nightmare sufferers volunteer the observation that they don't need LSD because their lives are always like a trip! Most criticism of Lawson's birth trauma study I have heard fails to display any recognition of his primary discovery, namely that Grof's *Realms of the human unconscious* provides the blueprint to the emotional subtext of UFO experiences. To me, the concern over foetal self-imagery being the origin of the humanoid image is a side issue and a distraction. Reading Grof for oneself after being immersed in a series of abduction reports gives one a much better appreciation of Lawson's excitement. It clicks. ●● 21. 'Ufology considered as an evolving system of paranoia'; *Artifex*; forthcoming. ■■■

In view of the problems we have experienced with the postal service, we would like to hear from any subscriber who thinks they should have received Magonia 31, but has not done so, so that we can send you one of the many extra copies we had reprinted. (Please include a 14p. stamp)

IMAGINARY REALITY

Patrick Harpur



"The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception"

After brooding long and hard on visions and encounters of all kinds, including UFO encounters, Hilary Evans is forced to conclude that "within our minds there exists a creative, intelligent, sympathetic and understanding capability, whose function is to fabricate non-real scenes and scenarios." He calls this capability "for the sake of convenience, the producer". We might expect this fundamental human faculty to have been previously observed. It has been - usually by poets, and in particular the Romantic poets (notably Bill Blake) who found it convenient to call it the imagination.

On no account must we confuse their imagination with what commonly goes by that name today. In a passage² familiar to all students of Eng. Lit., Coleridge dismisses the latter as mere 'fancy' which is "no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space". Authentic imagination on the other hand is divided into two kinds, the primary and the secondary.

"The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and is a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate..."

This isn't easy to understand; but since it's of vital importance in the case for reading UFOs as primary imaginative phenomena, it may be worth pursuing. Another poet, W H Auden is helpful. He adopts and adapts Coleridge's definition as part of his own artistic credo:³

"The concern of the Primary Imagination, its only concern, is with sacred beings and

sacred events. The sacred is that to which it is obliged to respond; the profane is that to which it cannot respond and therefore does not know... A sacred being cannot be anticipated; it must be encountered... All imaginations do not recognise the same sacred beings or events, but every imagination responds to those it recognises in the same way. The impression made... by a sacred being is of an overwhelming but indefinable importance - an unchangeable quality, an Identity, as Keats said: I-am-that-I-am is what every sacred being seems to say... The response of the imagination to such a presence or significance is a passion of awe".

A sacred being can be beautiful or ugly, benign or terrifying, good or evil, etc., but it must arouse awe. Some sacred beings are, of course, sacred only to a single imagination - a particular landscape, say, or a teddy bear; some, e.g. kings, are only sacred within a particular culture; others seem to be sacred to all imaginations at all times - the Moon, says Auden, Fire, Snakes, Darkness etc. 'Lights in the Sky' may well fall into the latter category., while UFOs *qua* spacecraft probably belong to specifically westernised cultures, as witches, say, belong to tribal societies. (Sacred beings can also combine in action to form sacred patterns of events - myths such as the death and rebirth of the hero seem to be universal; the alchemical Magnum Opus is near-universal occurring in different cultures at different

times. UFO myths may similarly occur only in cultures which are at a particular stage of development.)

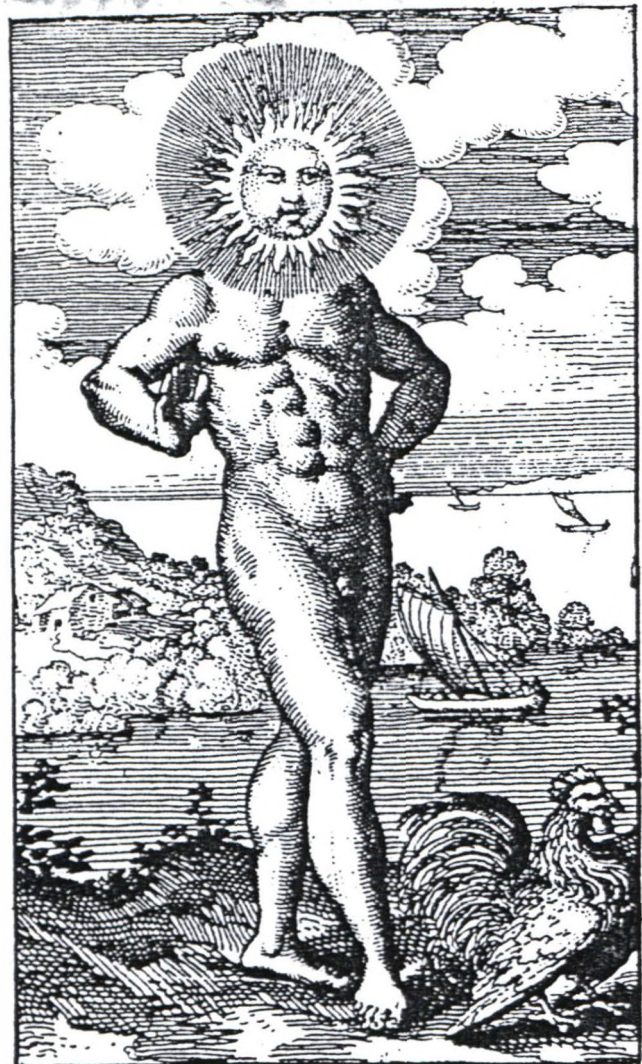
The secondary imagination is of less concern to us here. It is the faculty the poet brings to bear on the sacred beings of the primary. It's not, as Coleridge points out, creative, but recreative; it is active not passive; its categories are not sacred/profane but beautiful/ugly, i.e. it aesthetically evaluates the primary experience. Without its activity our passivity in the face of the primary imagination would be the mind's undoing: "sooner or later its sacred beings would possess it [i.e. the mind], it would come to think of itself as sacred, exclude the outer world as profane and so go mad". (This aptly describes the progressive disintegration of various cults and their leaders).

