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Flying Saucers From Hell...



BILL ELLIS EXAMINES ALIEN AND SATANIC CULT ABDUCTION STORIES:
HE FINDS REMARKABLE SIMILARITIES AND IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES

Magonia

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THIRTY years after first being introduced to Gouldian and Fortean topics by the BBC TV programme *Court of Mystery*, my continued involvement in the field testifies to its hold. Over the years young true-believer has been transformed into middle-aged sceptic, yet I would still hesitate to dismiss everything.

I am dissatisfied with the preconceptions and unexamined belief systems which circulate. Supporters of the ETH who never begin to examine what the mean by 'life' and 'intelligence'; survivalists who make no attempt to explain in non-theological terms just what it is that is supposed to survive; OBE researchers who never explain just what it is that is supposed to be floating around, or how it acquires information about its surroundings; the mountains of preconceptions which infest studies of 'haunted houses'.

On the other hand much of the sceptical literature is equally uninspiring: sweeping condemnations of 'ignorant beliefs', and too few sceptical writers with any real grasp of the subjects they are condemning. The blame is not entirely theirs: the literature is vast, in the case of ufology the raw material is virtually irretrievable, in the case of much psychical research it is mind-numbingly tedious.

The problem is that paranormalists and debunkers are pursuing the same false trail: the hunt for the pure white crow which will prove that not all crows are black. Debunkers meet a flock of black crows, smile knowingly and proclaim the non-existence of the bird. Believers half remember a fleeting glance, and press on for one more mile, one more nest, one more experiment will reveal the beast for all to see. In all the frenetic white crow hunting they forget that we don't know all there is to know about black crows yet, still less about the occasional dirty-grey one!

These interesting black and grey crows are items of memories and narratives of anomalous experience: odd things that give us a tingle in the spine. the stories of hauntings that I have heard - the actual phenomena that you would drag Manfred Cassirer or



PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES

Ralph Noyes from the Smoke for - are hardly impressive: things appear and vanish, a faint feeling of being pushed, an odd sense of presence. No white crows here, for it is not the individual incidents which haunt the victims, but an inexpressible sense of 'wrongness'.

The sense of 'thrill' can be seen as the basic motif of all magonian narrative. What unites the lake monster, the earthlight, the mystery cat, is the sense of the transcendence of the daily round. That doesn't have to imply that some special force is involved. What often happens is that otherwise ordinary events acquire a special meaning and significance: maybe black crows are a little bit white on the inside.

Some people and places have more than their share of drama, calls them psychics or repeaters, haunts or flap areas, as though they are a little bit of soap-opera islanded amid bland reality (of course by no means all of these 'dramas' are of the type psychical researchers study).

There is always going to be ambiguity here. the absence of hard evidence of anomaly - often a good deal of evidence of absence - coupled with a certain sense of presence of mystery. There will be continual misunderstandings between researchers, believers and sceptics alike, who are hunting for anomalies and narrators who are seeking to communicate an encounter with mystery.

EYE IN THE SKY

MARTIN KOTTMAYER

DO PEOPLE want to believe aliens are spying on us? Surely it's a trick question. Nobody would want to believe anything like that. The reconnaissance theory was an exasperated effort to make sense of a phenomenon that refused to be made sense of in any other terms. Want had nothing to do with it. What a galling sentiment!

Yes, it is embarrassingly cynical and debunkerish to put forth such a question. I probably wouldn't even have asked it if ufologists were the sole defenders of this belief. The problem is they aren't alone. The aliens believe it themselves.

The closest thing to a contactee in the earliest days of the flying saucer era was a medium named Mark Probert who was in the service of the Borderland Sciences Research Foundation. The group learned through persons on the "other side of life" having access to the etheric worlds that the saucers were appearing in order to demonstrate the possibility that there are ways to travel faster and eliminate friction. The sensation was all meant to compel our attention and wake us up. There is actually something to be said in favour of that view. It was much easier to believe that flying objects passing by Mount Rainier were meant to be seen than to be secret hardware being tested by the government as Arnold believed. (67)

In 1948 the medium got the word that we were being observed so a final record of our

civilisation can be made for future history. This is reiterated in a 1950 communication which says notes are being taken on our advancement before our fall. With 1952 there is an apparent intrusion of Keyhoe's ideas into messages received by the BSRF group. There is talk of reconnaissance craft and small remote-control craft used to make visual observations without drawing attention to themselves. Note the inversion -- they no longer want to wake us up. (68)

Employing a glass tumbler on a ouija board, George Hunt Williamson eliminated one of the middlemen in extraterrestrial communications. On 2 August 1952 he made direct contact with a being from Mars named Nah-9. He revealed that our world had been observed for 75,000 years and was under a survey. Williamson and his circle eventually contacted dozens of aliens, among them the first known paranoid extraterrestrial. Affa of Uranus expressed fear of the work going on at Lowell University: "The 'big eyes' were looking at us",

67. LAYNE, Meade, *The Coming of the Guardians*, Borderland Sciences Research Foundation, 1972, pp. 12-13

68. *Ibid.*, p. 41

69. WILLIAMSON, George Hunt, *The Saucers Speak*, Neville Spearman, 1963, pp. 46-47, 58

70. LESLIE, Desmond and ADAMSKI, George, *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, British Book Centre, 1953, pp. 200-201

71. KEYHOE, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170

72. ADAMSKI,
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73. MENGER,
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74. MITCHELL,
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75. ANGELUCCI,
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76. VALERIAN,
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77. "RAEL",
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pp. 24-25

78. SMITH,
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pp. 101-102

79. LORENZEN,
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pp. 20-23, 58-61

80. SMITH,
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Report*, 7, #1
(January 1979),
pp. 32-35, 58-62

81. STEVENS,
Wendelle C., *UFO
Contact from
Reticulum
Update*,
Wendelle C
Stevens, 1989, p.
33

**82. HOPKINS, op
cit.**, pp. 203-206

he complained. (69) An acquaintance of Williamson would, three months later, do him one better and meet a human being from another world face to face. The name of that acquaintance was George Adamski. In the initial encounter he communicated with the alien by signs and gestures and telepathy. Among the things he learned was that the little discs which were often reported served as eyes for the larger motherships. If the discs were in trouble a crosscurrent would detonate them in order to prevent capture. (70) This innovation could have been gleaned from Keyhoe's writings. Though Keyhoe personally rejected the rumours, he reported in *The Flying Saucers Are Real* that some individuals believed the discs would disintegrate with an explosive charge if they ever got out of control. (71) The idea began with Dr Lincoln La Paz who thought green fireballs were made of beryllium copper so as to burn up with no debris. Spectra indicated, however, that green fireballs contained magnesium and thus probably were of natural origin.

In a later encounter, the aliens took Adamski on a tour of their ship. Inside he was shown a central magnetic pillar which doubled as both propulsion unit and a power telescope which allowed them to inspect the land below. He is shown a TV set on which is registered everything seen by remote-control discs ranging in size from 10 inches to 12 feet in diameter. These discs registered every vibration taking place in the area under observation. They even allow aliens to know what we are thinking. Adamski saw over a dozen of these registering discs. (72)

Howard Menger, in time, saw one of these registering discs explode. The aliens shortly thereafter affirmed to Menger that it had been out of control. He elaborated on the fact that these discs recorded all emotions, thoughts, and possible intents. (73)

The Mitchell sisters added a novel wrinkle to this portrait. An alien named Alna demonstrated for them a spy scope which could see through roofs by subtracting their vibrations from other vibrations of a building. There is no escape. (74)

Orfeo Angelucci's aliens spoke of our planet having been under observation for centuries, but only recently it had been resurveyed. Every point of progress in our society is registered. (75)

Dan Martin corroborated the spy paradigm in titling his account of his contact *The Watcher*. Decades later, another alien named Khyla would also be known as the Watcher. (76) Contacts with names like Asmiz, Quamquat, and Mister Zno likewise have affirmed the fact that we are being watched. The seventies contactee Claude Vorlihon "Rael" was told by his alien

mentors that they had come to see what men were up to and to watch over them. (77)

Abductee literature also lends support to the picture of aliens spying on humanity. Herb Schirmer, from his 1967 encounter, received testimony his aliens were engaged in surveillance. (78) Like Adamski, Schirmer was shown a baby saucer inside the ship which could be launched to check out an area and send pictures to a vision screen in the mother ship. In the 1975 abduction of Charles L Moody, aliens refer to the craft they are on as an observation craft. It was distinctly smaller than the main craft and was said to be vulnerable to interference by radar. (79) Raymond Shearer, an abductee of 1978, broke out in a cold sweat fearful he had become a possible agent or spy for the aliens. (80) During a May 1979 encounter, William Herrmann, while aboard a saucer, witnessed rendezvous with what the aliens termed an "observance vehicle". (81)

Virginia Horton's aliens included one wanting to be a bioanthropologist. They collected a blood sample for later examination and research. The aliens' research had led to us being considered a "precious species". (82) One could regard all this face-to-face testimony as corroboration of the validity of Keyhoe's thesis. The pedigrees of these experiences, however, are of mixed value. Mediums and ouija boards are suspect to say the least. Adamski is largely dismissed as a charlatan by ufologists who

want to be taken seriously. Menger confessed his experiences more or less were not real. The other contactees also tend to be rejected as promulgators of fantasy. Abductees come late to the game and long after Keyhoe's ideas had suffused the UFO mythos.

If these are fantasies, why do all these people have their aliens say, in essence, "I spy"? The first possibility is camouflage. The contactees try to blend their fantasies with contemporary beliefs to give them credibility. An allied possibility is that they sense this is something people want to believe and, following the ancient credo, Tell them what they want to hear, they tell them. The other basic possibility is that contactees want to believe it themselves.

Ufologists, until the advent of the abductees, never used the testimony of UFO contacts to buttress the reconnaissance thesis. But both groups affirm it explicitly and implicitly. It is harder to discount the need to believe as fuel for the advancement of the idea in the case of the contactees. Untainted rationality can hardly account for the motif's presence there. If need accounts for one, it may unconsciously account for both groups believing aliens are watching us. Yet why would anyone want to believe anything like that? =====

Contacts with names like Asmiz, Quamquat, and Mister Zno likewise have affirmed the fact that we are being watched

The sensation of being watched is a common psychological experience. It can be termed an archetypal phenomenon for it is founded on a universal feature of human life. All of us are watched when we are children. Parents must constantly keep an eye on us to keep us out of danger or prevent us from causing trouble. As the child grows up he learns that certain behaviours have undesirable consequences and will become wary of doing things that might provoke an unwanted response from his parents. A glance at the parents for a look of approval or disapproval can cue him on whether he's doing the right or wrong thing. These parental responses are sought and anticipated. Over time they are internalised as a separate agency develops within the mind which oversees and supervises behaviour even when the parent is absent. This agency has been variously termed the conscience or superego. Poets have called it the watchman of the soul. (83)

There is a charming story which illustrates the beginnings of this phenomenon. A little child who formed the habit of stealing pies and secretly eating them in the attic was terrified one day when a ray of light fell on the picture of an eye. Wishing to be free of the intrusion he cut the eye out of the portrait. The next day, however, he still sensed there was a hidden eye ceaselessly watching him from the hole in the portrait. Guilt.

