

If
we are not alone
Then who
is talking to us
And what
are they saying?

alien scripture

Continuous Revelation

MAPS OF HEAVEN

A Sneaking Unanimity

HELL ON EARTH

The Importance of Omega

VIRGIN TERRITORY

Investigating Contact with
Non-Human Intelligences

alien scripture

No. 1

Continuous Revelation

In future issues, *Continuous Revelation* will mainly carry news items and reports about *Alien Scripture* subjects, and any contributions you might have will be gratefully appreciated. For this issue, it seems sensible to say something about the thinking behind this magazine, and the remarkable range of material we hope to cover . . .

This is not a spiritual magazine. I'm not really a spiritual person and anyway, others do that kind of thing much better than me. Nor is this a Fortean magazine, a UFO magazine, or even a psychical research one. The object is not to report the strange, surprising, freakish and weird for its own sake. There's quite enough of that going on already.

No. Though *Alien Scripture* will deal with communications that have spiritual content, and events reported as Fortean, UFO, psychic, paranormal or whatever, it will have a more specific purpose. This will be the search for the genuinely otherworldly, for the evidence that, in any culture or context, real, meaningful contact has been made with an intelligence that can be specifically identified as non-human. Hence my references to NHIs (Non-Human Intelligences).

Such a search might take us anywhere. Certainly there is no limit of time. Contacts of this kind have been claimed for as long as mankind has told stories. We do it now, and no doubt we always will. I would hazard that never before has such a range of contacts been claimed by such a wide variety of groups and individuals, and certainly not with such attendant publicity. We can look anywhere in history, and find material for our search.

Nor is death any boundary. Quantitatively, the greatest number of contacts in the past 150 years have been with

intelligences whose individual consciousnesses have apparently survived physical death. No other form of contact is practised at hundreds of locations each week in the context of Spiritualism and its related faiths and organisations. If just one apparition, one awareness of the circumstances of the death of a loved one far away is real, is true, that has great significance in our search. If the complex claims of full-figure materialisation mediumship are real - or ever have been, in the case of a phenomenon that occurred more in the past - so much greater would be their significance.

Space and distance set no limits. Though till recent years few contacts were claimed with intelligences from beyond the Solar System, distance is now no object. A fleeting knowledge of astronomy reveals that entities communicating currently often live more than 50 light years from Earth, in star systems in all directions, travelling to our planet by amazing methods, or communicating with humans via a stunning form of telepathy. It seems that once the public becomes aware of the characteristics of a particular star system, it is likely that an entity will turn out to be located there. Some entities travel round in massive spaceships, eons away from their homes. Almost all are reported to have clear, usually highly laudable purposes. Exploring the contacts with these entities will be an important part of the work of AS as, of course, will be the stranger sides of our reported interactions with non-terrestrial entities: the Alien Abduction phenomenon, and the tales of governmental contacts with 'grey' aliens, who have come to Earth for less than the best of motives. These, of course, are the NHIs of the moment, the leaders of the pack, the ones whose stories make money and fame.

But there is another dimension across which our search will take us, almost beyond time, death and space. There to be challenged is the most permanent boundary imposed on mankind by itself. The division between human and divine, between Man and God.

This works in at least two ways. Firstly, we will look closely at claims of interactive religious experience. Not just at religious visions - persistent and fascinating as they are - but also at the charismatic gifts, like speaking in tongues, at prayer, prophecy, healing, exorcism, magic, and other religious practices said to involve NHIs. And secondly, it seems to be important to consider the content of what is said to be communicated 'from God'. Most of the traditional wisdom and the rules by which mankind lives come 'from God', and modern additions - known in the business (the theology business!) as 'continuous revelation' - and versions (cults etc) claim the same source. Yet is there

anything in these words to suggest that they come from a source that is other than human? Just as I would look for evidence of a source that is truly 'otherworldly' in a claim of contact with an alien from Zeta Reticuli, or with somebody's late great-grandfather, so I would look for the same evidence in any of the world's great - or not-so-great - religions. They could actually provide invaluable reference points for the rest of our research.

So, that's a very rough outline of what the magazine is going to deal with. Why *Alien Scripture*? Well, I hope the 'alien' bit is clear enough - simply 'non-human'. 'Scripture' just means 'sacred writings', and I guess that can safely include verbal, telepathic and other communications. Whether they should be considered as sacred is one of the issues that we're exploring, but to date they generally have been.

Of course, human psychology being what it is, there is a dark side, a reverse to all this. One man's god is another man's demon, and we seem to need an 'alien' to praise or blame in most societies. We certainly won't ignore these aspects, and the various columns featured in this first issue may grow, change or die as time goes on, in the cause of encouraging research as wide and deep as we can make it. Nothing is fixed or final.

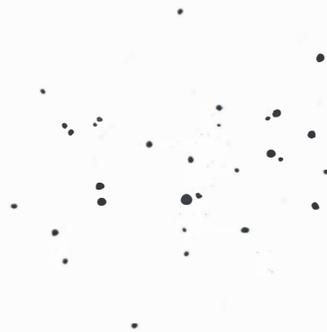
When I was young - from about 7 to 10 - my hobby was astronomy, and I approached it with my usual fervour. But for all that I knew what the stars and planets and constellations were called, how they moved, how far away they were, I was still frightened every time I looked up at a cloudless night sky. Too big, too awesome, too much to deal with all in one go. It was easier looking through a telescope. One small area of sky, chosen by me, and under my control.

I have a similar reaction to launching *Alien Scripture*. A sense of awe at the immensity of what I'm hoping to tackle. No limits, and very few rules. One of my points of reference comes from the timeless Leonard Cohen . . .

**Ring the bells that still will ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's where the light gets in**

L.Cohen. 'Anthem' 1992.

Home
Sweet
Home



No.1. The Pleiades

The Pleiades - a visually attractive group of stars in the constellation of Taurus - is currently the most popular home base for communicating entities. Quite apart from Billy 'Beardy' Meier's amazingly photogenic - yet generally invisible - Pleiadean Beamships, numerous channelling intelligences claim to come 'from the Pleiades'. I thought it might be useful to provide some background information about this cosmic hotspot of academic brilliance from astronomical, rather than inspirational sources. So, when our guides and mentors tell us they come 'from the Pleiades', what do they mean?

The Pleiades - see sketch map above - is, I understand, a relatively 'new' cluster of stars, only a few tens of millions of years old. There are many more stars in the group than the six normally visible to the naked eye. The group is some 400 light years from Earth. Bear in mind that light travels at 186,000 miles a second, and you may have some idea just how far the beamships travel to reach Switzerland.

The star cluster is, I gather, a dozen or more light years 'across'. If my maths are correct, that gives a straight-line distance across The Pleiades, from one side of the cluster to the other, of some 70,388,352,000,000 miles. If we assume that the cluster is roughly circular, then the flat size of that circle would be about 221,220,516,000,000 square miles. If the cluster is roughly spherical, then the number of cubic miles within that sphere would be half the first figure times the second. Very roughly, 11 trillion times 221 trillion, and then some! The next time an entity of your acquaintance tells you that he or she comes 'from the Pleiades', maybe you could ask them to be just a little bit more specific!