The struggle of the individual secondary imagination with its sacred beings makes art (in the case of sacred mythical events - drama, epic poetry, novels, etc.) The struggle of the collective secondary imagination to grasp the beings and events sacred to a particular culture produces the theoretical models of anthropology, sociology, ufology, etc. (It goes without saying that in the light of this view of imagination 'imaginary' is no longer opposed to 'real' - the sacred beings are more 'real' than ordinary consensus reality. We know what Evans means when he talks of the 'non-real scenes' that the producer 'fabricates', but he should qualify his definition nonetheless.)

C G Jung's therapeutic use of a technique he called 'Active Imagination' is also relevant here. He is nowhere as specific about it as he might be, nor is it particularly well-named since its purpose is to allow unconscious images (e.g. in the form of fantasies) to rise up into consciousness where they can be passively observed, as if in a waking dream, and subsequently assimilated and integrated into the personality by means of some quasi-artistic activity such as mandala painting. Jung only considers imagination in depth when he's discussing alchemy, which he saw as the historical counterpart of his theory of

the archetypes and the collective unconscious.

He wants to see the alchemical opus, bless him, as a 'purely psychic' activity in which the alchemists 'project' their 'unconscious contents' on to the substances and processes inside the Hermetic vessel. In the next breath he is endorsing the alchemical description of imagination as "the star in man, the celestial or supernatural body" ⁴ - an 'astounding definition', says Jung, which compels us to conceive of the opus not as a series of 'immaterial phantoms' but as something corporeal, a 'subtle body'. The opus then is no more 'projection', with all its distinctly pejorative and hence misleading associations; rather it is an archetypal drama of sex, marriage, death and resurrection acted out by the sacred beings of the primary imagination on the stage of the alchemical retort: serpents and dragons, lions and eagles, kings and queens, suns and moons - all are orchestrated by that underlying spirit, that strange paradoxical godling *Mercurius*.



Imagination, says Jung, is "perhaps the most important key to the understanding of the opus"; it can only be "a concentrated extract of life forces, both physical and psychic". It is the locus of

reconciliation for all the oppositions and contradictions which inform the UFO experience; and as such it is analogous to, if not identical with, the collective unconscious where (as Dennis Stilling's timely and enlightening essay ⁵ rightly points out) "at some point... the psychic meets the hylic."

Although the alchemists thought of the primary imagination in the same way as the poets, they preferred (as I've already suggested) to personify it as *Mercurius*, 'our mercury', the 'secret fire' on which the whole work depends. He is the trickster and shape-shifter who is both light and dark, good and evil, male and female, celestial and terrestrial etc. - like the collective unconscious, whom he also of course personifies, he contains all the contraries. He is the quintessence of the four elements; he is both an aerial spirit of the Above and a chthonic spirit of the Below, yet he is also both spiritual and material, volatile and fixed. In the course of the work he manifests himself in a series of images from dragon to Philosophers' Stone.

Thus we notice that there aren't a whole load of archetypes in the collective unconscious, as Jung's model of the psyche would lead us to believe; there is only, as it were, one archetype, the mercurial imagination itself - which, unknowable in itself, can be inferred from its appearance in a number of archetypal images. One of these images is the 'star' (often associated with the Albedo, or whiteness, in the opus when Sol and Luna, Above and Below are united). In his essay on flying saucers, Jung noticed the mercurial nature of UFOs and their similarity, if only because of their roundness and luminosity, to this 'star' which is an image of the soul, the potential Self in which all opposites are transcendently re-united as they are in the Stone.