The conscience constantly compares our behaviour to the ideals which are instilled by our parents. The ideals are added to by authority figures such as teachers, religious figures, cops, media pundits, friends, and public opinion as time goes by. When we fall short of the ideals we set for ourselves, become insecure, or find ourselves apart or isolated from the rest of society, the conscience makes itself felt. Sensations imprinted from childhood of being spied upon by distrusting parents or parents giving 'that look' can surface to make us stop what we're doing and think over our actions. Though such actions on the part of our conscience may make us anxious and may even cause us to be wracked with guilt, they develop from the need to feel pride about ourselves and warn us there are consequences in our misbehaving.

Parenting and socialisation is unfortunately not always gracefully managed. Ambitious parents can instill ideals impossible to live up to in a child. Cruel parents can assault the child with criticisms and punishments that are impossible to live down. Parents may teach distrust by unfairly spying on the child with insufficient cause. Under these circumstances the superego can take on severe qualities which hang on as fixed aspects of the adult's character. When these superego functions are split off and distort an individual's perception of reality the situation can be termed pathological and the condition acquires the description of paranoia. (84)

Generally speaking, paranoia is defined by the idea one is being persecuted. Among the striking commonalities of this idea is the motif of

being watched by others. Such erroneous beliefs have been categorised by psychiatrists under the phrase 'delusions of observation'. (85) As Freud saw it, there is ultimately a grain of historical truth behind such delusions. The individual had been watched before, but as a child. Pride forces the individual to deny feelings of internal narcissistic mortification, but accepts external control by imaginary others or others in imaginary relationships. It is a compromise solution to a moralistic dilemma. Without it the individual falls into unbearable depression and self-loathing. Distorting one's perceptions of reality exacts costs over time, however. Whether the cost is worth it is a deeply problematic issue. Many paranoids function at superior levels of performance in their work and may bother no one with their quirky ideas. Others may act on their delusions and make false accusations that destroy human relationships and injure the innocent. While paranoia can be treated by analysis, it is a difficult and emotionally painful process for both the individual and the therapist. Therapists, if nobody else, wonder if it is worth it.

It is fairly natural to assume that the beliefs encountered earlier in this paper are collective equivalents of the delusions of observation seen in individual cases of paranoia. We are looking for the eyes of our parents in some sense. Rather than dwell on soul-searching our inadequacies which we know we would find, we anxiously look skyward for signs of attention and supervision. In the case of the contactees nothing could be clearer given the beliefs of aliens being able to read our thoughts, something parents give every appearance of doing at times (as pointed out in Silvano Arieti, *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, Basic, 1974, p. 93). The paternal warnings to not fool around with A-bombs or you'll knock the Earth out of its orbit or upset the balance of the universe have that distinct aroma of exaggerated warnings of parents not to play with that toy or you'll knock somebody's eye out. Oh, sure, Mom. Ufologists are subtler than that, but remember even Keyhoe warned that A-bombs could knock huge chunks out of the Earth or propel the Earth out of orbit. (86)

It is tempting to lay the growth of the UFO mythos to collective shame over Hiroshima and the development of nuclear weapons in the fifties. Outwardly we were proud of the Yankee ingenuity we showed in constructing this superweapon, but the gruesome effects of it were undeniable in the photos brought back and displayed in *Life* magazine and elsewhere. Oppenheimer, in his oft-quoted lecture before MIT in December 1947, spoke his conscience: "In some crude sense, which no vulgarity, no humour, no overstatement can quite extinguish, the physicists have known sin and this is a knowledge they cannot lose." One could easily deny the physicists had sinned and many did. The knowledge, however, returned in projected form -- the delusion of aliens watching us. The concern reflected in Lipp's researching whether

83. FREUD, Sigmund, 'On Narcissism: An Introduction', in STRACHEY, James, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud - Volume 14*, The Hogarth Press, 1953, pp. 92-98

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98 *Ibid.*

99 LEVIN, Murray

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or not aliens could have seen our nuclear blasts gives some credence to the notion as does the frequency of talk about A-bombs by both contactees and ufologists in the fifties.

The possibility of narcissistic mortification over Hiroshima is most relevant in the context of the cluster of UFO reports around Los Alamos noted by Keyhoe and the Robertson Panel. Interest in flying saucers appears to have been considerable there. Ruppelt of Blue Book singles out the Atomic Energy Commission's Los Alamos lab as a place where so many people turned up for his briefings that the lecture theatre wouldn't hold all the people who tried to get in. His briefing was recorded and played many times. Some even banded together to form a 'mineral club' which was a cover to set up radiation detectors which they hoped might detect UFOs.

(The fact that Roswell was home to the world's only combat-trained atomic bomb group may have some relevance to the rumour complex that has grown up around the balloon crash, but nothing has surfaced to date to build an argument on).

Whether nuclear shame has a wider, more totalistic role in fueling the UFO mythos is open to considerable doubt. Why didn't the paranoid reaction set in immediately in 1945? UFO flaps don't correlate with atomic tests. Blue Book set up a UFO reporting net in the Eniwetok H-bomb test region, but got nothing for the effort. Not only have there been a notable absence of bomb-project physicists among ufologists, but two are renowned for their disbelief. Enrico Fermi, the mastermind of the first chain reaction in 1942, had the famous Fermi Paradox against the prevalence of ETI civilisations credited to him. Edward Condon was a member of the committee which established the US atomic bomb programme and he served as advisor to later atom-related study groups of the government. A recent tribute to Hermann Oberth reminds us that while here is a figure who believed in saucer reconnaissance, his claim to immortality lies not with the atom, but with the creation of the V2 rocket.

Clearly nuclear shame has limitations as a source for UFO paranoia. This is more fully rendered inadequate by the larger consideration that paranoid delusions are a constant element in our culture's fantasies. Paranoia may have been rampant in the fifties, but it was by no means new. Collective paranoia existed before there was a Hiroshima.

C R Badcock points out that beliefs in shepherding sky-gods begin, historically, with the formation of nomadic pastoral economies and the domestication of animals. Before that period, man's beliefs tended to be animistic and polytheistic because of the nature of cultivation and agriculture. The practices of pastoralism obliged a special psychology formed of independence, an obsessional nature, and the feeling of guilt-shame. The formation of such personalities favours the creation of

paranoiac reaction states of mind and the spread of paranoid beliefs. From the inception of these new practices we start to see the spread of myths about all-seeing gods and secret races of watchers of mankind. (87)

There survives from ancient Babylon, for example, a prayer to the first-begotten of Marduk who is addressed as "You watch over all men". (88) Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, besieged Jerusalem in early Biblical times and exiled its people. Among them was the prophet Ezekiel. He believed God had passed judgement that his people were sinful. While in exile he came to see a vision of a wheel in the air with eyes on it and thenceforward prophesied doom and destruction. (89)

Also in the Bible we encounter practices like Joshua's placing seven eyes on every stone of the Temple to convey the special watchfulness of God. It is believed the eyes of the Lord can range through the whole Earth. (90) As he lay in bed, Daniel had a vision of a watcher that came down from heaven. (91) Watchers are also spoken of in 2 Enoch XVIII as a group of angels banished to a dungeon along with Samael, a planetary power and prince in heaven. (92)

Hesiod, among the early Greeks, also speaks of 'watchers', thrice ten thousand immortals who, clad in mist, fare everywhere over the Earth and watch over judgements and froward works. (93)

Christianity, with its end-of-the-world fantasies and fears of eternal damnation for trivial infractions, has been termed paranoid by some psychiatrists. (94) It is an interesting question whether or not the decay of the Roman empire provided the fuel for its diffusion. Irregardless, there is little dispute it lent a distinctly paranoid tone to the Dark Ages. People lived in a double spy cosmology as angels and devils scrutinised the minute day-to-day behaviour of everybody for the slightest blasphemy or offence. (95) Towards the end of the Middle Ages fantasies of flying witches and secret meetings of Devil-worshippers led to the Great Witch Hunt, one of the deadlier paranoid delusions to have gripped masses of people. (96)

Mass paranoia does not confine itself to religious realms. Conspiracy theories constantly interweave with reality-based political thought and often dominate it. The American revolution, some historians now argue, was rooted in a pandemic of persecutory delusions. (97) Paranoid fantasies suffuse American history: the Illuminati conspiracy and anti-Masonry, anti-Catholicism, "the Gallic peril", slaveholders' conspiracies, baby-killing and dismemberment by Indians, the Yellow peril, the Great Red Scare of 1919-20, reefer madness, the fluoridation poisoning fear, the Red Nightmare and McCarthyism in the fifties, JFK assassination theories, The TriLateralists, the Gemstone file, cattle mutilation, the Satanist conspiracy, etc. (98) Anyone in doubt of the influence and industry

of the paranoid is directed to Murray Levin's dissection of the Great Red Scare. It led to lynchings, the crushing of unions, and the abandoning of civil liberties. The belief in a nonexistent Bolshevik conspiracy to foment a revolution that would destroy the American way of life was supported by an "irrefutable" 4465-page document called the Lusk Report. Psychotic ravings are reprinted without evaluation and bits and pieces of reality are force-fitted to prove what amounted to a vague assumption. (99)

The impression I receive is that our culture has a constant reservoir of paranoids ready to adopt and give flight to any fear that finds a coterie of advocates. One doesn't really need to point to any particular instance of collective shame to account for the origin or diffusion of paranoid beliefs in our culture. Thus the spread of Keyhoe's reconnaissance theory probably wasn't dependent on

Hiroshima. The paranoid character of the fifties may have some sociological explanation I have missed and I thus won't rule out the possibility there was some psychological undercurrent of the era that favoured the growth of the UFO mythos. For the nonce, I think it was just a fantasy that could have emerged and spread decades earlier or later if the right persons had or hadn't come along to vigorously advocate it.