A Sneaking Unanimity by Martin Kottmeyer

The extraterrestrial hypothesis is the standard against which all UFO theories must be measured. There is no question that the broad picture is modelled to appear as an extraterrestrial portrait. Entities speak of homes on practically every planet of our solar system. They also speak of origins in distant star systems and even other galaxies. Mechanical vessels are seen which behave in so magical a fashion, only a sufficiently advanced civilisation could excuse their miraculous character. Advocates of the extraterrestrials can never be accused of being blind to the obvious. All other theories are weighed down with imputations of deception at the outset. The ETH has the virtue of simple congruence with what the witnesses reported.

That advantage quickly vanishes once the surface appearance is scratched. Planets such as Venus and Mercury are totally hostile to life, yet aliens claim to hail from these worlds. They described Venus as balmy. Contactees have spoken of forests on the moon and canals on Mars. Space probes have firmly disproven the reality of these observations. Deception certainly exists on some level for some fraction of alien contacts. A significant percentage of craft reports are explicable in terms of prosaic occurrences overlain with elements of fantasy. The question that haunts people is whether one can write off all evidence of extraterrestrial visitation as deceptive. People on both sides of the controversy are fond of saying that if even one account stands up to scrutiny, the implications are staggering. It would be unwise to dismiss the ETH before all the evidence is analysed, with such matters of import at stake.

I do not accept this. It may be good science to evaluate every report on the criteria of evidentiality, but I am not that patient, nor am I trusting that investigation can find the dupes and the liars behind their masks in every instance. It is my belief that one solid *a priori* argument is worth a thousand inconclusive investigations. With ufology's ETH, the most fatal argument to have been directed against accepting appearances is the Problem of Noncontact.

Every thinking ufologist must confront it sooner or later. Even before the saucer era arose, Charles Fort had posed it in counterpoint to his own speculations about extraterrestrials being the cause of UFO observations: "Then why have they not landed, say in Central Park, and had a big time of it - monstrous parade down Broadway, historic turn out, eruptions of confetti?"

Most critics of the ETH have repeated versions of the Problem of Noncontact. A roster of those who accept the fatal character of the noncontact paradox would include James Lipp of Project Sign, Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, Donald Menzel, Peter Kor, Robert Plank, John Keel, William Markowitz, and Robert Sheaffer. There has been no poverty of attempts to weasel around the significance of the dilemma posed by noncontact. Allan Hendry, in an atypically thick-headed moment, called contact an arbitrary desire, and warned the paradox was promoted only "to demean UFOs as imaginary." James M. McCampbell called the paradox "a homocentric fallacy of the most obvious nature" embodying "more whimsy than good reasoning." Robert M.K. Baker considers the paradox on "extremely thin ice" since no one has done a concerted study forecasting the social characteristics of advanced civilisations. Budd Hopkins simply sloughed it off as "irrelevant."

Stanton Friedman at least gave the Problem due attention when he discussed criticism of the ETH. It was his opinion the intent of aliens is "not to seek out lunch with the loonies of earth but rather to get data at their leisure without much risk." He expressed doubts that "the Margaret Meads of Zeta Reticuli" would care to live with a people who have "made such a mess of a nice planet." Friedman's remarks would ring truer had not ufonauts repeatedly shown a lack of social discernment. As geeks, ufonauts uniformly lack class. The reckless driving habits of ufonauts and their evident problems with clunky vessels similarly raises doubts that ufonauts operate by the motto 'safety first'. Even if we grant a medical supertechnology that would not assuage anxiety over the violent tendencies of humans, it is not clear to me their safety would not be enhanced by declaring unambiguously their intentions are strictly anthropological and therefore innocuous. Assuming of course their mission is innocuous. The alternative that they may be criminals can certainly be allowed on the force of a number of UFO incidents. Fear of reprisals would then explain away the lack of communication and possibly some measure of furtiveness. Yet what sort of criminals have access to spacefaring technology? It would seem doubtful that their motive would be economic or impulsive. Politics? No publicity is sought. Even if we could puzzle out a criminal motive, criminal behaviour applies only to a fraction of UFO reports. Do we assume rock-collecting aliens are also criminal to make this explanation of noncontact cover all cases?

Such dilemmas apply to other explanations of extraterrestrial behaviour. Stanton Friedman was able to think of some 26 reasons why aliens might decide to visit Earth. But in going over the list I discovered only a couple of them had inherent in them the ability to explain

the furtive nature of the UFO phenomenon. Those were his ideas of invasion-scouting, and the use of earth as a honeymoon hideaway. Extrapolating human modesty to extraterrestrials is admittedly dubious, but I let it pass anyway. The immediate dilemma for these motives is that the behaviour of UFO entities *en masse* do not really seem to be guided by such motives. What sort of invasion scout does medical examinations? Why aren't abductees primarily in positions of status, and privy to important information? As for the idea of Earth as a secluded, surveillance-free spot where aliens can indulge in wild passion, Villas-Boas-type affairs are not the rule. Modesty can't single-handedly take care of the Problem of Noncontact.

The most common excuse proffered for noncontact is that it is inevitable that superhuman thought or the effects of an independent evolutionary and cultural history would render aliens, in part, incomprehensible. This is perfectly true. Proof: music is one of the great unsolved mysteries of human evolution. There is no widely accepted theory to explain the emotional effect music has on man. Certainly there are no grounds to assume the music sense has a universal survival value that would cause it to arise on alien worlds. Yet what did mankind place on the Voyager probes for interstellar civilisations to find? Records with music on them. It would border on the miraculous if aliens understood what music means to us. Our logic for doing this would be impenetrable, for it is not based on logic at all. It is based in human emotions. Given our own behaviour, one cannot possibly disagree aliens will analogously be capable of mystical behaviour.

To say this however is not the same thing as explaining away noncontact. While we can nonimagine reasons for noncontact, one is equally justified in nonimagining reasons aliens would make contact. The question then turns on deciding the likelihood that all aliens would adhere to philosophies, however inscrutable, mandating non-contact to the exclusion of pro-contact philosophies, however inscrutable they may be. Here we give Charles Fort bonus points for seeing this broader and deadlier version of the Problem of Noncontact: -

"The greatest of mysteries: Why don't they ever come here or send here openly? Of course there is nothing to that mystery if we don't take seriously the notion that we must be interesting. It's probably for moral reasons that they stay away - but even so there must be some degraded ones among them."

As he states elsewhere, there must be "many different kinds of visitors to this earth as there are visitors to New York, to a jail, to a church - some persons go to church to pick pockets for instance." So where are the degraded aliens?

It violates what we see every day about life, society, culture, and intellectual discourse to expect radical uniformity among extraterrestrials.

