

A New Journal of the Paranormal

The Wild Places



No.1

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The Wild Places

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Hilary Evans must be known to many TWP readers, either personally, from his work for various research organisations, as a lecturer, or through his many books and countless articles. Following the success of his Alternate States of Consciousness (Aquarian 1989) he is currently working on the raw evidence for 'balls of light' through his research collation Bolide, and on 'street lamp interference' - a fascinating subject still in its early stages.

THE ULTIMATE MYTH

by Hilary Evans

There's an interesting debate going on. That is, if you're interested in such things. And really, you should be interested, because if the protagonists are right, it's the most exciting thing that's happened to the human race since we came down from the trees. Of course, if it's the antagonists who are right, it's no such thing: but even so, it's got a lot to teach us about human behaviour. And human behaviour is something we should all be interested in . . .

So, what's this debate about? Well, on the one hand we've got a whole lot of people saying they are in direct contact with visiting extraterrestrials: and on the other hand we've got a number of people saying the first lot are mistaken, and what's happening to them is a psychological process shaped by sociological forces - in short, a psychosocial event. To this, the first lot reply, reasonably enough. Well, we should know, shouldn't we, it's us it's happening to! And the other lot respond to that by saying, Ah, but things aren't that simple, sometimes people think something's happening when it isn't.

What makes it difficult for you and I to decide between these two points of view is that the first lot can't produce any convincing evidence to support their claims, all we have is their personal say-so: while the second lot can't produce any convincing evidence to disprove their claims, they can say only that their version of events is more probable.

Whatever the encounter experience may be, it is clear not only that a great many people are having them, but also that they are having experiences which are broadly very similar. Consequently, those experiences must be seen not as one-of-a-kind incidents but as parts of a larger pattern.

Many such patterns have been proposed. Here are three of the most intelligent, each one proposed by a leading student of the subject who has come to radically different conclusions from the others. The first accepts the reality of the extraterrestrial encounter: the second questions the extraterrestrial origin of the events, but accepts the reality of external intervention: the third questions any kind of external intervention and looks to a purely human origin.

Though only one - or none - can be right, each offers an illuminating perspective on encounter stories and each, whether we think it right or wrong, deserves our serious consideration.

The 'cosmic education' hypothesis

Leo Sprinkle (a psychology professor at the University of Wyoming at Laramie) is the most eloquent exponent of the hypothesis that we humans are currently undergoing a process of 'education', in which well-disposed extraterrestrial beings are helping us develop from 'planetary persons' into 'cosmic citizens'. Since Sprinkle has probably had more first-hand contact with encounter witnesses than anyone else on earth, his thoughts must carry a unique authority even apart from his professional standing. He points out that his 'education' process is, on the one hand, precisely what many of the beings encountered claim to be doing, and on the other, what many of the witnesses claim to be experiencing. It is inherently plausible, and makes sense of a number of stories which otherwise do not seem to make sense. Above all, it is dead in tune with the 'New Age' thinking which, for some at least, is the dominant trend in contemporary cultural history.

However, the hypothesis seems to me weak in certain respects: -

* A hypothesis is as stable as the data it is built on. This hypothesis is based on claims which are themselves based on an assumption that extra terrestrial visits are taking place. Since, after 40 years of sightings, we are still not in a position to say that extraterrestrial UFOs so much as exist, let alone are visiting us, this is a somewhat unsubstantial foundation.

* The concept of an education process is an anthropomorphic one. Just because the idea of development (whether of the individual or of the species) is fundamental to our terrestrial way of thinking, it doesn't follow that other civilisations would think along these lines.

* We have no objective evidence that an educational programme is being conducted, only subjective claims: there are no tangible results. Even if people are becoming more open, more 'cosmic' in outlook, who is to say that this isn't a natural development rather than the result of a programmed educational process?

* The choice of persons to receive such education is odd. Whatever can be said by way of explanation, it remains curious that the cosmic educators should bestow their gift on such a high proportion of middle-aged middle-class white American housewives.

A specific feature of the encounter experience which at first sight seems to favour Sprinkle's model is the fact that witnesses often acquire superior insights and abilities as a result of their experience: many report enhanced psychic powers, and at least one became a healer thanks to her encounter with the extraterrestrials. However, there are other kinds of experience - shamanic initiation is one, religious conversion is another - in which the individual acquires spiritual gifts for which he gives thanks to a deity. But in both cases we have good grounds for thinking that what the

shaman and the religious convert are subconsciously doing is to 'externalise' their personal experience in culturally acceptable terms (initiation ritual, stereotyped encounter with the Virgin Mary or the equivalent) thus giving objective authority to what is actually subjective do-it-yourself therapy. If this is true of the shaman and the religious convert, it seems reasonable to suppose that any 'education' involved in the encounter experience may cloak a similar process of self-help.

The 'control system' hypothesis

Jacques Vallee (a French-born computer scientist who works in San Francisco) is, like Sprinkle, one of the best-liked as well as one of the most highly regarded researchers in the UFO field, with years of close involvement with the subject to his credit. So when he tells us that he does not believe that UFOs and UFO-related encounters are of extraterrestrial origin, his opinion must carry a good deal of weight.