Napoleon Buonaparte had a familiar spirit "which protected him, which guided him, as a daemon, and which at particular moments took on the shape of a shining sphere, which he called his star, or which visited him in the figure of a dwarf clothed in red that

warned him."⁶ Here we see that the imagination chooses an alternative, but equally fundamental, way of representing itself - as a dwarf or homunculus more appropriate to warning than protecting; and this too, I suppose, is part of the function of diminutive 'extraterrestrials'. They do not occupy UFOs; they are another manifestation of UFOs. Like anthropologists we must try to discern meaning in the relationships between the signs within the constellation of UFO imagery, rather than trying to isolate the signs and examine them out of context. For example we might say, by alchemical analogy, that aerial UFOs are to 'landed extraterrestrials' as Above is to Below. (I also suggest that since Mercurius is not only the spirit of both Above and Below, but also that which mediates between them in order to heal the rifts in existence, UFOs perform the same function by 'coming down to earth from the heavens')

At the risk of labouring this point I could cite another example which occurred to me when I came across an alchemical engraving from Michael Maier's *Atalanta fugiens*, called 'the rejected stone'. In this picture - of a road, a coastal inlet, a village, people walking, etc. - cubic 'stones' are seen on the road, on a hill, in the water and, most strikingly, in the sky. The idea is that the miraculous Prime Matter (which is also the *ultima materia*, the Philosophers' Stone) is all around us, in earth, air and water (it is itself fire) yet we don't see it or value it. It is Mercurius, who is the essence of each element and also their transcendent quintessence. It may be that, as spirit of air, he appears as a luminous disc and, as spirit of water, as a serpent or dragon; i.e. air is to water as UFOs are to lake/sea monsters. As spirit of earth, he might leave his signature in cornfields, particularly golden cornfields which have an affinity with another mercurial symbol, the sun⁷. Thus: Sun : Gold :: Above : Below :: sky : earth :: UFOs : cornfield circles. I wouldn't be surprised if Mercurius appeared as a 'mountain spirit' in the shape of a large humanoid with lots of hair and big feet.

Jung never entirely resolved

his inner conflict between 'alchemical' thinking and 'scientific' thinking. Like us he clung to a particular historical and cultural model of the world, viz: the post-Cartesian dualistic model, as if it were somehow absolute, as if somehow the binary classifications subject/object, mind/matter, were *truer* than Above/Below, volatile/fixed; and he went on clinging to it even when his own empirical material from the unconscious indicated that the 'imaginative' model is supraordinate to the scientific and is more true because more universal. He never consistently conceded that the distinction between 'inner' and 'outer', for instance, is only a spatial metaphor derived from Descartes' model and, as such, is equivalent to the spatial metaphor Above/Below derived from the pre-Cartesian model. The vertical axis, as it were, has simply become horizontal.

It's perfectly valid to change metaphors. The distinction we make between subject and

object is useful as long as (a) we do not regard it as final, and (b) we apply it correctly. For example, what I have been pleased to call, for the sake of convenience, the 'sacred beings of the primary imagination', have often been labelled 'subjective'. In fact they are always 'objective' - regardless of whether they are perceived inwardly (as dreams, say) or outwardly as visions and apparitions. Similarly we are free to talk of 'projections' providing we don't start talking nonsense about 'subjective projections' - they are by definition 'thrown forward', i.e. objective. Nor do we throw them forward - *it does* - the imagination. (The notion of projection is a red herring, as if projections were somehow unreal. I prefer to say that the imagination imagines, i.e. there is that within or without us, or both, that produces images!)

If we compare Valerie of Peckham's misidentification of a planet with a spacecraft, with (I choose at random)



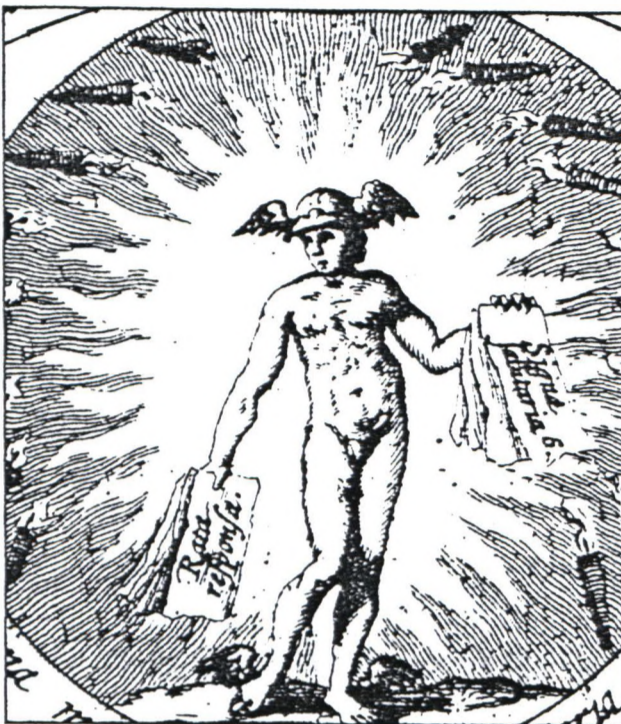
'The Rejected Stone', Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*