Just within the sphere of the scrutable, can we imagine any sort of reason to avoid contact which might gain universal assent? No, I think not. Take the oft-cited idea of the Star Trek Prime Directive. Aliens refrain from interfering in the affairs of other cultures to prevent culture shock or contaminating the philosophical development of the subject culture. Looking at the baleful effects of the UFO subculture on our own planet, slight though they are, one might see wisdom in advocating such an ideal. It is however a romantic notion charged with allusions to clashes of culture in human history. Many had horrid consequences - disease, slavery, butchery, thievery, and the deliberate erasure of cultural history. But not all contacts were disastrous. It is hardly certain other worlds had such bad experiences in their histories. Nor is it clear lessons would be learned either here or there. The underlying ethical premise, we can hardly fail to note, is inconsonant with the unscrupulous behaviour shown in some encounters. One can also wonder how aliens moral enough to conceive of noninterference as a noble philosophy could justify sneaking around.

Noninterference is not nearly as elementary an ethical principle as others like cooperation or love. One can imagine precepts of cooperative tolerance which would mandate interaction between alien worlds to learn from each other and possibly increase their mutual survival and mutual well-being. A sharing of the finest of both worlds is an aim even an advocate of self-interest could justify. One can equally see how extraterrestrials might be guided by love and thus seek to alleviate suffering and cultivate joy on alien worlds. To put things in their starkest terms, I procure from theodicy their starkest dilemma, The Problem of Suffering, and direct it to the question of the existence of god-like extraterrestrial civilisations.

If extraterrestrials exist, why do humans suffer needlessly? Scrutable reasons for contact or nonfurtiveness can take many forms besides love. Some possibilities that come to mind: hunting and fishing, art trade and instruction, planet-scaping, antique-hunting, attention-seeking, entertainment, power-seeking, lawsuits against humans, sports, the offering of services - interstellar taxi, impartial police protection (*The Day the Earth Stood Still*), famine relief, exile of undesirables, erotic adventure, eccentric obsession with alien life, playfulness, tourism, territorial displays, and we dare not forget Charles Fort's notion: "Why not missionaries sent here openly to convert us

from our barbarous prohibitions and other taboos, and to prepare the way for a good trade in ultra-bibles and super-whiskies . . ." Add to this the set of motives aliens might have for contact beyond our comprehension and you have a conception of the magnitude the Problem of Noncontact presents to the ETH. The odds all possible visiting extraterrestrials would be philosophically opposed to contact seems *a priori* remote.

Parenthetically, it must be observed that if one believes the evidence for an extraterrestrial presence is too extraordinary to reject even in the face of innate improbability, the argument here has implications the extraterrestrial advocate is obliged to come to terms with. If UFOs are real, the cosmos is barren! There is no diversity. The cosmos is home to entities with only a narrow range of behaviours.

If UFOs are real, we are quite alone. There are no aliens in any profound sense analogous to humanity. The startling corollary follows: Only Humans Love.

Does that sound arrogant? Yet it must be so. Aliens capable of love would make contact rather than fly about indifferent to humanity. If you are going to affirm that UFOs are extraterrestrial craft, the heavens are sending us only geeks for playmates. Either we have incredibly bad luck or there is almost no variety of lifeforms blooming in the vasty depths of space. The universe does not know how to throw a good party.

In fairness, Charles Fort did proffer a way round the paradoxical absence of degraded aliens. "We are property", he wrote. The degraded ones are warned off. It would in principle reduce much of the problem of diversity, but it hardly eliminates it. Unless we are able to reduce the number of owners to one or a few, diversity would still be expected. The range of forms found in the UFO phenomenon would be problematic to such an assumption. One might be tempted to extrapolate territoriality behaviour found in many species to the realms of outer space, but such behaviour is mostly directed to members of one's own species. The range of forms again makes the extrapolation problematic. The concept of property appears to not be a cultural universal on top of all this. Many alien cultures quite possibly would not recognise the idea of property rights and ignore warnings not to trespass. We also might question if owners would feel the earth is worth defending against other aliens. UFO behaviour gives no indication resources are being exploited. No special care is lavished on humans or other animals leading us to doubt we are regarded as priceless possessions. There is no blatant evidence of cultivation, weeding, or artificial breeding on a planetary scale. It just doesn't ring true.

Having admitted ufonauts seem indifferent to the state of human life leads naturally to a different explanation for noncontact. Maybe technologically advanced life all evolves to such a higher plane of existence or all desires artificially are taken care of such that all life leads up to a state of universal total indifference. This can be justified by analogy to the universal indifference humans show protozoa. This could explain Fermi's Paradox, but it won't work with the UFO phenomenon.

The universe is just too big for aliens to turn up here by accident. If UFOs are representative of an alien presence a motive must exist to target themselves onto earth. If we saw a billion mile wide alien construct zip along past the orbit of Saturn, speculation about alien pleasure palaces and indifference would make sense. Craft navigating the onion skin of our atmosphere requires at least the semblance of an excuse for being here.

I believe an appreciation for logical force of the Problem of Noncontact must lead to the conclusion that the ETH has a very low order of probability and should be rejected as a viable theoretical construct for the UFO phenomenon.

Let's pretend, however, that improbable though it is the UFO phenomenon actually is caused by visiting extraterrestrials. Could the perversity of the UFO phenomenon be accounted for within the framework of extraterrestrial speculation? Certainly. In a broad sense there is little that couldn't be accounted for by use of a magical, even god-like, technology. However, there is also what one might call a natural sense in which the UFO phenomenon can be fit into a logical extrapolation about what can be expected of an extraterrestrial civilisation.

Delillo and Marx, in 1979, presented what I consider the first bold attempt to integrate the facts of the UFO phenomenon to the ETH. No gosh-wow, gee, they're real, what could it mean? They took a hard look at the data and pieced together a portrait from the broad outlines of what was there to work with. They seem to be among the first researchers to recognise what the visible lack of sophistication of aliens implied for the ETH. I also took as promising their acceptance of the premise that aliens would likely have more than one motive for their presence here. They ended up with a construct they called The Tourist Theory.

Arguing cogently from the data available to them, they determined there were two overarching themes: ufonauts as tourists and ufonauts as nature reserve officers. Like

tourists, ufonauts have a penchant for gazing at the surroundings. They collect rocks and hunt for souvenirs. The chasing of cars and the buzzing of people on the ground is consistent with some tourist behaviour. The randomly periodic flaps of interest are also readily interpretable as the whims of extraterrestrial tourists - this year Europe, next year South America, and maybe a few will brave Africa for a safari in between. It would be unsystematic, but curious clusterings would follow events like the surprise turned up by park personnel when looking at two specimens in 1973 in the Southern US or concerted advertising campaigns by this or that agency. It struck me after seeing this thesis that this scheme would also draw in such cases as Reeve's picture-taking alien, sexual exploits, and those inevitable tour bus breakdowns in the middle of nowhere. It also makes sense of the range of language fluency/difficulty seen in reports and the range of ignorance/knowledgeability shown about earth customs. A strictly professional operation would presumably be more uniformly trained. Of course the tourist theory would not explain the abduction of humans, therefore Delillo and Marx tack on the necessity of park rangers to keep tabs on the more interesting native lifeforms. Just as humans abduct animals for census, health checks, and tracking; aliens abduct humans for analogous concerns. Presumably the rangers also look out for poachers (a la Valentich?) and keep an eye on the tourists to prevent their despoiling the balance of nature. They ensure there will be something there for future generations of tourists.