Elements of the UFO mythos are clearly evident long before the fifties. There was, for example, a significant market for stories about extraterrestrials visiting Earth or being visited by Earthlings as early as the 1890s. Nearly 60 such 'interplanetaries' appeared in that decade. (100) Among the latecomers was H G Wells'

War of the Worlds in 1898. It is of small surprise to note that more extraterrestrials were reported during the Airship Waves of 1896 and 1897 than during the Flying Saucer Flap of 1947. (101) Most of the 19 reports involve little more than extraterrestrial picnics and camp-outs or excursions. A pair speak of negotiating trade agreements. One airship is here to pick up ice. Two involve spirits or angels making surveys for future colonisation. Only one case involves Martians scrutinising humans for the apparent purpose of securing an inhabitant. There is also one case of unearthly beings hurling balls of fire, brimstone, and molten lava from an airship at witnesses -- the only other one fully suggestive of paranoid fear. Overall, the Airship Waves look like nine-day wonders unrelated to paranoia-fuelled UFO fantasies of our times.

It is actually easier to trace the development of the UFO mythos to the British

airship scare of 1912-13. These flaps were clearly paranoid in character, involving as they did the belief that German Zeppelin airships were secretly visiting Britain for spying out the land in preparation for war. (102) There seems to be no compelling reason to doubt it inspired John N Raphael to pen 'Up above: The story of the sky folk' for the British *Pearson's Magazine*. The plot begins with a rash of disappearances that include the Prime Minister, an elm tree pulled up by the roots, an invalid in bed from a collapsing house, the town pump, a weathercock, a ewe and a ram. One man survives to describe being picked up by some force and later dropped. A professor arrives to investigate and speculates that a race of sky folk may have the same curiosity about us as we have about creatures at the bottom of the sea.

"Isn't it plausible that having this

curiosity, and having at their disposal scientific methods, of which for the present, we can know little or nothing, they should endeavour to discover more about us? How would they try to obtain information?"

The answer it seems is by using an immense pincer to take up samples by winch to their space ship. Blood subsequently falls from the sky. Then, a decapitated gorilla's head. Finally, the body of a man, partly skinned, is discovered with a diary confirming the worst. The man describes being placed in a transparent cubicle and seeing animals, humans, quantities of dirt, rocks, and seawater on display as though the ship were a combination of museum and zoo. He observes dissection experiments and, realising his fate, straps his diary to his body in

expectation of his remains being tossed overboard. The ship subsequently develops power trouble and settles into Trafalgar Square. The aliens are regrettably killed when rescuers cause air to rush inside the craft after making a hole in it. The hope is expressed that the aliens won't be sending down another expedition. (103)

This is probably the first major story to adopt the premise of furtive extraterrestrials flying about our atmosphere engaged in abduction for scientific research. Sam Moskowitz argues it is unlikely Fort could have missed this story in his extensive reading. *Pearson's* was one of the most widely read magazines in its day and was certainly in the New York Public Library haunted by Fort. The corollary that it played a role in Fort's ruminations about extraterrestrial visitors which found us mysteriously useful, caused various disappearances and sky falls follows naturally.

Our culture
has a constant
reservoir of
paranoids
ready to adopt
and give
flight to any
fear that finds
a coterie of
advocates

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101 NEELEY, Robert G, *UFOs of 1896/1897: The Airship Wave*, Fund for UFO Research, 1988, pp. 46-49

102 WATSON, Nigel, OLDROYD, Granville and CLARKE, David, *The 1912-1913 British phantom Airship Scare*, FFUFOR, 1988

103 MOSKOWITZ, Sam, *Strange Horizons: The Spectrum of Science Fiction*, Charles Scribner's, 1976, pp. 228-232

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110 DEMAUSE, Lloyd. *Reagan's America*, 1984, p.79.

111 *Ibid.*, p.77.

Though the propriety of calling Fort the first ufologist has been called into question there is plentiful evidence that the first post-Arnold generation was indebted to his work. Keyhoe quotes a memo from DuBarry who cites Fort's opinion on a report from 1762 (105). Gerald Heard and Frank Scully acknowledge Fort's work (106). Palmer in a 1946 issue of *Amazing Stories* was

Staring eyes can be found in every culture and every age... Though they can be attached to foreign enemies they are often pictured as simply floating above us, strange, unidentified staring eyes ...

already calling attention to the files of Charles Fort as proof that extraterrestrials visited earth (107). In 1936 Coral Lorenzen had already read the books of Charles Fort at the tender age of 12 (108). Morris Jessup's interest in disappearances and his suggestions that falls of flesh and blood result from disgorged materials from experiments and captured specimens curiously echo not only Fort, but Raphael's story (109). Whether Fort also inspired the intelligence community in some direct or indirect fashion to formulate the alien reconnaissance theory is necessarily unknown, but is neither impossible or implausible.

All the elements seem to be there in 1913: belief in extraterrestrials, belief in furtive airships, the idea of examination, paranoia. The only thing that seems to be missing is a Keyhoe and a Mantell case to lend his idea seriousness. Fort was too much the class clown to phrase his ideas in arguments that tried to convince. It also might be the the public needed the sensation of Arnold's supersonic saucers to redirect their attention to aerial mysteries. Teasing out all the relevant factors and possibilities may keep historians guessing for years.

Though no single episode of collective shame can be pointed to as establishing the UFO mythos, the idea may provide a key to several mass manifestations of the UFO phenomenon. The major UFO flaps subsequent to 1947 appear in concert with major historical episodes of national shame or humiliation. The 1952 wave coincides with an emotionally charged steel strike which caused allegations of treason, that steelworkers were undermining the war in Korea. The 1957 wave emerged in the wake of Russia's launch of Sputnik and the realisation that Yankee technological superiority had been called into question. It was easily the pivotal identity crisis of the fifties generation. The 1965 wave began within days of the first US ground combat operations in Vietnam. It was quickly termed a 'futile assault' and in the weeks that followed the situation visibly deteriorated. After the initial pulse of the wave passed, the famous Watts riots kicked up a secondary peak in mid-August. The notorious Swamp-Gas flap of 1966 played against the backdrop of the first anti-US demonstrations in Hue and Danang, then Saigon and elsewhere. Spectacular fiery suicides by religious figures were particularly agonising to behold. Lastly, the 1973 Wave blossomed in the heat of Watergate

Psychohistorian Lloyd deMause has asserted that staring eyes can be found during times of crisis in every country and every age from ancient Egypt's "Eye of Horus" to the "hypnotic eyes" of Adolf Hitler. (110) Though they can be attached to foreign enemies they are often pictured as simply floating above us, strange, unidentified staring eyes. (111) Unidentified Flying Objects with their connotations of aliens-are-watching-us seem to be a variation of the paranoid delusions of observation prompted by ego crises seen both with individuals and groups.

Odil Redon:
The eye like a strange balloon mounts towards infinity. (1882)



Old Hat New Hat

Michael
Goss



Blame your editor. His BackPage invitation to *Magonia* readers to predict the next Great Unexplained Phenomenon set me a-thinking.

Set me a-thinking that each successive Great Unexplained Phenomenon which rises from the obscurity of being known to the freakish few to becoming the possession of the millions - becomes a craze, a talking point, a trend a pollutant of the airwaves, breeds a spawn of conferences and specialist magazines - poses on the cover of *Newsweek*, gets sniped at in *Private Eye*, blunders onto Wogan, struts and frets its hour upon the stage and then is heard of on breakfast TV no more. Well, a thing like that leaves casualties behind it.

The chiefest casualty being the previous month's Great Unexplained Phenomenon. If this really is a culture where everyone can expect a turn at being famous for a quarter of an hour (less advert breaks) the paranormal has no right to demand preferential treatment. It may be possible, even, to lay down a set of general rules governing the rise and fall of Great Phenomena.

In semi-logical order, and no more than that: paranormal phenomena breed one upon the other in the sense that popular awareness of newly (mass) publicised ones is conditioned by how well-digested the preceding ones were. Past-life regression makes more sense - seems more credibly, arguably - if you have been exposed to popular articles on hypnosis. Materialization as a

concept arises, though not inevitably, from more humble seance-room phenomena. The Greys of Zeta Reticuli are less likely to be shown the door to your boggle-threshold if you condone CEIVs, and that in turn may depend on how you reacted to CEIIIIs, as Andy Roberts's article in *Wild Places* proved triumphantly. 'Boggle-threshold' is a good metaphor, a coining of Renee Haynes I think, although someone is bound to tell me I'm wrong. It expands thanks to the activities of all the previous boggles. We are more likely to believe and accept if we believed and accepted the last time.

Quasi Rule 2: strictly speaking there are no 'new phenomena', merely variations on old ones. This theoretical distinction isn't always clear to general audiences, or to newspaper editors, who tend to treat aspects on phenomena in isolation. A phenomenon incapable of variation becomes, in neo-Darwinian terms, obsolete. It need not drop out of existence; it will have its practitioners, its students and others who are prone to say with time that it has been unjustly neglected. Loss of mass audience doesn't invalidate. I have long suspected that there was more to mesmerism than is covered by the term hypnosis; SPR investigator Brian Nisbet produced some intriguing ESP-Spiritualist

◄ ROBERTS, Andy. 'Subterranean Homesick Greys', in *Wild Places*, no. 2, (1991), pp.14-21.





evidence by the ostensibly outmoded means of table-tilting as late as the 1970s. But what the phenomenon loses is its charisma; quite likely it will pass into a coelacanth-style afterlife, without anyone having explained it satisfactorily. But now, nobody *cares* about explaining it. the real thrust, the excitement, has focussed upon something new. the direction of studies in that particular field lie with the *new* phenomenon, not the old... possibly or most probably.

Three: to take off into the empyrean - to make the Wogan show for instance - the Phenomenon must offer audience participation. What Uri Geller did on *Dimbleby* you may be able to do. Your grandmother found strange things happened when she went to that Spiritualist medium. And you? You've no need to stop at reading about this stuff - you can become involved, you can *experience*. "The *Sunday People* experiments with Uri at 12.30 p.m.", announced The Paper With Guts (*sic*) on the front page of its 25 November 1973 edition. "Mind-bender extraordinary Uri Geller wants your help today. So stand by with any old bits of metal (for) the biggest experiment in extra-sensory perception ever staged". At the appointed hour Uri (in Paris) would concentrate hard on whatever metal objects the 15 million *People* readers across Britain happened to be holding... The results filled up a page of the gutsy paper's next issue, but did not, I fancy, impress the SPR.

Turning the pages of my 1973-1975 scrapbooks past the gellerian plethora, I'm daunted by the sheer amount of coverage given to audience-participation psychic phenomena. But I am equally fascinated at the way in which (spoon-bending revivals not counted) each phase of paranormal trend-riding drops out of sight, upstaged as it were by the next. Time then for another attempt at laying down the law.