Siragusa's 'luminous disc, the colour of mercury'⁸ we shouldn't say that the first is more subjective and the second more objective, nor that the first is 'only' a projection while the second is (let's say) a vision; nor that the first is less true than the second. Both encountered sacred beings. Both responded with the requisite 'passion of awe'. Their experiences are the same in kind (the same, even, as St Paul's encounter with Christ on the Damascus road) but they differ in degree. At best the kind of distinction we can make is to say that Val's experience was more *personal* than Siragusa's, or that Siragusa's was more *universal* than Val's⁹ or that one was more *direct* than the other. In these senses we can say that Siragusa's experience (and St Paul's) was more *real* than Val's because (to use spatial metaphors) it was 'deeper' or 'higher'.

Alchemy, Jungian psychology and ufology have this in common: that it is largely futile to approach them or seek to 'explain' them with a set of 'scientific' presuppositions. In truth they are *themselves* an expression of the scientific method's limitations. The sacred beings appear in proportion as we neglect the imagination or imagine one-sidedly. Of the three, alchemy is the most sophisticated because its practitioners by and large grasped the contradictions inherent in the Great Work. They never emphasised (as Jung does) psyche or spirit at the expense of matter, but recognised that each informs the other: "Make the volatile fixed and the fixed volatile" was a favourite slogan.

They would never have asserted that UFOs were *either* psychic manifestations or nuts and bolts spacecraft; they would always go for a 'both-and', insisting that the two conceptions bore the same relationship to each other as volatile bears to fixed. Similarly the ET hypothesis is to the earth-lights hypothesis as Above is to Below. UFOs are both from the far reaches of space and from the earth's depths, both psychic and hylic, because they are shining examples of the imaginative power of Mercurius in whom all contradictions co-inhere. His realm is where UFOs come from. We can't think about this realm in terms of

We can predict his appearance as a sacred being - a tall angelic 'star' person as elusive as quicksilver - who warns us not to corrupt atoms under the age of consent



dualisms or of cause and effect, but in terms of relationships through analogy, affinity through meaning and correspondence ('as above, so below').

In other words we have to think like tribal people or poets or, preferably, alchemists in order to understand UFOs. Fortunately this is not too difficult: every time we speak of a thought coming 'out of the blue' from above, or of a feeling 'rising up' from below, we are in part speaking out of the pre-scientific perception of the world, and this is what UFOs have come to remind us of. They present us with the possibility of participating in that deeply satisfying, mysterious, imaginative *gnosis* which, far removed from the current fad for impoverished cognition, we have somehow mislaid along with our sense of awe.

Broadly speaking, alchemy was a work of the Below. It concentrated on matter (or the spirit imprisoned in matter) in order to compensate for the overvaluation of the Above, i.e. the stress laid in the Christian tradition on soul and spirit at the expense of body and matter (Nature). In our century the reverse is true: the natural sciences - to which alchemy in part gave rise - undervalue the Above, spirit, the spiritual side of Nature. We are reduced to dispirited materialism. Thus we can expect a compen-

satory return to the things of the Above, an inversion of the alchemical myth, in which Mercurius appears as an aerial spirit, more volatile than fixed, who deplores our ignorance of his presence in Nature and protests the violence done to him.¹⁰

We can predict his appearance as a sacred being - a tall angelic 'star' person, say, as elusive as quicksilver - who warns us not to corrupt atoms under the age of consent and not to abuse a natural world which is to him as body is to soul. When we go on producing atom bombs, we compel him (or her, of course) to be more insistent. We shouldn't be surprised if we are forcibly abducted in to the Above and treated as we treat him - as passive, soulless objects of scientific experimentation. Mercurius isn't being vengeful; we're not being punished. He's simply warning us that he will redress any imbalance in himself, against our will if necessary; and, because he's not separate from us but is both the ground of our being (Below) and our transcendent goal (Above) he is also protecting us from the lack of equilibrium in ourselves. □■□