It fits the data to a fair degree, but I think a few amendments help to clarify the portrait in the detailing. I consciously resist futuristic speculations which project millennial and apocalyptic conclusions since the UGH and the klunky technology of the UFO data strongly implies the Principle of Mediocrity should guide our reasoning. I take as the starting point of this theory the proposition that spacefaring is an inevitable outgrowth of the impulse to explore. Exploration is a deeply ingrained feature to life. There is evidence that even microscopic protozoa possess this impulse. The survival value of this behaviour is easy to understand. The more widely dispersed a gene is in the environment, the less likely it will be eliminated in local disasters and the less severe will be the competition for resources among offspring. Spacefaring will enhance possibilities for survival in the event of nuclear holocaust or resource exhaustion or environment toxicity. The search to find advanced life-forms is probably unconsciously related to the hunting drive of carnivorous species, but a species intelligent enough to develop a spacefaring technology will likely see the possibility of enhancing both the ability to survive and ability to fulfil needs by finding the example of a successful advanced species. Contacting alien civilisations is a likely goal of a concerted space exploration program.

The large timescale of the universe is unfavourable to the meeting of civilisations at the same level of development. It favours the discovery of superior civilisations or planets that have not yet spawned a technological species. In the latter instance the question arises what to do with the undeveloped world. Colonisation? I should think the prospect of planetary life quite grim after living on star roamers free of insects, predators, storms, disease, and the stress of gravity. Let us assume instead it is allowed to evolve its own advanced life. The planet however would likely be subject to a monitoring program which would shepherd and eventually welcome to the galactic club certain elite species.

The problem, as I see it, is that the monitoring program would necessarily be bureaucratic in form. Over the millions of years such a program must stay in place the Peter Principle would eventually cause all positions in this bureaucracy to become filled with incompetents. In accordance with universal laws describing the evolution of bureaucracies, the original intents of the program would become eroded and eventually actively opposed. One could count on the operation mucking things up in the host culture. The decision to make contact would be continually opposed or postponed. Incompetent officials would lead to demoralisation of the staff directly involved in planetside activities. Incompetent supervision would lead to malcontents and goof-offs appearing and a probable perception that the census and sampling operations are pointless. Such an operation in point of fact would be unnecessary for alien survival or well-being. It could easily be consigned such a low priority in the scheme of an alien civilisation that resources would be periodically cut back. Poor staffing and poorly-maintained equipment would follow. Resentments could build and find expression in mistreating specimens.

Here we have a portrait which makes sense of many bits and pieces of the UFO puzzle. Noncontact arises through LeChatelier's Principle: complex systems tend to oppose their own proper function. The UGH reflects staffing problems: klutzy neophytes are common because of rapid turnover in a job few want while some incompetents get stuck for various reasons and show nasty dispositions to abductees. Call this the Floundering Nature Park Theory.

Most of the other perversities of the UFO phenomenon could then be laid to the enhanced Pauli fx of klutzy aliens or murph-crunching space drives and the UFO phenomenon would be a solved mystery awaiting someone to tie a bow around it. Later thinkers could go on to speculate how natural selection might favour only tourists and bureaucrats taking over the cosmos. Stay-at-home types die in nuclear

holocausts and eco-catastrophes. With the advent of computers, important jobs will be usurped by their superiority. The rich unemployed become tourists, the poor unemployed are shoved into bureaucratic jobs which give them an illusion of purposefulness. Sufficiently geeky bureaucrats are transferred into outer space and out of everyone else's hair. They survive therefore when disaster strikes the home-world. Natural selection might even be said to favour the survival of geeky species. Macho species blow themselves up. Romantic species remain so sentimental about Nature and find technology so repulsive they never go spacefaring. There will have to be a lot of wrinkles ironed out however, and I'm not inclined to bother since one dislikes taking 'what-if' too far.

The Floundering Nature Park Theory fits what is there, but not what isn't there. Delinquent tourists and park employees would be counted on to buzz down the main streets of metropolitan areas tossing beer cans at the natives and looking to have some real fun. Some would be attracted by the peculiar spectacles of sporting events and revivals. Park employees might rescue abused human children and make them pets or adoptees. Sentimentalists might try to slip the natives advanced cures. We also note that anthropologists frequently go native and join up with the tribe they were only supposed to study. Computer millennialists could also be justified in an *a priori* suspicion that an advanced civilisation would make a monitoring/shepherding operation completely automated to avoid a travesty like the one implied by this interpretation of UFO reports.

Whatever variation of the ETH can be imagined to account for the UFO phenomenon, the problem of degraded aliens lies in the shadows to snatch it away. There are just too many possibilities in a universe full of life.

Editor's Note

While this excellent article is completely self-contained, Martin also sent three pages of references and notes that pick up some of the ideas in it. Demands on space don't really allow me to publish them, but if any one sends an sae large enough, I'll be happy to send them photocopies!

MAPS OF HEAVEN

So what's it like living over there, up there, down there, out there, wherever our communicators say that they come from? What way of life do they lead? What are their interests and priorities? Why (he asks, mischievously) do they so seldom tell us anything we don't already know? **Maps of Heaven** is a column covering all these matters, and I'll hope to investigate a variety of non-human cultures from issue to issue.

A delightful culture to start with would be that outlined in the journal *Connecting Link*, No.20, 104 glossy pages of extraterrestrial esoterica, available for \$8 from 9392 Whitneyville RD, Alto, Michigan 49302-9694, USA. Outstanding in this is 'A Tour of a Pleiadean Ship' by Nina Jenice. The Pleiadean Fleet is part of Ashtar Command, and the Mothership - the subject of this article - is "as large as the width of the United States, and can be more than 40 stories or levels high." The author provides us with her account of this Mothership because, "It is important for the Pleiadean Starseeds upon this Earth to remember who we are Now: I hope to refresh your memories, to link us together in a common cause through remembering our missions and acting upon them."

However, though we will explore all sorts of alternative worlds in future issues, this time I want to concentrate on a subject rather nearer home: the ongoing struggle in British Spiritualism. No doubt this is one we'll return to again, because it has at its heart the problem of belief versus evidence, one that AS readers are going to meet all the time. Briefly, the struggle has three main participants.

Firstly, there are the traditional Spiritualists, with whom I tend to have most sympathy. Over 145 years, they have considered the delivery of survival evidence to be the Movement's priority, and as standards, and numbers of effective working mediums dwindle, they are becoming concerned, if not desperate. Their main channel of communication has long been the well-established *Psychic News*, though that has certainly been quirkier since editor Tim Haigh took over. They want to ensure higher standards of platform mediumship - the passing on of verifiable and familiar information to specific recipients - and to prove that, to use Maurice Barbanell's *PN* masthead, "You Will Live After You Die". With the current standard of mediumship, they have a major challenge to overcome.