Four: the public, upon whom the Phenomenon relies for its vitality, has an ill-defined but limited span of concentration. It becomes eventually bored, satiated. The paranormal may portray itself as an entity more important to our mental and spiritual future or to our scientific knowledge than, say, John Travolta or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, yet it is as subject to over-exposure as they. Editors, producers have to gauge both the incipient appeal of a phenomenon and its rate of exponential decay: when to play a trend for all it's worth and when to drop it.

The foregoing is too simple, I'm aware; it ignores the fact that while *some* portion of the

audience stay faithful to the Phenomenon, it is equally likely that new and younger audiences will come along and rediscover it. At a modest level, true-life ghost stories (essentially a conservative form) are perennially popular. There are still people who find fire-walking a vibrantly exciting topic, just as there are still people who will not miss an episode of *Neighbours* or a home game of West Bromwich Albion. The focus's heady days of fame may be past, but they *may* come back. or try this: during my spell as a secondary-school teacher, I was recurrently bemused at teenagers' delight in rediscovering the sub-surface arts of what they called weeja and ipnertism. Perhaps my coelacanth gibe was misplaced. After all, someone else's old hat may fit you nicely.

Talking of which, is there anyone out there who goes in for hat-turning? Since a prerequisite is a top-hat, I'd guess not. *Punch*, ever-alert to 19th century social fads was pretty firm about it though: "It is necessary to get a hat" it declared in the caption to a typically immobile 1850ish cartoon entitled 'The Hat-Moving Experiment'. Deadpan instructions to this latest craze in drawing-room psychical research followed: "Two or more persons place their hands on the rim thereof, the little fingers of each person being in contact. In about twenty minutes or half an hour or perhaps more, the hat will begin to jump, and revolve rapidly."

How? Why? The 'Song of a Hat-Turner, By One who was Moved in the Highest Circles' explained:

Some say the action's muscular,
and some it is galvanic,
While others call it humbug in a
scientific way;

And some there are assign it to an agency Satanic;
And vow the Devil's in it if there's not the deuce to pay.
Yet all around my hat I still persist in turning,
Unheeding what the sceptical and scientific say:
And tho' perhaps a character for verdancy I'm earning,
I've nothing else to turn for whiling the time away.

Hat-turning was a short-lived sensation, nothing more than an embryonic stage in the life history of Spiritualism. What we need to appreciate is how enthusiastically it was greeted. *Punch* had ample room for the craze and even more for its co-terminous near relation, table-turning, whose M.O. epidemic popularity and ephemerality it also borrowed from the hatters. The allure of table turning may be appreciated from three comments: one made when it was yet a novelty, the others some time after it had subsided. In

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contrast with the American-import label attached to Spiritualism, table-turning appears to have migrated to England from Europe, where the Rev. Chauncey Hare Townsend found it: ▶

"The fashion spreads from the cottage to the throne. the Emperor of Russia is reported to be engaged less in devising how to get Turkey than how to make tables revolve. Is the Emperor of Austria supposed to be in strictest conference with his minster? Not a bit of it! He is turning tables. Even of the Pope it is whispered that, when he was represented as playing at billiards... this was only a deceit way of expressing that he really was not making the balls spin, but the table itself?"

So to England where a species of valediction to table-turning was pronounced by *The Yorkshireman* as early as 1856. It was, said the writer, an evening party regular of "some two or three years ago... In those days you were invited to 'tea and table moving' as a new excitement, and made to revolve with the family like mad round articles of furniture." In those not-so-distant days, then, table-turning had been revolutionary in more senses than one. By 1894 Andrew Lang was speaking of it as being "deserted like croquet and... even less to be regretted." ▶▶▶

Sic transit... Spiritualism did not require gyrating hats and tables by then. It was a movement whose history reveals a pulsating pattern whereby a Phenomenon advances in a series of evolutions, each of which constitutes a phenomenon in its own right - and in the public consciousness. In its earliest English phase (as introduced to us by Mrs Hayden in 1852, one of the first 'big name' American mediums or, if you prefer, 'Yankee conjurers') it offered discreet communications with the departed through rappings. This effect soon became a subsidiary, and a minor one at that, overtaken by more dramatic phenomena: by table turning, by other major PK-like manifestations, by apports, by automatism (the planchette,▶▶▶"another source of amusement, mysterious and novel" was here by 1867), by materializations, slate-writing... Each advance was, in some senses, a loss. Phenomenon heralded as the core of a new science, lost their impact. It is tempting to see the 'greater Phenomenon - Spiritualism as a whole - to have reached its evolutionary zenith. Comfortably placed though it is today, it appears to have lost its emotional impetus. Ufology took up the running a couple of decades ago: "I'm beginning to think Spiritualism's future lies firmly behind it" , writes Kevin McClure.

But them Spiritualism itself had effortlessly and uncaringly upstaged animal magnetism just when the so-called 'Science of Life' was entering a new phenomenal phase as electrobiology (1851). And animal magnetism (or Mesmerism, to use a term that gradually rose to dominance) had in turn ridden in on the back of phrenology. When we consider that a cheap edition of George Combe's 'bump-reading' text *The Constitution of Man* sold 100,000 copies in Britain alone we can be sure that phrenology was

no minor sensation. In fact it evolved as an artifact of lecture-demonstrations, literature, coteries and controversy which Mesmerism took over in the late 1830's, early 1840's. Phrenology became alternative-science-as-popular-participator entertainment - as did Mesmerism. The parallels are remarkably consistent, so too the pattern of old phenomenon being overtaken by new. The danger, as Chauncey Townshend saw it, lay in the superficiality of the public:

"Let a Mesmerist tell the marvels of his experience; people prick up their ears. Let him speak of the humble utility of Mesmerism; people look down to the ground. Talk of clairvoyance; they at least start. Talk of cures; they yawn. They want the marvellous..." ▶▶▶▶

By now (1854) Spiritualism was giving it to them. In the long-term view Mesmerism - the focus of what some critics just three years previously decried as a mania, the focal point of evening-party entertainment and pantry 'experiments' which threatened to destroy Victorian edicts on rationality or propriety - was not capable of resisting the challenge. Spiritualism was more exciting, more daring... more stimulating. And easier to practice, evidently. The animal magnetists who had thrown verbal brickbats at Braid for his deglamorization of their art (hypnotism, he called it and no magnetic fluids were involved) collected them up again, borrowed the outraged moral stance of those who has criticised and attacked them, and assailed their Spiritualist rivals. A bastard version of the true magnetic power, a dangerous delusion, impious and unseemly: few had much mercy to spare for the spirit-rappers. That did not save them. Upstaged again. Caught in public wearing old hat.

Let's remind ourselves: Mesmerism, courtesy of Braid, transmuted into hypnosis and survived; as far as popular sensation is concerned, the 1890's witnessed an amazing revival of the Science of Life (still occasionally referred to as animal magnetism or Mesmerism), partly due to a *fin de siecle* explosion of interest in occultism and more, I suspect, to Du Maurier's lachrymose best-seller, *Tribby*. It is foolish to draw fat, felt-tipped lines between phenomena or to vote any one of them an irredeemable fossil. Called on to review a bibliography on phrenology for *Fortean Times* a year or so back, I was forced to concede that phrenology is not the deadest of dead pseudo-sciences, it has adherents - look closely and you will see definite signs of respiration.

And yet... and yet. Limiting the argument to the proposition that mass public enthusiasm has a part to play in phenomenal evolution, I could not foresee any major development out of either hypnosis *per se* nor Spiritualism. As for ufology, you know more than I do. Could it be that with the subterranean Greys of Andy Roberts's article we are reaching the point where Something else is ready to get up on the stage and give us a number? I just know that I wouldn't want to be an agent for a good old down-the-middle UFO abduction manuscript nowadays.

◀ TOWNSEND, Chauncey Hare. *Mesmerism Proved True*, (1854) p. 121.

◀◀ TOWNSEND, op. cit. p.110.

◀◀◀ LANG, Andrew. *Cock Lane and Common Sense*. (1894), p.332.

◀◀◀◀ JB in *Once a Week*, 26 October 1867, makes it clear that the planchette was no novelty in America. the following week, in response to readers' inquiries OAW gives two London addresses where the new toy was available. A book entitled *Planchette: of the Despair of Science*, was reviewed by *The Athenæum* on 15 May 1869. The reviewer agreed with the title.

Flying Saucers from Hell

ALIEN ABDUCTIONS AND SATANIC CULT ABDUCTIONS

BILL ELLIS

1 See his *Intruders*, New York, Ballantine, 1987, and *Missing Time*, New York, Ballantine, 1988

2 *Michelle Remembers*, New York, Pocket Books, 1981

3 Particularly influential among these have been STRATFORD, Lauren, *Satan's Underground*, Eugene, OR, Harvest House, 1988. For further background, see MULHERN, Sherrill 'Satanism and psychotherapy: a rumor in search of an inquisition', in *The Satanism Scare*, RICHARDSON, James, T., BEST, Joel and BROMLEY, David (eds), New York, Aldine de Gruyter, in press, and VICTOR, Jeffrey S., 'Satanic cult "survivor" stories', *The Skeptical Inquirer*, Winter 1991

4 SMITH and PAZDER, p. 9. See BRUNYAND, Jan Harold, *The Mexican Pet*, New York, Norton, 1986, pp 76-77. 'The Spider Bite', he notes, has been a popular urban legend in North America and Europe since the mid-1960s

5 SMITH and PAZDER, pp 22-23; STRIEBER, *Communion*, p. 54

HERE are unquestionably, as John Rimmer states, 'disturbing parallels' between UFO abduction research and satan-hunting. And folklorists are good at finding parallels among widely separated stories and traditions. We can suggest ways in which these coherences represent common human responses to stresses or represent revivals of motifs from the past. But we should also be aware of *why* we are looking for such continuities. By discussing such stories as folklore, are we explaining or explaining away?

The late 1980s brought many Americans' attention to two similar claims: people were being abducted and abused by extraterrestrials, and 'cult survivors' had been abducted and abused as children by devil-worshippers. Budd Hopkins (1) uncovered and detailed several puzzling cases in which witnesses reported a close encounter with a glowing light, then found they could not account for a period of 'missing time'. Regressive hypnosis often filled in this gap with experiences in which the witnesses were levitated inside some kind of craft, given medical examinations, then returned to where they had been.