NOTES

- 1. EVANS, Hilary, *Visions, Apparitions, Alien Visitors*, Thorsons, Wellingborough, 1984. ● 2. In the thirteenth chapter of *Biographia Literaria* (London, 1817) ● 3. See the essay 'Making, Knowing and Judging' in *The Dyer's Hand*, (London, 1963) ● 4. RULAND, Martin, *Lexicon of Alchemy*, (London, 1622). The quotations from Jung can be found in *Psychology and Alchemy*, p.265f. ● 5. In *Magonia*, no. 28, p.6. ● 6. Quoted in JÄFFE, Aniela, *Apparitions*, (University of Dallas, 1978.) p.108. ● 7. The symbol for both sun and gold is ☉, a perfect example of which can be found in the photo of a cornfield reproduced in *Phenomena* (London, 1988) ● 8. Quoted in EVANS, Hilary, *Gods, Spirits, Cosmic Guardians*, (Wellingborough, 1987) p.124. ● 9. i.e. the two experiences can be compared in a system of analogy, viz: Val of Peckham's spacecraft ; Siragusa's disc :: personal ; impersonal :: individual ; collective :: indirect ; direct. ● 10. The Virgin Mary is pluckily competing with UFOs in our time. As the Spirit of Nature - 'Dame Kind' or Mother Nature - she frequently comes down from Above to warn us (with a banality equal to that of any star person) against abusing nature and, probably, to refute the dogma of the Assumption by which, in 1950, she was consigned to the Above, out of harm's way. ■■■

IT WAS characteristic of *Magonia* to open its twentieth anniversary conference on Walpurgis Day, the first of May. Not *Wapurgisnacht*, be it noted, that terrible eve of May when witches are abroad, but in the clear light of day. And it was daylight that prevailed. We were conducted on a tour of reason by such torchbearers for sanity and commonsense as Roger Sandell, Peter Rogerson, Michael Goss and Hilary Evans. hardly a stone was left unturned in the graveyard of our superstitions. I departed on the Monday swept clear of cobwebs, purged of terror, as Aristotle might have put it. It had been a *purgisfest* against unreason. And yet I left uneasy...

I was sufficiently uneasy, in fact, to look up "superstition" in several dictionaries and to consider whether I now believed in anything at all except the brute facts of an utterly deterministic world in which knuckles get barked, bills must be paid, natural selection pursues its dreadful course and the *Sun* always rises. I even went to the lengths of re-reading David Hume on miracles.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines superstition as "credulity regarding the supernatural, irrational fear of the unknown or mysterious, misdirected reverence; a religion or practice or particular opinion based on such tendencies". David Hume, I reminded myself, defined a miracle as "a violation of the laws of nature", adding that "we may establish it as a maxim that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle..."

My unease mounted. I was not reassured. It seemed to me that the Oxford lexicographers had begged all the important questions. What is "the supernatural"? When is a fear "irrational"? What do we mean by "misdirected"? Who are the arbiters in these matters. CSICOP? The Society for Psychical Research? The Central Electricity Generating Board? Mrs Thatcher? Commonsense? The BBC? But I recalled that a prominent member of CSICOP is on record as saying that he would disbelieve in psychokinesis even if demonstrated

REASON VS SUPERSTITION

superstition, n. Credulity regarding the supernatural, irrational fear of the unknown or mysterious, misdirected reverence; a religion or practice or particular opinion based on such tendencies. So *~IOUS* (-shus) a., *~IOUSLY*²

RALPH NOYES

before his eyes and would seek to withdraw the research grant of any scientist who showed him. As for miracles, I recall that David Hume, writing in 1748, would have been obliged on his own principles to reject the testimony of millions for the frequent apparition of Terry Wogan in dimly lit living-rooms at a time of day when common folk grow prone to superstition.

I also recalled that several members of the *Magonia* conference audience, myself included, took leave to doubt that we were always wrong to fear the unknown or mysterious. It seemed to some of us quite rational to be superstitious, in the dictionary sense, of nuclear power stations, overhead power lines, new pesticides, the irradiation of food, genetic engineering, bank statements prepared by main-frame computers and almost anything said on behalf of Her Majesty's Government by Mr Bernard Ingham.

It seemed to some of us that the rapid spread of alarming folk-tales in all these matters would not be only a pleasure for the folk but a rational duty on behalf of the sensible man. One of us went so far as to suggest that paranoia should be the normal stance of the concerned citizen, but I think we agreed lines must be

drawn *somewhere* and that states of psychosis should be avoided wherever possible. (I have, indeed, since heard through the friend of a friend that paranoia can bring you out in boils; and he has, for this reason, given up reading *Quest*.)