Secondly, there is the 'Physicists'' case for survival, which seems to be a reaction to mediumship's failings. It

is propounded avidly and inexhaustibly by 'scientist' Ron Pearson, and prolific writer, pamphleteer and letter-writer Michael Roll, who sends his distinctive diatribes to people of influence and status all over the world. I can guess what they do with them! It is unfortunate that the 'physicists'' case isn't really put over by physicists. Their original platform was in *PN* - the main reason I gave up writing my column for the paper - but now they have become a fixture in the new monthly *Psychic World*. Pearson's article in the August issue is titled, 'Gravitation: A Key to Understanding the Paranormal'. I really don't understand this article, but I gather that we have to accept that 'an ether' exists, so that Einstein's theories, as adapted by ex-science teacher Pearson, then make sense, and "physics is immediately extended to encompass the so-called 'paranormal', and shows that worlds of Spirit can be explained as a natural consequence." Roll's article is headed 'The physicists Case for Survival Is Censored in Great Britain', and explains (I think) that the Thought Police Force in Great Britain (sic) prevents Ron Pearson having a television debate about NDEs with Dr. Sue Blackmore. He, and a couple of others are also, apparently, "banned from writing articles in the national press, scientific publications and all large circulation magazines." (Banned by whom? We shall probably never know). However, "Genuine scientists have broken through on local radio stations throughout the country, and the public response is overwhelming." No doubt you, too, have been overwhelmed by the clamour. So much for the Physicists.

The third group with specific influence is the Noah's Ark Society for Physical Mediumship, which enjoyed great early support from *Psychic News* and some from *Psychic World*. Committed to reestablishing a pre-1955 style of mediumship, and willing to accept such dubious practitioners as the late Helen Duncan at face value it, too, seems to be in decline. One of the two 'physical' mediums attached to the NAS who have been willing to work semi-publicly (and at some cost) was caught in the middle of what certainly looked like deliberate fraud, and the NAS has since then retracted most of its previous commitments to working in light, with still or video cameras, or under research conditions. The second edition of their Teaching Booklet No.2, 'The NAS Modern Day Guide to the Development and Safe Practice of Physical Mediumship' reads more like a prayer-book, or a set of magical rituals than anything else. How, where and when to sit, with how many sitters, "Absolute darkness" is insisted on. There should be an odd number of sitters (Lady, Gent, Lady, Gent), and if you have less than 4 sitters "there is generally not enough 'power' or psychic force." Living pot plants may "add extra energy". "Spirit have requested in the circle a saucer containing half a teaspoon each of . . . Vitamins C, D and B2 (Riboflavin), Calcium, Iron and

Magnesium, plus a teaspoon of common salt . . . which help to replace lost energy." And so it goes on, for 24 pages, recommending that circles should first attempt table-turning, and work on from there.

About halfway through these instructions, pseudo-religious elements come into play. Prayer is essential, and is a very powerful tool in making contact with Spirit. And, "It is also vital that . . . we ask for protection from unwelcome spirit entities of a lower order." Every circle member should pray before the red light is turned out. Darkness is necessary because, "Ectoplasm is created by the spirit people out of a mixture of chemicals and body fluids from the medium and sitters, and a number of types of kinetic, magnetic and electrical energies. The chemicals, just like the emulsions on photographic film, are sensitive to light, and therefore require darkness to develop . . . the normal process of the creation of human life is completed at an extremely accelerated rate by spirit . . ."

There is much more of this, but what has really caused ructions, especially with the Physicists, is the use of hymns - a recommended list is provided - to create the right atmosphere for spirit events. The Physicists detest religion, and its trappings, but then, they don't claim to be talking to the dead, only to know where, in the broadest terms, they might be. The debate about this one goes on, and we will follow it.

So, why am I pursuing this particular issue in **Maps of Heaven**? Mainly because this is where the most managed forms of contact with NHIs occur. Numbers of people claim to know what Spirit wants, how it functions, how surviving intelligences return from the dead, and exactly what they do to make themselves apparent. The NAS, in particular, is claiming that it knows how spirits behave, and what methods and processes will encourage them to progress from making contact via mental mediumship, to physical mediumship, to full-scale ectoplasmic figure materialisation. These are grand claims, and little has been done to substantiate them. If some human intelligences do survive death, surely they should be coming up with some better evidence of where they are, how they got there, where they are going, and what they are doing. Theirs should, from the sources of information we apparently have available, be the first Map Of Heaven we researchers can draw. But it isn't. And we really do need some reasons for that.

VIRGIN TERRITORY

Ten or eleven years ago, I wrote my one and only real book, *The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary* (Aquarian 1983). When I was collecting material for it, one particularly intriguing account came via a colleague at work, whose aunt in New York was a follower of Veronica Leuken, the 'Bayside Seeress'. Thus, the Bayside visions came to appear not only in the book, but a good many other places besides.

My interest in religious visions persists - after all, there is no longer history of contact with any NHI than of that with the Blessed Virgin Mary - but I'd heard nothing more from Bayside till a couple of weeks ago, when I found a contact listed in one of the mound of magazines that comes with editing TWP. I wrote off, and received a swift reply from one Cyril Marystone, concerned about my publishing *Alien Scripture*. The visions apparently continue, and some of the messages have dealt with the matter of alien contacts. I understand that a package of updated material is on its way by sea, but for now, I'll quote part of the letter . . .

" As the Bayside messages indicate, we are now involved in a great hidden supernatural war - which has always been with us, of course - and the supernatural messages are coming from both the side of God (good and truth) and the side of Satan (evil and deception). The messages also indicate that the UFO vehicles are from Hell, and the messages of the UFO creatures are from Satan.

You may not accept this. In any case, one should not look at the propaganda of the aliens - their 'messages' - but at their actions. "By their fruit you shall know them." To me the overwhelming evidence since the 1940s shows that the works of the aliens are evil: abductions and kidnappings, deceptions, secret sexual manipulations, terrorizings of humans, "accidents that are not accidents", burns, murders, poltergeist phenomena, creation of anti-God cults, mutilations and blood-drainings of animals and men, etc. - actions which would be judged evil and/or criminal if the aliens were simply humans - are being committed by them".

Visions - as often as not accompanied by messages - occur all over the world, and I hope that, with some help from readers, (hint!) this column can expand to give good coverage of this area of experience. To set things going, here's a couple of reports that have come my way recently. The first, from the *Rocky Mountain News*, Colorado, 12.5.93, comes via Gene Duplantier . . .

" An 18-month investigation found no evidence that a Highlands Ranch homemaker has seen apparitions of the Virgin Mary, Archbishop J.Francis Stafford said Tuesday. But, Stafford said, the investigation will continue.

'Even though the evaluation of the alleged apparitions is proceeding, I can state that, from the information available, there does not appear to be evidence which would indicate a supernatural origin for these alleged events,' Stafford said in a written statement. He has appointed three priests and two nuns to investigate reports by Theresa Lopez that she sees and hears the Virgin Mary at Mother Cabrini Shrine on Lookout Mountain and elsewhere. The case is the only reported apparition under investigation in Colorado.