Michelle Smith reconstructed an influential cult abuse story with the help of her psychiatrist (and husband-to-be) Lawrence Pazder. (2) She described in detail how she had been taken by her devil-worshipping mother to many gruesome rituals during which babies were murdered, animal blood drunk, and children forced to lie in graves with dead animals. She was followed by several other dramatic

'survivors' who claimed to have been the victims of similar cults. This claim, in fact, has become accepted as standard among many fully accredited psychiatrists treating patients with multiple-personality disorder, now widely assumed to be caused by satanic ritual abuse during childhood. (3)

These scenarios share many motifs with older Anglo-American beliefs and legends focusing on abductions, and they can be historically linked to each other and to older folk traditions. But are they *identical* claims? If the dynamics and the content of alien abductions and satanic survivor stories are structurally identical, isn't it reasonable to assume that they are reflections of a similar cultural process that produces or encourages delusions? I believe that the differences between the two types of claim are more important than the parallels: one is *empirical*, the other is *mythological*. And this distinction, in social and political terms, is hardly trivial.

Satanic abuse and UFO abductions do have much in common, particularly the contexts out of which they arise. Generally speaking, both kinds of abductees do not initially recall any unusual event. Most UFO abductees recall only seeing a bright light, followed by disorientating nightmares and flashbacks. Likewise, cult survivors 'present' with generalised feelings of anxiety and recurring dreams, like Michelle Smith's vision (familiar to urban legend scholars) of an itchy boil that, when lanced, proves to be full of little spiders. (4) In both cases, the

abduction or ritual abuse is reconstructed with the help of a therapist, often using regressive hypnosis. And in many instances, the moment of 'recall' is marked by a cathartic moment of screaming — as in the case of Michelle Smith and Whitley Strieber. (5) And in both instances, follow-up therapy sessions recall these stories in increasing detail. The internal consistency and sincerity of such accounts lend both kinds of accounts credibility, and in both fine details from one victim's story are apparently corroborated by others interviewed independently. (6)

But we must also admit significant contrasts. UFO abductees generally focus attention, at least initially, on a recent puzzling encounter that can be to some extent corroborated by others present: the glowing light and other puzzling sounds or traces do apparently point to some specific event that occurred in some specific place. By contrast, satanic abuses are more frequently placed in a distant past, and survivors frequently concede that they have no direct witnesses or physical proof that would link their experiences to any specific time or place. This need not be taken as proof that UFOs landed in Whitley Strieber's backyard; only that the apparent abduction was linked to some identifiable incident in his and his acquaintances' immediate past; by contrast, Michelle Smith's ritual abuse took place more than twenty years before she sought medical help and was corroborated in no way by her friends and relatives.

Despite elaborate efforts to connect their stories to abnormal psychological patterns, UFO abductees stubbornly test in the normal range. Experienced psychologists like Rima Laibow and John P. Wilson have noted that such patients do often show signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, but this seems a reaction to the apparent abduction rather than a cause of it. (6) And integration into a support group of fellow 'abductees' and sympathetic researchers seems to have been therapeutic rather than destructive: the detailed survey conducted by Kenneth Ring and Christopher J. Rosing among UFO abductees shows that 'on the whole it has made a positive difference in their lives'. (7)

By contrast, satanic cult survivors normally appear with long histories of psychosis: substance abuse, self-mutilation, previous fantasies, and so on. 'Lauren Stratford', or Laurel Rose Willson, one of the most visible American 'survivors', arrived at her story of being a cult 'breeder' after impressing a series of pastors and church members with detailed stories of abuse and personal illness. Her acquaintances recalled numerous times when she faked suicide attempts,

making superficial cuts on her arms, to provoke sympathy. In fact, before she was adopted by the anti-satanist network, she was living on total state disability due to her mental problems. (8) Alien abductees, in short, construct their experiences as the explanation of a recent, intense state of disorientation; satanic cult abductees, on the other hand, arrive at their ritual abuse memories only after a long string of previous extravagant claims have been tried and found wanting.

Likewise, the contents of these 'experiences' show interesting but superficial parallels. Both show victims incapacitated in some way — a drug, a strange ray, perhaps even brainwashing — that reduces their will to resist. They are removed to another place: Michelle recalls being put on a bed and 'flying'; other witnesses recall 'mystery planes' or 'tunnels' that took them into some mysterious place, where some kind of symbolic or actual rape took place.

Strieber, like many others, recalls being levitated into a small room, where, among other discomforts, he was subjected to some kind of anal probe. Both victims return, frequently with some mysterious mark on their bodies, besides which there is no physical sign of the abductors' presence. Among cult survivors, the killing of a baby seems the most common climax to such events; a growing number of UFO abductees sense that sperm or ova — even a developing foetus — had been removed by aliens as a personal sacrifice to some scientific purpose. We could say that the one is a technological transformation of the other.

These parallels noted, the obvious difference remains: alien abductions are caused by superhumans; cult abuse is carried out by humans. True, satanists show nearly superhuman powers in the way they can carry out the most gruesome ceremonies without leaving any physical evidence. And since many of the survivors' accounts include demonic manifestations caused by the cultists, we could say that the difference is academic. But is it? I think not, if we put the two phenomena in full historical perspective.

Since space aliens by definition do not inhabit the same world as humans, abductees must deal with them as part of a mythical otherworld. The main problem, as expressed by many victims, is not merely how to avoid further contacts, but to accept them as genuine but unbelievable experiences. Such a process obviously puts pressure on abduction victims to reduce their experiences to good form. By forming networks to exchange ideas or perceptions of the aliens, abductees follow a

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Satanic cult abductees arrive at their ritual abuse memories only after a long string of extravagant claims have been found wanting

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6 For this claim on ritual abuse, see MULHERN and VICTOR; for a similar claim for alien abductions, see BULLARD, Thomas E., 'Hypnosis and UFO abductions: a troubled relationship', *Journal of UFO Studies*, 1, 1989, pp 3-40

7 LAIBOW, quoted in CONROY, Ed, *Report on Communion*, New York, Morrow, 1989, pp 235-241; WILSON, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Experienced Anomalous Trauma (EAT): similarities in reported UFO abductions and exposure to invisible toxic contaminants', *Journal of UFO Studies*, 2, 1990, pp 1-18; RING, Kenneth and ROSING, Christopher J., 'The Omega Project: a psychological survey of persons reporting abductions and other UFO encounters', *Journal of UFO Studies*, 2, 1990, p. 82. Ring and Rosing, while admitting that their data cannot resolve the empirical status of abduction experiences, suggest that a psycho-social explanation is most probable (p. 94)

8 PASSANTINO, Gretchen and Bob, and TROTT, Jon, 'Satan's sideshow', *Cornerstone*, 18: 90, 8 December 1989, pp. 24-28

9 See particularly KALCIK, Susan, "Like Ann's gynaecologist or the time I was almost raped". Personal narratives in women's Rap Groups', *Journal of American Folklore*, 88, 1975, pp 3-11. About twice as many women as men are willing to admit an abduction experience, though hard data on this are lacking; see RING and ROSING, p. 65

10 See my 'Abduction' in HAND, Wayland, CATTERMOLE-TALLY, Frances and WARD, Donald (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of American Folk Beliefs and Superstitions*, Berkeley, University of California Press, in press.

11 'The varieties of alien experience', *The Skeptical Inquirer*, 12:3, Spring 1988, pp 263-269. See also HUFFORD, David, *The Terror That Comes in the Night*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982

12 *Missing Time*, pp 145-175

13 STRIEBER, *Transformation*, New York, Avon, 1988, pp 242-244

14 Nevada Aerial Research Group, *The Leading Edge*, November 1990, p. 26. One suspects that garlic, too, might be effective.

15 UFO-*Abductions: A Dangerous Game*, Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1988, p. 194

pattern of group therapy similar to that studied by folklorists as women's 'rap groups'. (9) Whether the trauma of the abduction is empirical or imagined, the folk process that it initiates is essentially one that integrates members into a self-supportive group.

Alien abduction, as many commentators have noted, is a modern cognate to earlier supernatural attack traditions, most notably fairy kidnaps. These bodies of lore also focused on queer experiences in which individuals were 'taken away' into another plane of existence in which normal time was disordered. But they were self-regulating, including also a broad range of ritualistic activities intended to keep away these unwelcome guests or limit their power over humans: carrying cold iron, whistling, turning pockets inside out, a broom placed in the chimney upside down. (10) As I noted in an earlier essay on UFO abductions, the common Old Hag or 'bedroom visitor' experience has much in common with abductions, (11) and indeed Budd Hopkins took on a person who had had such a 'hagging', repeatedly regressing him until the witness eventually produced a suitable abduction memory. (12) But while the Old Hag generally could be kept at bay by sleeping with a sharp knife under the pillow, I expressed fears that abduction researchers might not provide any proper 'superstitions' to dispel fears of aliens.

But now it appears that the network is generating these new folk beliefs. Fetishistic or ritualistic ways are emerging to control the threat of abduction. In *Transformation*, Strieber describes a series of personal and communal rituals that he participated in as part of his acceptance of 'the visitors': these ranged from refraining from certain foods (chocolate in particular) to holding a group invocation in a Wiccan or neo-pagan sanctuary. (13)

Another 'new age' channeller has circulated the useful knowledge that, if aliens are really after our 'glandular secretions', then we can defeat them by eating things that they don't like, specifically 'sugar, sweet foods, and spinach and rhubarb, hot spicy foods, such as chili peppers'.

