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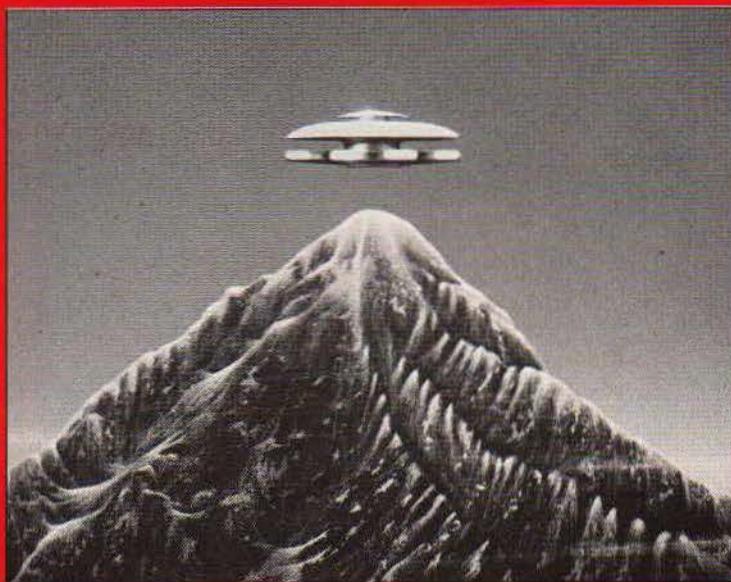
## ANTI MATTER

Chris Rutkowski is a graduate student in the earth sciences at the University of Manitoba. He also has a keen interest in UFOs. He has even given some thought to doing his Ph.D. thesis on the subject. But when he decided to find out if any other Ph.D. theses on UFOs had been done, he dug up at least a dozen.

One of the first of these appeared in 1970, out of the journalism department of Northwestern University. The author, Herbert Strentz, was interested in how the press covered UFO reports between 1947, when the whole controversy began, and 1966. The answer, he found, was not very well. Mostly newspaper accounts sniggered about “little green men” and quoted “experts” who seemed to know even less than the reporters. And they did little to confirm the accuracy of the stories. In Strentz's view, it was media attention, not UFO activity, that generated UFO waves.

Another Northwestern Ph.D. thesis, this one from the sociology department, cast a cold eye on four Chicago-area flying-saucer groups. As a graduate student, Kelly Schutz joined the groups and was even elevated to the rank of “priest” in one of them. He ultimately concluded that the members were involved in a religious quest.

And from Indiana University comes Thomas Eddie Bullard's “Mysteries in the Eye of the Beholder.” The Bullard thesis takes a historical approach, reviewing beliefs in other beings and supernatural events from other centuries, then comparing them with modern UFO stories. “Bullard holds that anomalies over the ages, from biblical times to the pres-



## UFO UPDATE

ent, are strongly similar,” Rutkowski says. “These types of phenomena will always be with us. UFOs happen to be our modern mythology.”

There is also Paul McCarthy's “Politicking and Paradigm-Shifting,” a 1975 thesis from the University of Hawaii. It examines the career of the late James O. McDonald, a respected University of Arizona atmospheric physicist who, in the mid-Sixties, became convinced of the reality of UFOs and tried without success to persuade his colleagues to pay serious attention to the evidence.

Finally, Rutkowski believes, the best UFO thesis of all is David Michael Jacobs's “The UFO Controversy in America,” published by Indiana University Press. “This is the foremost reference book on the subject,” Rutkowski declares.

What are these theses saying about the reality of UFOs? “Not much,” says Rutkowski. “They're looking at the social dimensions of the UFO question. They just sort of dance around the reality of UFOs themselves. This approach allows young scholars to write in a respectable forum about a nonrespectable subject that interests them.”

Is Rutkowski going to join the crowd? He has been approached by the University of Manitoba geophysics department to do his Ph.D. thesis on the theories of Michael Persinger, who believes that UFO lights are caused by earthquakes—a hypothesis Rutkowski has criticized in articles published in geophysical journals. But Rutkowski thinks he's going to decline the offer. “Sure, it's an interesting subject,” he says, “but it won't get me a job.”—JEROME CLARK