Between 1,500 and 2,000 people show up at the shrine on the second Sunday of each month, including an average of 10 busloads from Canada, said shrine administrator Sister Bernadette Casciano. Lopez said the apparitions she sees at the shrine appear on second Sundays. After Lopez's initial reports around Thanksgiving 1991, more than 6,000 people converged on the shrine. At least three people suffered permanent vision damage from looking at the sun after others said they could see a spinning sun, a halo, or the 'gateway to heaven.' . . . "

The second report is a strange one, from the Christian magazine *Alpha*, always on the lookout for a bit of one-upmanship over other major religions . . .

" Up to 200 Nepalese, mostly Hindus, have reported seeing a vision of Jesus over Tansen, the chief town in the remote Palpa district of mid-west Nepal. *Go*, the quarterly magazine of Interserve, has reported an upsurge of interest in Christ following the amazing vision. Eye witnesses reported that Christ was shown from the waist up, crucified with hands flat and head bowed.

"Even from the path we could see him, out there over Masyam Hill. His legs weren't visible, just his chest, and his head bowed, and his arms spread out as if on a cross - but we couldn't see his fingers. He was so bright! We could see him clearly . . . I don't know how long we stood there before he went - half an hour maybe. I was too busy looking at him to look at my watch! We couldn't stop watching, we didn't want to leave, so we didn't go and tell anyone else. But we soon found out that lots of other people had seen him, too."

If you come across any information or news items about religious visions, or have any comments to make, or views on what is seen and why, please write and tell us!

The Importance of Omega

by Hilary Evans

In view of the substantial number of people who are currently being abducted by extraterrestrial aliens for their sinister purposes - a recent estimate from Professor John Mack, of the Harvard Medical School, puts the figure at 3+ million for the United States alone [1] - many readers of these pages must be asking themselves: could it happen to me?

Unfortunately, expert opinion is divided on that matter. One school of thought holds that the selection of victims is purely random, so that you are as likely as your next-door neighbour to find yourself strapped to an examination table aboard an alien spaceship. Others prefer to think, either that some kind of selectivity is at work on the part of the abductors, or that some kinds of people are more at risk than others. There is, of course, a further school of thought which holds that no one is being abducted at all and that the whole abduction business is a kind of shared delusion. But even if this should turn out to be the correct explanation, the question would still remain: is everyone equally likely to be sucked into this delusion, or are some people more vulnerable than others?

Let us start by getting the abduction scenario into perspective. The first fact we have to face is this: it is the people who have spent most time with abductees who are the most strongly convinced that their stories are based on physical fact - that the abductees are, literally, people who have been abducted. This is the viewpoint expressed by people such as Budd Hopkins, Leo Sprinkle, and David Jacobs, all of them persons who command considerable respect: it is also the viewpoint held by a great many other people, less eminent but sometimes more qualified, such as Dr. Edith Fiore, a practising clinical psychiatrist, and Thomas Bullard, a professional folklorist.

Those who remain unconvinced of the reality of the abductions, by contrast, are a motley and generally unqualified crew Philip Klass, a journalist; Edoardo Russo, a doctor of economic science; Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, who works for the Ford Motor Co.; John Rimmer and myself, librarians; and so on. One of the rare skeptics to possess any professional qualifications to support his dissent is

Robert Baker of the University of Kentucky. Not one of these doubters has spent the thousands of man-hours in first-hand contact with abductees that Hopkins et al have done.

On the face of it, then, the position appears to be this:

1. Hundreds of people are claiming, in apparent sincerity, to have been abducted by aliens: there are good grounds for believing that for every one of them who has openly made such a claim, there are thousands more who have undergone the same experience, consciously or otherwise.

2. Those who have spent most time with these claimants are convinced that their experiences are based on reality and that their stories can be accepted literally.

3. Those who doubt this literal reality have little or no first-hand experience of abductees: such first-hand acquaintance as they may have is likely to take the form of superficial meetings rather than in-depth investigation.

On the face of it then, the reasons for going along with the abductions-are-real position substantially outweigh those for rejecting it.

The most amazing event in the history of mankind

If the Believers are right, then millions of people are being taken by extraterrestrials on board their spacecraft, where they are subjected to a distressing medical-style examination and, often, to distasteful sexual experiences which sometimes result in childbirth. If these stories are true, it is the most extraordinary thing to happen to humankind since the dawn of history.

If these stories are true, we would expect the governments of the world, the media, not to mention the rest of us, to be excited to such an extent as to make all other happenings - our wars and revolutions, our royal separations and religious quarrels - seem trivial and insignificant. Yet our governments do not seem to be concerned; the media take an interest, but only intermittently, and when they do their interest tends to be one of amusement rather than excitement. When we send an astronaut into space, it dominates the news broadcasts: yet when these space people visit us, it is rarely mentioned by press or television. Alien abductions, it seems, are fait divers rather than front page headlines.

Why such a divergence between what we would expect, and what actually takes place? Why, if the debating position of the pro-abduction lobby is so strong, have they not succeeded in

convincing the rest of the world? The answer is this: while the skeptics cannot prove that the believers are mistaken, what they *can* do is offer an alternative explanation. They accept the evidence - the same evidence that has convinced the believers that abductions are real: but they do not accept that the evidence leads necessarily to that conclusion. They accept, by and large, that abductees have had an experience of some kind: but they argue that the experience could be occurring on a different level of reality than that of our everyday experience of our physical environment. Quite simply, they accept the 'abduction experience', but reject the 'abduction fact'.

Errors of Interpretation

If the skeptics are right, the abductees and their investigators are wrongly interpreting the seemingly-real abduction experience, and mistaking fantasy for fact. Not so, say the Believers. They have open-mindedly considered the possibility that abduction experiences are private fantasies, but they conclude that this cannot be the case because psychological tests show that abductees are as sane and balanced as anyone else.

This belief was reinforced by a survey published in 1985 by the Fund for UFO Research. [2] A group of nine people, all of whom claimed abduction experiences, were tested by a psychologist *who did not know of their claims*. She found that

- a battery of standard tests failed to detect any psychopathology that could be reasonably be expected to be a cause for UFO abduction reports
- the psychological characteristics which the tests did detect are generally consistent with what would be expected from people who have been subjected to a traumatic event such as a kidnapping or 'abduction'.

That is to say, the subjects were not 'mad' in the generally accepted sense of the word, and their psychological state was what we would expect if they had indeed been literally abducted, as they claimed. In consequence, Hopkins and the rest saw no reason to doubt the literal truth of the abductees' claims.

Once again, however, the issues were clouded by problems of interpretation. In particular, it seemed that the Believers were adopting a somewhat simplistic either-or position with regard to fantasy: a position which boils down to this - if you are sane, you don't indulge in fantasy: if you fantasise, you are not clinically sane.

But this was refuted by the skeptics who pointed out that we all of us fantasise a great deal, most notably at night, in our dreams, but also in our waking lives, in day-dreams and reveries. Agreed, said the Believers, but we don't mistake those fantasies for reality. Not so, said the Skeptics, some of us do.