(14) Even Philip Klass ends his debunking of abduction research by telling readers that ufonauts will never abduct a 'True UFO-Skeptic': 'To assure that you are a TUFOS, and thereby completely protected against ufonaut abduction, it is suggested that you read my earlier book(s)...' (15) Though a jest, Klass's remark points to an insight shared by several folklorists examining cultural responses to the paranormal -- that the sceptical response frequently mirrors the uncritical reasoning of believers. (16)

Supernatural attack traditions are responses to a specific, directly remembered psychological crisis. Certainly the details of this crisis, as reconstructed in memory and shared with others, rely on acceptable cultural models. But are abductions simply subsets of of popular culture antecedents like alien invasion movies and comic strips? (17) The direction taken by most abductees, as with those who have experiences

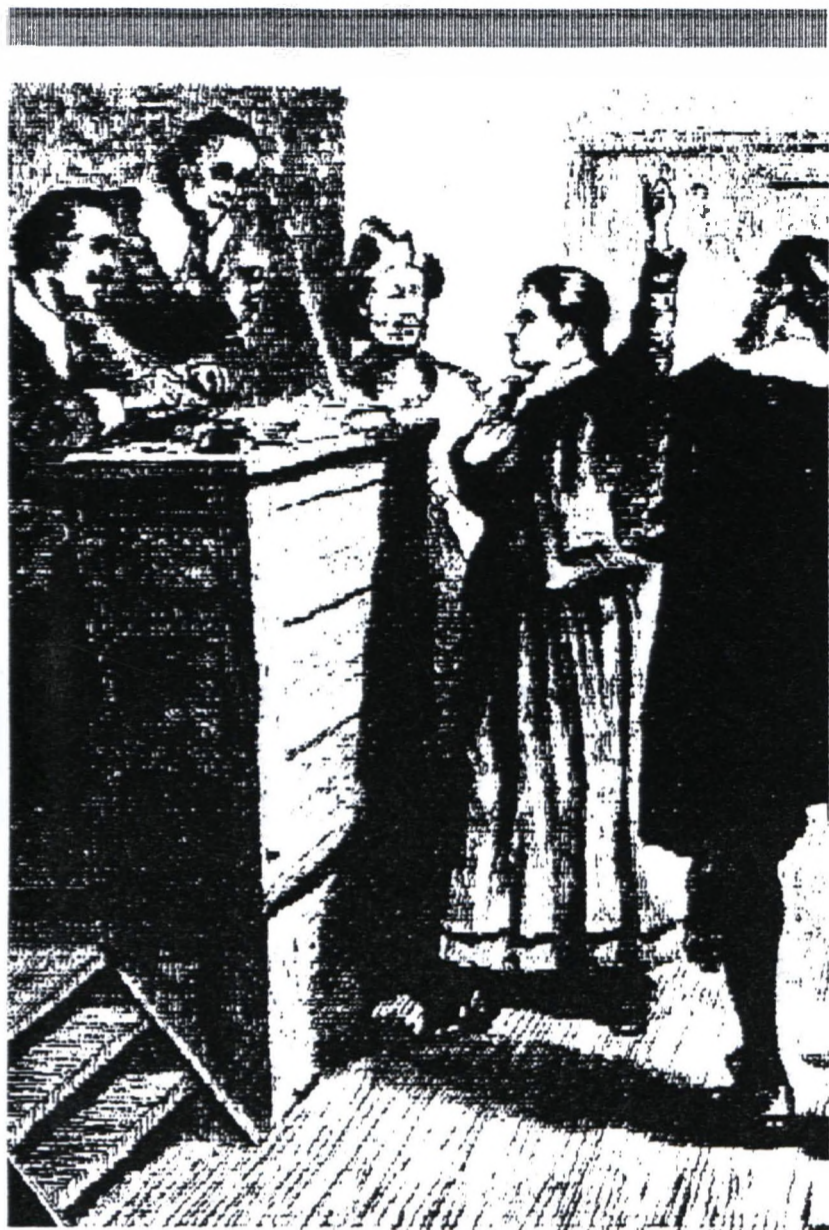
near-death experiences, has been to challenge and move outside of mainstream institutions like organised sciences and religions. To that extent, UFO abductions marginalise victims, but living in the margins also impels many of them to create novel myths and rituals to reorder their world views. These alternative world views may offend mainstreamers, but the fact remains: abductees form their own alternative networks and resist being subsumed by mass-culture movements.

Satanic cult survivors, by contrast, assume that the actions they have witnessed have occurred in real time and in the real world, not in some otherworldly fairy hill. This is why police and vigilantes have, on several occasions, gone so far as to excavate sites named by survivors, looking for graves or signs of secret tunnels. (18) The agents of ritual abuse, even if they have superhuman powers given them by the devil, are still mortals who live in the same community as we do. This point is made quite clear by the satan hunters:

'A coven...is set up so that no one knows more than one or two members involved at the next level of its hierarchy...And because many of the people involved hold respectable positions in the community, few are willing to believe what often are considered ravings from a troubled mind.' (19)

Alien abductees may report real-time contacts with strange 'men in black', but these characters often betray their extrahuman natures by their odd appearance and tendency to vanish. The cult members who harass survivors, on the other hand, are assumed by therapists to be real people who can be identified and arrested. In fact, the satanists *cannot* vanish; however secretive they may be, they can and must be disarmed by decisive social action. And the actions projected by the two groups' beliefs point in quite different directions. At worst, the UFO abduction camp demands respect for non-standard myths and beliefs; the satanic abduction camp, on the other hand, wants to *hurt* the people responsible for their experiences. By its nature, the cult mythology is reactionary and aggressive. It exorcises a generalised, poorly defined fear by projecting it outward on to other members of the community.

Its proper cognate is not fairy lore but witch-hunting. Witches, too, had superhuman abilities given them by the devil: they could enter people's dreams, afflict their bodies, kill their children and cattle. But they could not hide when they were pointed out by afflicted girls or professional witch-finders, executing the will of God almighty. Susanna Martin, one of the accused witches in the Salem, Massachusetts, panic of 1692, took one farmer, Joseph Ring, from his bed, flew him to a nearby field, and forced him to take part in black sabbats. Before returning, she would 'strike him dumb' so that he could not tell of what he had seen. This continued for more than two years, but by the grace of God he recovered his memories in time to participate in the testimony that put Goody



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Martin's head in the noose. (20)

In many cultures and times, witch-hunts have led to acts of violence against marginal classes — women, Jews, Gypsies, African Americans, Socialists, any group who can serve as ready targets for the generalised fears of the mainstream. In short, alien abductees seek to create a marginal world view; satanic cult abductees seek to eliminate marginality.

Is it surprising that the two bodies of information share motifs? Both grew organically out of the cattle mutilation panics of the 1970s, which were widely linked to devil-worship ceremonies. The abduction scenario received an infusion of new blood from two simultaneous abduction/mutilation experiences elicited by ufologist Leo Sprinkle through hypnotic regression. These recollections, helpfully reprinted in extenso by Linda Moulton Howe, include a number of motifs common to satanic cult lore, including aliens in cult lore, including aliens in black, hooded robes and with eyes 'red, like the devil', who bathe in tubs of blood and excised organs. (21) It should also be noted that *Michelle Remembers* was published at the height of Canada's own cattle mutilation panic of 1979-80, which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police openly attributed to a sinister cult called 'Sons in the Service of Satan' or 'S.I.S.' (22)

The 'missing children' moral crusade likewise took hold in the early 1980s, while psychopathic mass murderers, according to the media, haunted neighbourhoods and roamed the interstates. (23) And this crusade has hardly been confined to Americans but affected the Communist Bloc: while cattle mutilators roamed Colorado in the 1970s, strangers in a mysterious black car prowled Russia and Poland, abducting children to drain out their blood or pluck out their eyeballs and vital organs. (24) This kind of story is a universal cultural myth, found in some form in nearly every continent, especially when Europeans were perceived as a threat to Africans, Asians, or Latin Americans. (25) Overall, such patterns indicate broad bodies of cultural language, that would affect *any* anomalous claim.

Is one simply a more sophisticated form of the other? Michael Goss implies this when he notes that 'The Georgians, and the Victorians after them, were too sophisticated to fear that their children might be kidnapped by fairies. But as they had nomadic gypsy bands...the loss was not felt'. This comment seems close in spirit to Jan Harold Brunvand's confident explanation that when ballads containing references to fairies, ghosts and the like were brought over from England to the US, Americans dropped out the supernatural elements, 'presumably because they [Americans] are hard-headed and practical'. (26)

A close reading of Hilary Evans's *Intrusions* (27) would show that the Victorian period was an extraordinarily active period for supernatural beliefs and research at the most sophisticated scientific levels. Spiritualism, table-tapping, and ESP were seriously entertained by

20 STARKEY, Marion L., *The Devil in Massachusetts, N.Y.*, Anchor, 1969.

21 *An Alien Harvest*, Littleton, CO, Linda Moulton Howe Prods., 1989, pp 347, 371

22 See ADAMS, Thomas A., 'The cult connection', *Stigmata*, 11, 1980, pp 10-13, and KAGAN, Daniel and SUMMERS, Ian, *Mute Evidence*, N.Y., Bantam, 1983

23 A useful introduction to this crusade is BEST, Joel, *Threatened Children*, Chicago, U. of Chicago Press, 1990

24 CZUBALA, Dioniz jusz, 'The "Black Volga"', *FOAF tale News*, 21, March 1991, pp 1-2. See also STILO, Giuseppe and TOSELLI, Paolo, 'Gli Acchiappabambini e l'Ambulanza Nera', (The Kidnappers and the Black Ambulance), *Tutte Storie*, 1:1, March 1991, pp 9-11: the same story was circulating in southern Italy in November 1990

25 See CAMPION-VINCENT, Veronique, 'The Baby-Parts Story', *Western Folklore*, 49, 1990, pp 9-25 and STEVENS, Phillips, Jr, 'The Demonology of Satanism', *The Satanism Scare*

26 *The Study of American Folklore: An Introduction*, 3rd edn, N.Y., Norton, 1986, p. 256

27 London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982

28 ANKARLOO, Bengt and HENNINGSEN, Gustav (eds), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990

29 *Encounters*, New York, Macmillan, 1989

30 See ROGO, D. Scott, *The Search for Yesterday*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1985

31 UPI release, 30 October 1984; Portland (ME) *Press Herald*, 19-27 November 1985. These cuttings were made available to me by the kindness of CHILD Inc., Box 2604, Sioux City, IA 51106 USA, this country's leading advocate of children's rights in the face of genuine religious abuse, mainly committed in the name of recognised religions like Christian Science.

32 *FOAftale News*, No. 17, p. 12. Full cuttings of this case available on request.

33 *FOAftale News*, No. 15, p. 7. Full cuttings on this case available on request.

figures of no less import than William James, Sir William Crookes, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (whose arguments for the existence of fairies continue to mystify the hard-headed American fans of Sherlock Holmes). In fact, sociologists have recently noted, the outbreak of the witchcraft hysterias in Europe matched precisely the emergence of modern scientific methods that removed fairies as a 'sensible' explanation for phenomena later used to burn witches. (28)

Supernatural attack claims and witch-hunts have coexisted at every cultural period, however 'sophisticated' it might have been. Romans believed in lamia that might snatch children's spirits to the underworld, and they also believed in Christians that kidnapped babies and ate them during their love feasts. They appeased the former and burned the latter. The medieval English believed in fairies that might abduct children or adults into underground neverlands; they also could be convinced that Jews were using Christian babies as a Passover sacrifice. Bowls of milk were left out for the fairies; the Jews were dispossessed and burned.