So lines must be drawn somewhere... But the dictionary does not help us... Nor can we look to David Hume or CSICOP for the guidance we clearly need... I found myself forced back to first principles, obliged to grope my way towards home-spun conclusions. I now offer the readers of *Magonia* the outcome of my researches - nay, I insist that they should have them, subject only to such deletions in the remainder of this text as the Editor may care to make in the interests of good taste (never 'eard of it, Ed.), government objections to the revelations of a former official or perhaps even brevity.

Let us leave out of the definition of superstition anything to do with fear: fears may be rational until proved otherwise. Let us abandon once and for all the absurd term 'supernatural': all that occurs in nature, everything that happens is in this sense 'natural', the only issue for sensible men is the evidence of it having happened. Let us

'Europe' is a fashionable concept, and everyone is thinking of the fateful year 1992, when the European Community will come to real life. Where do ufologists stand: will a Ufological Europe soon exist? If you look at what is published in UFO journals around the continent, you might easily answer 'No!': differences and specificities are quite consistent.

The 'language barrier' is the main reason: out of 18 West-European countries as many as 14 different languages are spoken, and often ufologists are not able to understand other than their own language. Also historical differences may be easily found: some national ufologies have had a leading role, often because their languages are widely used internationally (France and Britain, for instance) and more intense exchanges have enabled them to keep a world-wide view of the UFO problem and research. Others remained more closed on themselves, both in input and output, and their contribution has been small (or at least little known outside their own territory).

Specific national areas of interest may be found for given periods of time; for example sky-watching was popular in the UK in the 1960s, in France and Italy in the '70s, in Scandinavia in the '80s. The UMMO issue rarely affects non-Spanish ufologies; humanistic ufology was peculiar to small British groups in the early '70s, while a heavily revisionist wave hit France in the late '70s. The earthlights debate has barely passed British boundaries.

Even specific IFO/UFO types may be found: illuminated toy balloons are said to cause as many as 31% of German sightings in the last twelve years (and very few UFO landings are reported from that country), while an epidemic of 'laser beams' has been produced all over Italy in the last few years. French contactees look very different from Italian ones, and if you only consider the UFO abductions around Europe you will find very different situations as of both quantity and quality of reports.

Our purpose is to show that European national ufologies do

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN UFOLOGY

Edoardo Russo
&
Gian Grassimo



already have something in common, and order to understand it we will single it out by contrasting it with US ufology, using our transatlantic colleagues as a background.

The UFO phenomenon was born in America, in 1947, and only later was 'imported' to Europe, where the first real sighting wave was 1950. And ufology itself was indisputably born in the USA; a history of ufology cannot but include classic names such as Arnold, Ruppelt, Keyhoe, etc. The road towards a scientific ufology has always been shown by America: Vallée and Hynek with their terminology and classification systems as well as computer analysis; but also the road away from the ETH was indicated by US authors like Keel and Vallée. Think of anything in '50s and '60s ufology and the USA was

the leader; Europe's contribution was little more than Aimé Michel and FSR.

As the UFO phenomenon evolved, the USA was nearly always in the avant-garde: the Daylight Discs arrived there in 1947, the contactees of the early '50s, the 'soft' and psychical CE's of the late '60s, the abduction epidemics of the mid '70s. The 1958-1964 period is often called the 'dark Age' because of the lull in US sightings, even though great waves happened in Europe and South America then. In a word, the USA was the bench mark for ufologists all round the world. If something had to happen, it was there. We could easily speak of a 'mythical rôle' of classic USA ufology, up to at least the mid '70s.

At that point something began to change. It may have been on the 'scientific ufology' side (since 1977 it was France who led the way thanks to the civilian scientific study of UFOs by GEPAN); but we believe it may be better traced in the different consequences of 'paraphysical' ufology. While Keel and Vallée seemed unheard voices in America, they obtained greater success among European UFO intellectuals, especially in Britain and France. Only small groups at first, but they grew and influenced the whole national scene.

For example the English *MUFOP*, (now *Magonia*) team did not remain a voice calling in the wilderness: the 'humanistic' turn they gave to what was then called 'new ufology' was later amplified by authors like Jenny Randles, and in turn gradually influenced a whole generation of British ufologists, to the point that it is now rare to find believers in alien spaceships anywhere amongst the best known and active investigators in the UK.

As another example, Vallée's influence (especially *The Invisible College*) pushed French ufology in the mid '70s toward parapsychological overtones and this in turn had a major influence on the sudden 'change of mind' of Monnerie and the other *nouvelles ufologues* which in the late '70s turned to skepticism.