The fantasy-prone 4%

Look around you at your friends, relatives, work colleagues and ask yourself, would you be equally surprised if any of them reported an abduction experience, or are there some people you think it would be more likely to happen to than others? Many of us would choose the second alternative. Trouble is, that's purely a subjective response, a gut feeling based only on our knowledge of our fellow creatures that we've built up in the course of our lives. It's not much to set in the balance against FUFOR's report conducted by a qualified behavioural scientist.

However, critics noted that when you read the FUFOR report carefully, it contains hints that while abductees may be normal, some are more normal than others. They noted that Dr Slater also found that "anxiety was prominent in all nine subjects, some of whom were simply flooded with it . . ." They displayed "considerable sensitivity to affect [emotion, mood etc] and fantasy . . . identity disturbance, lowered self-esteem, lack of emotional maturity, impaired identity sense . . ." In other words, even if they were not clinically insane, they were not typical of the population as a whole in certain significant respects. However, working with so small a sample of people, the figures were not exactly conclusive.

No one can live among the human race for very long without realising that it contains many categories of people whose special temperament sets them apart from their fellows. Spirit mediums, gifted artists, psychics of many kinds - such people are clearly 'different' from you and me, without being clinically insane.

So it should not surprise us to find that there exists yet another such group, characterised by a belief that each has been abducted by aliens. The question is, what is the nature of this belief? For the Believers, the question is easily answered: these people had a special kind of experience, it isn't surprising that they have special behaviour characteristics as a consequence. But psychology offers an alternative reading.

Keith Basterfield, a veteran Australian investigator, has for many years been studying the behaviour of abductees. In 1991, together with sociologist Robert Bartholomew and

George Howard, Professor of Psychology at Notre Dame University, Indiana, he suggested that many if not all UFO abductees are members of the very interesting 4% of the population who can be defined as 'fantasy-prone'. [3]

The concept of fantasy-proneness was originally formulated by Wilson & Barber in 1983, to define a category of people whose private fantasies are so real as to be indistinguishable from 'real' experience:

" As children, they interacted with fantasised people or animals, clearly seeing, hearing and feeling them in the same way as they perceived living people and animals. They see [imagined] sights equally well with their eyes open or closed, imagined aromas are sensed, imagined sounds are heard, imagined tactile sensations are felt convincingly. Almost all have vivid sexual fantasies that they experience 'as real as real' with all the sights, sounds, smells, emotions, feelings, and physical sensations, so realistic that 75% report that they have had orgasms produced solely by sexual fantasies."

Basterfield and his colleagues found that UFO abductees behave in many ways like the fantasy-prone subjects [FPP] tested by Wilson & Barber. Abductees, like FPP, are highly suggestible and easily hypnotised. Like FPP, they describe themselves as 'psychic' or 'sensitive' and report a wide spectrum of psychic phenomena such as telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and poltergeist activity. Like FPP, abductees are more likely than the rest of us to have out-of-the-body experiences, to be able to give healing, to receive spiritual or 'life-enhancing' messages, to see religious visions.

Basterfield offers many examples. One of the best known is the case of Barney Hill, whose psychological state led him to seek treatment which revealed an apparent abduction along with his wife Betty: he also developed physical signs, including a "ring of warts around his genital area corresponding to the position of a cup-like device he said was placed there by his abductors". Many of Budd Hopkins' abductee subjects report strange marks on their bodies which they attribute to 'implants' placed under their skin by the aliens, to monitor their behaviour in some unknown way. Whitley Streiber, who Basterfield suggests as a candidate for the fantasy-prone diagnosis, at one time claimed to have had such an implant, though when an examination was carried out it was found that it had already been removed by the aliens, and indeed no such implant has ever been found in any abduction subject.

If Bartholomew, Basterfield and Howard are correct in their hypothesis - and their arguments are strong - abduction

stories are simply fantasies, chosen because the idea of extraterrestrial visitation is so widespread in today's culture. True, fantasy-prone people are relatively rare: but if we accept the Wilson/Barber figure of 4% of the population, that means there are some 10 million fantasy-prone persons in the USA alone, quite enough to account for the abductee population!

Fantasy proneness certainly offered a viable model for an abduction syndrome. But was it anything more than speculation?

Heading Towards Omega

This is where Kenneth Ring, of the University of Connecticut's Psychology Department, stepped into the debate. Though not an expert on UFOs or UFO abductions, he had made a highly respected name for himself in the field of near-death experiences; and what he had read about abductions led him to think there might be significant similarities in the two kinds of experience.

This led to the Omega Project, developed by himself and colleague Christopher Rosing, which set out to compare those who report abduction experiences (UFOers) with near death experiencers (NDEers). Like Basterfield & co, Ring & co were dissatisfied with the conclusion of the FUFOR findings, which seemed to suggest that because abductees showed no signs of psychopathology, they were indistinguishable from the rest of the population except that they displayed signs which could mean they had had a traumatic experience. While there was, as Dr Slater had correctly shown, no indication that these people were clinically unbalanced, at the same time, they did present a specific psychological profile which meant that they differ in certain specific respects from the norm.

Drawing on a much larger sample [264 subjects], Ring & co's *Omega Project* [4] tested people who claimed UFO-encounter and Near-Death Experiences. They found that these two categories of people shared many psychological characteristics which are not shared by the general population. Like Basterfield & co, they found that their subjects reported psychic abilities and experiences, and noted mental, psychological and physical changes as a result of their experience. They were more sensitive to alternate realities, reported expanded mental awareness and a proneness to paranormal functioning, such as causing electric or electronic malfunction. In addition, they found a marked correlation with childhood trauma, frequently taking the form of specific sexual abuse. This leads them to conclude:

" What we are suggesting is that such persons are what we

might call *psychological sensitives*, and that it is their traumatic childhoods that have helped to make them so".

The importance of the Omega Project is that it provides scientific evidence for what the abduction-skeptics have long felt intuitively: that people who report close encounter experiences with extraterrestrials are not typical of the population as a whole.

However, there also emerged from the Omega findings a highly disconcerting fact: when their subjects were tested specifically for fantasy-proneness, they did not appear to be markedly different from the rest of the population. Encounter-proneness, it seems, does not go hand-in-hand with fantasy-proneness.

At first sight, this seems to invalidate Basterfield & co's hypothesis. However, we must remember that we are dealing with ideas that, at present, are still very speculative, and imperfectly formulated. Even though Ring & co's subjects do not match existing criteria for fantasy-proneness, it is clear they have much in common. In other words, both these two projects are working towards the identification of a special sort of person who is more likely than the rest of us to have an abduction experience. As Robert Baker reminds us, psychiatric diagnosis is not a science, but an art, and we are a long way from formulating reliable criteria which will enable doctors to distinguish one kind of mental condition from another. In the celebrated Rosenhahn Study of 1973, "eight normal and sane individuals gained admission to twelve different and well-respected psychiatric hospitals by feigning mental illness: all but one were diagnosed as 'schizophrenic'. In none of the cases was the person's sanity discovered".