And in our own time alien abductions and satanic cult abductions emerge, both equally drawing on contemporary beliefs and concepts to refurbish equally ancient structures. 'But doesn't it *scare* you that abductees are forming these networks?' one popular press reporter demanded during a phone interview. No, I responded: the marginality of ufology in general and doubly marginal place abductionology holds even there, it seems unlikely that it will ever have the clout to appeal to more than a minority of New Age seekers. True, Edith Fiore blatantly uses hypnosis to cure Californians' anxieties by helping them construct satisfying 'abduction experiences' and gives the reader helpful hints on building your own UFO experience by dangling a crystal over your wrist while asking it leading questions. (29) But like past-life therapy (in which Fiore also dabbles), such tactics may offend sceptics' sense of logic, but they do produce cures (like shamanism) when the therapist and patient share similar world views and when the patient expects the therapy to make him better. (30)

The question is: how much social damage can abductee networks cause? Anecdotal accounts circulate about victims who consider suicide and murders to keep themselves and children from being abducted by extraterrestrials. These 'horror stories', however, have not yet been accompanied by names and dates. On the other hand, the satanic abduction network has the desire to damage individuals and institutions and possesses the clout of academic and political institutions. Consider the coalition as we have experienced it in the United States: the producers of ABC-TV's *20-20* news programme,

the members of the American Psychiatric Association who organised and participated in the international conferences on Multiple Personality/Dissociative States; at least three archbishops of the Roman Catholic Church; the District Attorney of Los Angeles, who pursued the McMartin Preschool satanic abuse case despite a lack of objective evidence, even, for several years, the US Government's Federal Bureau of Investigation.

And to what positive end? The MPD/satanism therapy, like others, works when therapist and patient agree on the reality of cults. Many 'survivors' find relief from their psychoses in becoming widely demanded 'experts' on ritual abuse. But the benefit of the patient must be balanced against the staggering cost of careers and reputations damaged by

innuendo. And, as Mulhern has pointed out, many patients diagnosed as victims of ritual abuse, are further traumatised by being convinced that they are in continual danger from real-life satanists. Given the role that *Michelle Remembers* played in initiating the McMartin prosecution in Los Angeles (the model for Rochdale), Michelle Smith could have done a lot worse than contact Budd Hopkins.

And, ironically, the saddest toll must be numbered in *real*/child victims, which can be documented by name and date.

Angela Palmer, 4, burned to death in an oven in Lewiston, Maine, 27 October 1984: Her mother's boyfriend was trying to exorcise a demonic image from the mother, put there by her father who had abused her as a child. The exorcism went awry when Lucifer manifested himself in the child. (31)

Kimberly Jackson, 4, died of starvation in Milton, Florida, 8 February 1987: her mother, concerned about her daughter's 'defiance', had consulted an evangelist, who ordered her to punish her child by beating and starving her, and forcing her to sleep under black blankets representing the death of the soul. (32)

Eric Cottam, 14, died of starvation near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, 4 January 1989: their parents, afraid that the children were being subjected to satanic abuse in a local Seventh-Day Adventist school, took their children to psychiatrists at a Pittsburgh children's hospital, who elicited detailed accounts of animal sacrifices and sexual abuse. After the specialists determined that it was 'reasonably realistic that those acts did occur', the Cottams fled into seclusion and, lacking money, waited for God to save them from the satanists. (33)

Folklorists can't decide if extraterrestrials exist or if any given accusation of ritual abuse is valid or not, but they can and should help people keep phenomena like this in perspective. History repeats for those unwilling to learn it. ◀◀

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BOOK REVIEWS

CLARKE, David and ROBERTS, Andy. **Phantoms of the Sky**. Hale, 1990. £12.95.

This is in many ways the proverbial 'book I would like to have written'. Clarke and Roberts have, however, far more street credibility, being most definitely not armchair ufologists, and therefore their stout presentation of a combination earthlights-psychosocial approach to the subject is to be welcomed greatly.

A wide range of material is discussed: recent cases of lights over Yorkshire, the airship reports, the phantom helicopters of 1974/4, crashes and cover-ups, abductions, earthlights, the lessons of Cracoe fell, shamanism and the foibles of perception. They point out the critical ambiguity and vagueness of much of the evidence: how for example could anyone have kept Roswell secret for thirtysomething years. They show that the pre-1947 material can easily be seen to be derived from misperceptions of conventional stimuli with the odd earthlight thrown in. They also show clearly the essentially *religious* nature of much UFO research: the need to 'testify a truth' without any critical evaluation. The authors are aware that ufology is a modern folklore in which many traditional motifs are presented in updated, more fashionable, terms. All folklore represents the society in which it spreads. One would not expect a peasant society to have visions and beliefs centred on mechanical devices, nor a modern urban society to invest its folklore with agrarian concerns. Given the massive differences in culture, it is the similarities which surprise.

Clarke and Roberts are also aware

of the essentially heterogeneous nature of the folklore. What constitutes the 'UFO experience' in 1991 is quite different from that of 1951. The massed flights of echelon formations of silver discs gave way to reports of aircraft-UFO dogfights, then to civilian reports of lights-in-the-sky, then landings complete with Dewilde style pilots. Later came the psychic aspects, then abductions, home abductions, implants, secret bases and star-wars. Only one constant can be found: the constant belief from Al Bender in 1953, Ruppelt in 1956, Lorenzen in '62, Shuttlewood in 1967, through Emmeneger, Blum, Fawcett, and dozens of others right up to the latest crashed-saucer aficionados, that the answer is just around the corner.

If there are solutions to the UFO mystery, Clarke and Roberts suggest they



may lie both in the mysteries of wild nature and the mysteries of the human mind: UFOs are visitors from horizons where the landscapes of the earth and the landscapes of the imagination merge and blur in the haze.

Neither wild nature nor wild imagination are especially gentle places. Magonia is no place where 'gentle fairies play', but the place where the hosts of the dead take the living, where dark imagination creates even darker initiations. When this book was written everybody's attention (including the authors') was focussed on the gentle whimsy of the crop circles in England's green and pleasant land. Within six months attention moved on to stories of ritual child abuse. We know those stories have been spooned out of the same folkloric cauldron as the UFO abductions: as Roger Sandell mentioned in *Magonia* 39 one of the Rochdale children told a typical UFO abduction story.

Thus *Phantoms of the Sky* is not just absolutely essential reading for ufologists, it should be on the compulsory reading list of every social worker in the country.

Peter Rogerson

GARDNER, Martin. **Science: Good, Bad and Bogus**. Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1989. £10.50

ALCOCK, James E. **Science and Supernature: A Critical Appraisal of Parapsychology**. Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1989. £15.95

Researchers into anomalous phenomena, such as parapsychologists, are quite unlike orthodox scientists. They consider it an achievement if they *fail* to find explanations for whatever they are investigating. When someone like Martin Gardner or James Alcock examines their data and experimental procedures and suggests possible explanations, they tend to get very upset.

Gardner's book is a new edition of one first published in 1981. It consists of a collection of articles and book reviews which deal mainly with parapsychology and pseudoscience. The book reviews are particularly entertaining, as they include angry letters from the authors, together with Gardner's replies. Gardner's main targets are slipshod parapsychology experiments and the garbage churned out in vast quantities by writers of gee-whiz books.

Many people like to argue that telepathy has been proved because experiments have been carried out using machines which generate random numbers and automatically record the scores. Gardner demonstrates that this is not so. For example, he examines some

telepathy experiments carried out by Charles Tart, which were found to be flawed when it was discovered that the numbers produced by the machine were not random. This experiment involved the sender pressing a button to indicate to the receiver when a number had been chosen. Gardner pointed out that the sender could transmit information using a time-delay code. He also remarked that the proceedings had not been videotaped, so there was no way of knowing whether other methods of cheating, consciously or subconsciously, had been employed. The sender and receiver were in rooms only ten feet apart, leaving open the possibility of using auditory signalling (especially if the subjects had sharper hearing than the experimenter).

Gardner's helpful suggestions for tightening up experimental conditions to remove the possibility of cheating are never appreciated, though. It seems that such rigorous conditions have a remarkably inhibiting effect on the phenomena and psychic people lose their powers. Gardner has also pointed out that parapsychologists hardly ever publish the results of those of their experiments which produce negative results. Some of them even refuse to allow statisticians and other experts to examine their raw data.

Among other topics discussed are some of the weird cults and fundamentalist sects which flourish in America and elsewhere, and the metal-bending antics of Uri Geller. Gardner's humour makes the book highly readable. As he puts it in his introduction, '...when writing about extreme eccentricities of science, I have adopted H.L. Mencken's sage advice: one horse-laugh is worth ten thousand syllogisms'.

Alcock's book is more academic in its approach. It covers much of the same ground as Gardner, giving detailed criticisms of psi experiments and pointing out their methodological and statistical flaws. In the first part of the book Alcock attempts to define what parapsychology is supposed to be about. Is it a search for the soul, a non-material entity which can act on matter? This part of the book, originally published as a separate article, drew replies from parapsychologists, many of whom denied being committed to the idea of mind-body dualism. Alcock admits that the metaphysical problems raised were rather more complex than he had realised. So we are left with no clear idea of what psychic research is supposed to be about.

What, then, does motivate psychic researchers, dabblers in the occult and pseudoscientists? Gardner suggests that

decline in conventional religion is part of the answer. He notes that many people sceptical of parapsychology are committed Christians, whereas most of the believers in the subject seem to be atheists or agnostics. He has little to say about this question, though, being more concerned about matters of fact.

Both of these works are recommended as suitable antidotes, if you have recently been indulging in a diet of gee-whiz books.

John Harney

CROMPTON, Carole, with Gerald Cole. **Superstition; the true story of the nanny they called a witch** (afterword by Guy Playfair). Ebury Press, 1990. £12.99.

Carole Crompton, whose story was in the headlines a few years back, was a Scots nanny working in Italy who was accused of starting fires in the homes where she worked to gain attention. The account presented here is the typical flag-waving, Sun-reader, football supporter version of reality: the lonely, innocent Brit persecuted by all those dastardly superstition-ridden foreigners. It was not however Italians who introduced the paranormalist claims, but the British press, and paranormalists, who seem to have the idea that "white hot anger or smouldering rage" can literally burn the house down. If such abilities existed one imagines that the deaths from spontaneous combustion among British Rail staff would be quite phenomenal, to say nothing of all the exploding cars in

CLARKE, David. **Ghosts and Legends of the Peak District**. Jarrold, Norwich, 1990. £4.70 (inc. postage) from David Clarke, 6 Old Retford Rd., Handsworth, Sheffield, S13 9QZ. (Cheques payable to David Clarke)

David Clarke is one of a number of ufologists who are building an academic career on the back of their UFO research - he is now based at the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at Sheffield University, the main base for foaftale research in Britain. As befits the background of its author the book goes beyond being a mere recital of popularised ghost stories, and covers local traditions and beliefs, folk customs, archaeological sites, stone circles, and all variety of anomalous phenomena.