'Revisionism' was a tendency in or around 1980, and you may

find examples in the USA: Allan Hendry, Richard Haines and Alvin Lawson, for example, or even the *MUFON UFO Journal* publishing skeptical articles by CSICOP members like James Oberg. But it was a different 'revisionism', less 'ideological' and more 'pragmatic' (think of *Monnerie v Hendry* on the IFO issue), and we will see that the distinction is important.

Some differences between the two sides of the Atlantic were visible as early as 1980, and not just in ufology. You will have read that the 'American Empire' as a cultural concept is in crisis. Not being sociologists we don't know for sure if that is true, but somehow the American model is no longer so influential, as you may see in different areas (an interesting example may be the European youth sub-culture since, say, 1977, when there was quite a break after several decades of strong dependence on American models).

What about the American model of ufology? As we said, up to a certain point Europe and the USA followed the same path. Now it seems it is no longer so. In particular, since 1987 it looks like the circle of history has closed upon itself, and ufology has gone back to the beginning, with a difference: Europe left at a tangent, while America is beginning again the merry-go-round.

Strieber's *Communion*, Hopkins' alien abductors, Kinder's book about Meier, the cosmic cover-up of MJ-12, the Gulf Breeze photo repeater case: here are again those noisy contactees (now abductees); a new kind of George Adamski nurturing endless controversy about his wonderful yet unbelievable 'scout-ship' pictures, ufologists 'government cover-up' and all that mess.

As seen from Europe, American ufologists have entered a time machine. Moreover, they are debating central issues which have no parallels in Europe: in Europe you will find no saucer crashes, few abductions (except perhaps in the UK), smaller Government cover-ups (can you imagine the Italian government successfully trying to conceal anything).

In one sense it looks like we have gone full circle. Well, it's not exactly repeating the

past, it's on a 'different level'. It's no longer a question of Air Force debunking UFO reality, but of the President himself establishing MJ-12, who definitely knew there were aliens and even had their corpses; it's no longer simply examining Adamski's photographs through the magnifying glass, now we have sophisticated photo-analysis techniques confirming Meier or the Gulf Breeze pictures; contactees' evidence is no longer an alien pancake, but body scars and ghost pregnancies.

Times have changed: the 'first generation' ETH was good for accounting for Daylight Discs in the 1950s, but now that there are no more UFO reports you don't need a trigger sighting, not even a time lapse: you need nothing more than a vague fear for suspecting a suppressed alien abduction memory.

However, European ufologists seem to follow different lines of research, as you may see in most of the Old Continent's UFO journals. In Europe the big difference between the '50s and the '80s is that then ufologists 'knew' the truth of what the saucers were, while we presently think we don't know any longer. Early ufologists were not so much researchers as public educators trying to persuade people of the alien reality. How many investigation reports dating back from the '50s can be found in your files? Most 'classic' reports are to be found only in books and UFO-zines, but these hardly ever include those data which are presently required from the average investigator. (And yet, if you have to judge from some recent pieces of investigative work, some American colleagues have forgotten all what Hendry and Haines and Fowler did teach and preach of field investigation methodology.)

A major feature of new European ufology is that we no longer consider IFOs as 'false UFOs'. IFOs have become a conceptual reality and are acknowledged as part of the problem, whereas our overseas colleagues still regard them as little more than products of the dustbin: to identify and eliminate. The thought here is that their proportion of 90% points to their importance, and they're as interesting and instructive too.

So it seems as if we have two sorts of ufology; an American one concentrating almost exclusively on abduction reports, UFO crashes and government cover-ups; and a European one, more concerned with IFOs and human sciences.

How could it happen? We cannot blame the language barrier! It is true most American ufologists cannot read other languages but they can always read the British authors. And anyway we can read *them* and could still follow them, but we didn't, and took our own road.

Basic attitudes of American and European ufologists towards each other do not differ too much from those of the average man. Americans tend to think Europeans are much too complicated in their abstract reasoning, in 'behind-ology' and with their noses to the sky instead of being pragmatical in their approach to reality. In their turn, Europeans tend to think of Americans as gullible, naive, superficial people, unable to see further than the end of their nose and to detach themselves from the face value of things. Of course, such stereotyped images are rough and inadequate, but they nonetheless contain a grain of truth.

The practical (pragmatical) culture of Americans as opposed to the more theoretical European one is reflected by the difference between some 'revisionist' authors like Richard Haines and Allan Hendry there, and Jenny Randles and the French new-wave here. And often we can well understand some American colleague's impatience for what does look like groundless cerebral elucubrations.

That problem is well illustrated by some recent Budd Hopkins' reasonings, on the line: "We don't need abduction theoreticians, but abduction investigators: come and do the hard work instead of philosophizing from your comfortable armchairs." It's true: it would be good for some UFO philosophers to get involved in field investigations and 'touch' the phenomenon. On the other hand, it would actually be naive to go interviewing witnesses without a careful background training, unless you just want to get easy confirmation for your own beliefs.