Evaluating the Omega Experience

Having presented their findings, Ring & Rosing set out their conclusions: they speculate that the encounter experience is a psychological process, related to their personal development. So far, so good: it is pretty much what I had suggested in my own writings, and what Jung had adumbrated as long ago as 1958. But Ring goes further, and registers his belief that this individual psychological process is part of a cosmic plan for the resuscitation of the human race. Others - myself for one - find it easier to believe that the process is a purely internal one, related to the individual - something like the old religious conversion process, but appearing in modern guise acceptable to present-day beliefs.

There is another respect in which I find Ring & co's conclusions difficult to accept. In considering the

implications of their study, they speculate whether the characteristics displayed by their subjects are caused directly by their experience, or come about as a result of "differences in lifestyle afterward: changes in diet, meditation practices, or the kinds of group people join or the reading they do." But in either case, they assume that the subjects they tested were the way they were as a consequence of the experience. In this they agree with the FUFOR psychologist's findings, but not with the fantasy-prone hypothesis, which suggests that the people had the experience because they were already 'special'.

The problem stems from the fact, of course, that abduction witnesses are never studied *before* their experience, only *after*, so we have little or no information as to what they were like previously. The witnesses themselves will tell us their lives have been changed dramatically; but can we be sure this is the case? Personally, I have to say that I'm with Basterfield & co on this matter, and believe that the abduction experiences happened to these people because they were *already* the kind of people to whom abduction experiences would occur. However, such questions can be no more than speculation at the present stage of our research: what is important is the general principle, the abduction as psychological process rather than physical reality, and on that, at any rate, Ring & co and Bartholomew & co are agreed, along with probably the majority of doubters.

When truth becomes unimportant

One of the strongest reasons for believing that something real is taking place is the psychological condition of the people who tell these abduction stories. Many of them are frightened and shocked, some to the point where they need psychiatric treatment: nearly all crave comfort and sympathy.

Hardly less impressive are the long-term effects. Almost everyone who undergoes the abduction experience is changed by it - sometimes to the extent of changing their lives from top to bottom: they change their way of life, they leave their present families, they choose a different occupation, they adopt new values, develop new skills. John and Sue Day, who claimed an abduction experience in England in 1974, changed their lives completely after the event: after a breakdown, John gave up smoking, took to writing poems, gave up his job and went to work helping the mentally handicapped. Once again we have to say that if an experience can change a person's life to such an extent, it must be in some sense a real experience.

But an experience does not have to be literally true to be valuable. Particularly illuminating in this context is the

case of Arizona housewife Christy Dennis, who in 1981 told Leo Sprinkle's Rocky Mountain abductee conference [5] how she had been floated out of bed into an alien spacecraft. Her story was rich in detail, and unquestionably very meaningful to her: she had a profound spiritual interaction with the extraterrestrial beings who abducted her, and it was undoubtedly an important and traumatic landmark in her personal development. Nobody who heard her speak, or reads her account, could doubt for a moment the sincerity of her testimony.

Yet a year later, when the conference was held again, a letter from Christy Dennis was sent to the delegates, confessing the story she had told a year earlier was a fabrication. "I am not a contactee," she wrote, "I have never had an extraterrestrial experience. The stories I have told and the book I have written are nothing more than fair science fiction".

Of course, in the strict meaning of the word, Mrs Dennis was lying. And in the normal way of things, that would be sufficient for us to set her story on one side and ignore it. But the abduction experience is *not* 'the normal way of things', and this 'untrue' experience is just as pertinent as the 'true' experiences, and in fact tells us *more* about what is going on.

This article sets out to emphasise the importance of Ring & co's Omega findings, not to evaluate the conclusions they draw from them. If I do not find his conclusions persuasive, this in no way diminishes the value of his project which establishes, on a scientific basis, the reality, and the significance, of the abduction experience as psychological process.

Not everyone has such experiences: not everyone needs them. But it does seem as though those who have abduction experiences are those who *need* to have them. And it doesn't very much matter, for that purpose, whether or not abductions are literally true. Christy Dennis's fiction probably did her just as much good as if it had been fact.

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HELL ON EARTH

Wasps are, I suspect, more dangerous than Satanists. I know something of black magic, psychic attack and the rest, but remain unconvinced of an actual, independent element of power. I doubt that any magic works on those who are ignorant of it. Those who are aware and afraid of a threat may display all sorts of reactions that could give the impression of the effectiveness of a curse, a spell, an invocation or whatever. But for sheer, effective, bloody-mindedness and unpleasantness to total strangers, I'd go for the wasps every time.

Unimpressed as I am by the traditional versions of the 'nasty occult' end of paranormal experience - accessible Satanism seems to be a mix of barely-repressed neo-Nazis, misogynist heavy metal fans, and fringe paedophiles still disappointed by the death of Alex Sanders - the dark side of contact with NHIs takes many forms. It may be that the purpose of this column is to distinguish those which are self-inflicted by western minds accustomed to a liturgy which declares "and there is no health in us", and those which may have some genuinely external content.

I never thought much about the issue till I came across a brief phrase in *Breakthrough*, the book about Konstantin Raudive's work on the Electronic Voice Phenomenon, published in the early 70's. Among numerous brief and bland assurances of some fragmented form of survival, recorded semi-comprehensibly and in numerous languages on miles of recording tape, popped up the phrase, "It is dark here. Here the birds burn." To me, much into Spiritualism and hints of the Summerland, this came as a nasty shock, and its impact has remained. This would be the greatest betrayal of trust, the ruination of hope. Survival research is supposed to prove that our consciousness, will, and awareness can survive bodily death. But who wants to survive on into a place where it is dark, and the birds burn?

It made me think, particularly when I met individuals who told me they were involved in 'rescue circles', apparently working to contact unhappy spirits trapped between this world and the next. The theory was that one or more of the group would communicate with the spirit, probably while in trance, have a chat, explain where the spirit had gone wrong, and send it off in the right direction. Interestingly, in the context of later NDE material, I'm pretty sure that this 'right direction' involved a tunnel of light, and deceased friends and relatives waiting at the

end. But the grim point was that some spirits, surviving death adequately enough, were then stuck in this miserable limbo, sometimes for many years. Once there, they depend on earthbound humans of rare talents to gather in the right place, at the right time, to rescue them, and help them on their way.

Apparently, such rescue work still goes on. Meanwhile, of course, any good evangelical bookshop can provide several detailed volumes explaining how (Holy) Spirit-filled Christians can deliver the very sorts of people who believe they can rescue stranded spirits from the sorts of (evil) spirits that must have possessed those people in order to convince them they could undertake the rescues in the first place! I never said that any of this was going to be easy.

Part of the challenge of editing *Alien Scripture* comes clear here. I could easily produce a magazine that dealt only with these 'dark side' issues. That would be just too depressing, but three areas for investigation in future issues spring immediately to mind; the problems of possession, deliverance, and exorcism; the concept of self-defence against alien intrusion, interference and abduction; and the claims of an NHI role in the mutilation of cattle and other animals. These are all complex, demanding subjects, likely to involve a wide range of human emotional and psychological material, quite apart from any possible role taken by NHIs. *Hell On Earth* may well be a good title. Who makes it so is probably the key question, among many others.

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