David Clarke is the co-author of *Phantoms of the Skies* so of course gives a good deal of consideration to the whole range of mysterious light phenomena that are beginning to fall into earthlights research. There are also mentions of UFO cases (finding one dating back to the 1750's) and a brief account of the 'phantom helicopter' which haunted the north of

traffic jams and scorched soccer referees. The fact that we don't have to cope with all these sad fates is pretty good evidence that such powers don't exist.

Peter Rogerson

EASON, Cassandra. **The Psychic Power of Children**. Rider, 1990. £12.99.

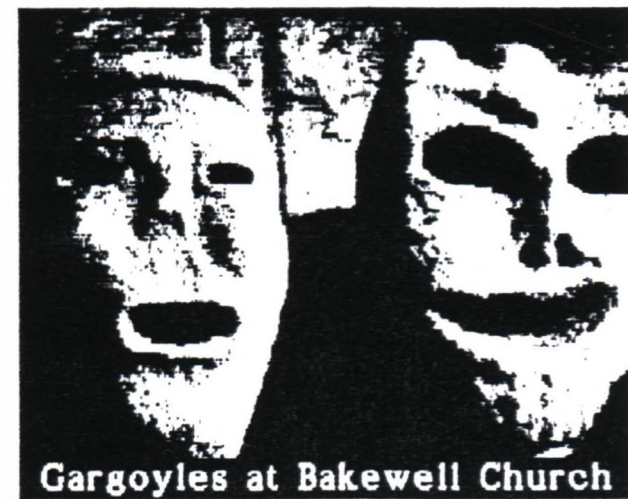
By no means as bad as the title threatens, this book explores the ostensible anomalous experiences of children, at least as seen by adults. The idea of children being psychic clearly relates to ideas of them being unsocialised and hence 'primitive' and 'instinctive' beings and thus, like those other great ghost detectors domestic pets, bridges between the worlds of habitat and wild nature. The incidents related are flashlight glimpses of this wildness and deep imagination by the adult world. Children's parents tend either to see it as their task to exorcise this wild imagination by means of formulae such as "don't make things up", or to see in them evidence of transcendental realities.

As we have seen, external adults can easily be persuaded to view such narratives as dramatic events in an external reality, and in terms of contemporary fears. The universal human fear of the unshared horror which we must bear alone in a hostile world, makes us willing to accept almost anything which can be shown to be 'out there' but can be captured and incarcerated in *Strangeways* or *Wright-Patterson*.

Peter Rogerson

England in the early 'seventies. It's quite a slim book (128 pages) so few of the cases are looked at in any depth, but it provides a useful gazetteer to an interesting region of England. As such its main interest will be to locals of the Peak District, but many other researchers, particularly those who are collecting the 'Project Albion' regional guides to anomalous phenomena will also need this interesting book, which is well-illustrated, well produced, and well worth the moderate price asked.

John Rimmer



SPENCER, John. *UFOs: The Definitive Casebook*. Hamlyn, 1991. £14.99.

At first sight this was the book which the author's deplorable *UFO Encyclopaedia* should have been. Rather than a useless alphabetical list of arbitrary and unknown names, the cases described here are arranged in a logical geographical sequence, covering Europe, USA, Africa, etc. Each section is introduced by an authority on ufology in the continent concerned (Dennis Stacy's brief overview of North American ufology gives a well-rounded viewpoint of a contentious scene), then goes on to a 'Database' of a couple of dozen of the best-known or most significant cases for that area.

It is with the 'Database' the trouble starts, and it is the same trouble that destroyed the *Encyclopaedia*: apart from Scandinavian cases which Spencer has been involved with personally, and which

dominate the European section of the book, the author just does not appear to know his subject very well. Most of the individual reports seem to be hasty scissor-and-paste jobs compiled from inadequate and not terribly up-to-date sources. The summary of the Peter Day film seems totally unaware of the explanation offered in the BUFORA case history (or the alternative suggested by Stuart Campbell), which is quite remarkable as the author is BUFORA's vice-chairman - doesn't he read his own organisation's publications? Other cases with proven explanations (the Trident radar-visual case of 1976 for one) are here given with such trivial comments as "no conclusion has been reached about this case though for a time the hoary old weather balloon explanation was trotted out". Hoary maybe, but also true!

Most outrageous of all, the Missing Norfolks case is dredged up yet again and

presented as a UFO mystery. Even the Hamilton Calf-napping hoax is retold, and its authenticity defended. Is this because Spencer has not read very many UFO books and magazines lately (in which case why is he writing this book?) or that he has read the explanation and chosen to disregard it (in which case why should we take this book seriously?). If this was a book written by some publisher's Grub Street hack, I would probably give it a reasonable review as a good effort, but it is written by a person who is supposed to be a leading figure in world ufology, and quite honestly it's just not good enough

BUFORA members may be relieved that unlike the *Encyclopaedia* this book does not have BUFORA's name emblazoned over it, and it is certainly a more attractive production than its predecessor. Lots of pretty pictures.
John Rimmer

BECKLEY, Timothy Green. *The UFO Silencers*. Inner Light Publications (Box 753, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, USA), 1990. \$12.95 plus \$1.50 p&p.

The Men in Black are a fascinating, frightening and absurd part of the UFO phenomenon. Their behaviour is threatening yet very stupid. If you want to keep the secret of the UFOs under wraps you'd hardly expect any organisation to employ agents who act like B-movie actors. MIB behaviour, their clothing and mode of transport is highly conspicuous. Beckley presents a wide range of MIB reports by famous and not-so-famous ufologists, and even includes a few first-hand accounts of MIB visitations.

There are a lot of bizarre stories here (including a MIB abduction of a woman, the revelation that Prince Philip used to keep a huge map of the world which pinpointed flying saucer sightings and contacts, and several stories of UFO researchers being followed and threatened by MIB). Many of the stories can be attributed to simple paranoia and/or hoaxes. I'm sure certain people would enjoy scaring ufologists or UFO witnesses by pretending to be MIB. The value of Beckley's book is that it gives a more direct view of MIB experiences. It doesn't provide an in-depth or scholarly analysis of the subject, but it does provide an excellent guide to grass roots attitudes towards the MIB. Indeed, since it is aimed at a popular audience, it is likely to fuel and reinforce the MIB mythology as incubated originally by Albert Bender way back in 1952.

John Keel, in his short introduction to the book, mentions that MIB feature in

fairy lore, oriental belief systems and witchcraft. It is a pity this aspect of MIB visitations is not explored more fully.

In my own files I have the following story from *Folk Tales and Superstitions* by Sidney Oldall (EP Pub. Ltd., 1973, orig. pub. 1895 - p.135). In Crowle, Lincolnshire, a mysterious man in black told a farmer that he would finish building a road for him. The only condition was that the farmer had to look away and not turn to see the feat accomplished. He complied with the wish but when he heard hammering and tinkering behind him he could not resist turning round. As soon as he clapped eyes on a number of little men working on the road they vanished instantly. the road went back to its old condition and could never be mended.

This account was associated with

the activities of Robin Goodfellow and the god of the ways. Like modern MIB, and their associated UFOs, we are not meant to see or understand them. In the past and present MIB warn of the dangers of contemplating things beyond human ken. they are the celestial mafia who warn us not to tamper with or research aspects and elements of the unknown.

As a final note, the moody Hollywood post-war films that are now categorised as film noir seem to create the mood and style that has brought MIB to real life. Alienation and disillusionment combined with a lack of moral purpose or meaning are prevalent features of film noir. The MIB were created by Hell and Hollywood. therefore Albert Bender was the first, but not the last, UFO researcher to fall victim to the satanic casting couch. **Nigel Watson**



HOLD THE BACK PAGE

Miscellaneous ramblings from the ufological fringe

THE PETER ROGERSON WIN-AN-ALIEN COMP.

SOME of our more perceptive readers may have noticed that it is highly probable not all the faces which have graced Peter Rogerson's Northern Echoes actually belong to that worthy (although we feel that in a deeper, metaphysical sense they represent elements of the Rogersonian persona). If you can identify the real characters with the help of the following clues you can win a signed copy of Nigel Watson's *Portraits of Alien Encounters* (There is no option for an unsigned copy!) For each question give the name of the person and the number of the

issue of *Magonia* in which they appeared, not counting this issue. (I'll be standing by for a flood of orders for back issues, the portraits started with number 28)

Which 'Peter Rogerson':

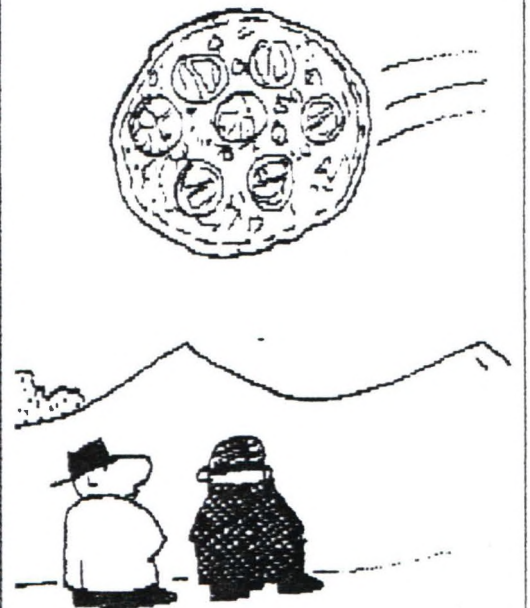
1. Claimed to have flown to the Moon
2. Said "They tell me my Rolls Royce can turn on a sixpence - whatever that may be."
3. Thought that he may have been used as a prophet of God and be a reincarnation of Oliver Cromwell.
4. Is known as 'The Great Leader', amongst other things.
5. His other wig is a barrister's.

6. Is the only female 'Peter Rogerson'
7. Had often "Supped some ale t'neet"
8. If 7 had done so in this one's pub he may have found himself "barred, you bastard!"
9. Was Prime Minister of New Zealand in a bad year.
10. And there's one left. Is this the real Peter Rogerson? We'll score one if you get the number of the issue right, two if you get the right name as well. Highest score wins the book, and second wins a mystery prize. Answers by, oh, end of October?

In *Magonia* 39 Nigel Watson discussed the climate of invasion scares in Britain in the first decades of this century and the way they inspired by, and themselves inspired, the various airship scares. Particularly important in the development of the scares was the portrayal of invasion on stage and screen. One of the stage productions he noted was *Wake Up*, a melodramatic story in which the British War Minister's daughter helps thwart the invaders. Just a few days after that issue of *Magonia* came out Roger Sandell found this post-card at a collector's fair, depicting a dramatic highlight from the *Daily Express's* film of the drama. We'll try not to say synchronicity, and just comment that of course coincidences happen, that's why they're called coincidences.



THE BARMPOTS



I think it's one of those pizza-electric phenomena!