The different part played by the mass-media in the USA and in Europe may also be significant. Media attitude towards people, and peoples' attitudes towards media may be very different, if you look at newspapers and TV. As an example we are told that Americans are fond of finding their names in local newspapers; in Italy we are afraid of that and don't want their names to be published. Media treatment was probably the cause of the great success of Whitley Strieber's *Communion* in America, while at the same time it received a very cold reception in Europe (In Italy, but also in Britain!).

We also think it significant that America claims to be in a lull of sightings since 1973 or so. That would explain why you have to resort to:

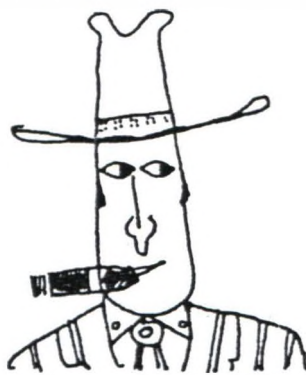
- alleged crashes which took place 40 years ago...
- 'invisible (indeed!) epidemics' of abduction cases without any conscious UFO sighting...
- bedroom visitors once kept outside any UFO report catalogue or file (do you remember Bloecher-Webb's CE-III class E: "no UFO seen in correlation with entity"?)...
- tons of reports (and photographs) from a single 'repeater' witness.

Abductions seem to mark the final separation, in that they have become American ufology. They undoubtedly constitute the highest strangeness reports, but do they deserve such total attention? Are we sure that a solution to the UFO enigma may come only from the study of such alleged alien kidnappings? What are we to do with such intrinsically un-studiable things as Hopkins' intruders: there is no proof or direct evidence, the intruders keep a constant control of the situation, it is substantially a transcendent reality. At this point we can only either wait for contact; arm ourselves and watch the skies; or conclude that "we're property" or already colonised and retire from ufology à la Aimé Michel.

Will we arrive at last having no contact at all across the Atlantic? In at least two fields it may well be. At the social level, a different public has got different interests (remember Strieber) and different ways of seeing the

phenomenon. Or the ufologists themselves - doesn't Hopkins, for instance, look for a 'different' UFO experience: hypothesis-created instead of investigated. Perhaps we could have such too, if we tried, but would it still be ufology?)

On the other side, our American friends might well ask us what we are talking about and conclude that we are no longer ufologists; and they may be right, since we no longer study what most of them mean by 'UFO'. (But can they correctly say they study UFOs, when they are actually on the trail of alien spacecraft which they modestly hide behind the more scientific sounding 'UFO' label?)



“ Basic attitudes of American and European ufologists towards each other do not differ too much from those of the average man. ”

In a certain sense there are also similarities between American and European avant-garde ufologists: UFO sightings are just the tip of the iceberg for both American abduction researchers, and for the European socio-psychological ufologists. But those are different icebergs: the first is a massive genetic experiment by alien intruders, the second is just one facet of a multifaceted modern folklore phenomenon.

If two different models of ufology are arising, is this a problem? We did, after all, point out that different countries have produced their own concepts of ufology. We want to emphasise a danger. Not just that Europeans and Americans are going in different directions, but that American ufology seems to be going in a dangerous way.

As a first result it has rehabilitated contactees, in a new form, so that they are now accepted and promoted by ufologists who even believe they act in a scientific manner. How can you oppose Philip Klass when he notes that Budd Hopkins' concept of 'skepticism'

is so broad that he feels he cannot refute anything?

We are told by linguists that American and English as languages are moving slowly apart, and that in the next 100 years they will not be able to understand each other. It looks as if such a process has already gone a good distance, since we seem not to talk about the same things.

What we fear is that we shall arrive at a complete misunderstanding, at having incommeasurable UFO realities. And we are near to that.

Indeed, while we express our astonishment at the recent American developments, our

transatlantic friends don't seem able to cope with our criticism and try to exorcise us as "debunkers of a new kind". But we are not "negative believers" of the CSICOP kind, and Michel Monnerie was writing ten years ago; a very different approach has developed since.

It seems difficult to explain to Americans that European research has moved to a point where it's no longer a battle between the goodies (us believers) and the bad guys (them debunkers): more and more often you will find ufologists holding very different ideological opinions working together without trying to bite each other. Indeed, it is only tolerance for different opinions, and none of us should feel entitled to possess The Truth. We're all searching for answers, and we've not got them yet. And here lies the hopeful solution: a greater tolerance for each others' opinions. Are we prepared to understand that ufology itself may be influenced by sociological differences, and so it is legitimate that each one has their own kind of ufology? □□