What he does believe is that a 'control system' is being imposed on mankind, whereby some unidentified power is guiding us towards a higher level of development. This is a process which has been going on throughout human history; it has taken different forms at different times, but is reflected in popular folklore about supernatural visitors, and in stories in old chronicles which seem to describe celestial visitations. At all times, too, there have been enlightened individuals who have been vouchsafed some glimpses of ultimate truth, and these crumbs of understanding are enshrined in the great occult and metaphysical teachings.

This is certainly an impressive concept, and one which offers to account not only for our encounter stories, but for a vast spectrum of anomalous happenings. But it is this very comprehensiveness of Vallee's scheme which is its weakness: he fails to show why so great a force, with so much power at its disposal, would deploy it in so haphazard and ambiguous a fashion. We humans are periodically tantalised by glimpses of higher planes of being, we enjoy intermittent flashes of insight and inspiration: but these happenings, which seem to transcend our everyday experience, leave us not enlightened, but puzzled and perplexed. Encounter experiences are no exception.

On the other hand, if these things are of human origin, if these momentary flashes are our own not-yet-fully realised powers in the process of revealing themselves, like a child discovering his abilities, then their uncertain and haphazard character is perfectly understandable.

Some of the objections to the 'cosmic education' hypothesis apply also to the 'control system' hypothesis - the curious selection of subjects, the absence of any tangible results which could not equally well originate within the subject himself. And though Vallee himself discounts the extraterrestrial origin of the UFOs, he fails to provide an alternative scenario for the actual occasion of the alleged encounter experience.

The 'psychodrama' hypothesis

Swiss psychologist Jung wrote his Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies when the catalogue of UFO case histories was only a fraction of what it is today, and before the need for in-depth witness-directed investigations was even considered. But patterns were already forming, and he noted how often a case-report would insist that 'the witness is above suspicion because he was never distinguished for his lively imagination or credulousness but, on the contrary, for his cool judgement and critical reasoning'. Jung sees this as an important clue, because he knew from his psychiatric work that it is precisely in people of this kind that the subconscious has to resort to particularly drastic measures if its 'message' is to be perceived by the conscious mind. "It does this most vividly by projection, by extrapolating its contents into an object, which then mirrors what had previously lain hidden in the unconscious".

The only contactee case known to him - apart from that of Adamski, on whom he heaps sarcastic comments - is that of Orfeo Angelucci. This case, however, he finds of the deepest interest. "without having the faintest inkling of psychology, Angelucci has described in the greatest detail the mystic experience associated with a UFO vision".

To Jung, whether the encounter experience has any physical reality or not is only of secondary interest: the primary fact is what, in the course of the experience, is released from the individual unconscious.

Since at the time Jung formulated his hypothesis he did not have available to him the vast amount of material on which Sprinkle and Vallee are able to draw we must, if we are to make a valid comparison of his ideas with theirs, project them into the present by seeing how far they hold good in the light of what has happened since 1958.

It seems to me that subsequent events have amply validated his tentative speculations, and overwhelmingly favour the view that to understand both the 'how' and the 'why' of the encounter process we should look neither to cosmic educators from other worlds, nor to hidden controllers from who knows where, but to the subconscious mind of the individual witness, operating within the context of the prevailing 'authorised myth'.

The paradox of stereotypes

Paradoxically, one of the strongest arguments in favour of this view is one which, at first sight, seems to show just the opposite: the fact that the encounter runs so consistently to a pattern. The very fact that we can speak of a 'classic' abduction story shows to what an extent the event has become stereotyped.

If we take the stories at face value, it is evident that the abductors are completely in control. The witness is often paralysed, drugged or otherwise incapacitated: if he does put up a fight, he is soon overcome. So if there is a pattern to the

order of events, that pattern is imposed by the visitors - despite the fact that they come from so many different worlds and belong to so many different species. It seems they must all be conforming to the same set of instructions, some kind of cosmic manual on 'How to abduct an Earthling'. But the stereotyped pattern of the abduction story can be readily accounted for if we relate it to the one factor which is common to every version of the story - the witness himself.

Once we accept the possibility that, though to outward appearance he is the helpless victim, the witness - or to be more precise his subconscious mind - is in fact calling the tune, then the overall similarity of the events is explained. For then we see that what is happening is what happens in many other types of experience which run to a pattern: the story teller uses a stereotype so that his hearers will recognise it for what it is. Folklore is full of stereotypes - encounters with the 'little people', battles with giants: ghost and poltergeist stories run to type: as for visions of the Virgin Mary, the pattern has become almost a ritual. The more closely a story conforms to the stereotype, the more likely it is to be accepted as authentic.

And so with encounters: the same circular process is taking place. If the witness is to believe in his own story (and of course he must, if it is to have the psychological effect which is why he's having the experience at all), others must believe in it also: and the way to make them believe his story is to present it as part of an accepted pattern. It is not only the myth itself that has to be authorised, but also the way in which it is experienced.

So the individual finds himself cast, by his subconscious mind, in the stereotyped role of encounter witness, performing in a stereotyped drama whose central event is an encounter with stereotyped aliens. But for all its stereotyped character, essentially the encounter experience is a personal experience, contrived for his own benefit, and made to his own measure. And in the end it is the individual who is changed by his experience, who undergoes a sort of re-self-discovery.

The extraterrestrial myth is only one of the available plots, of course: others prefer such time-honoured favourites as 'meeting the Virgin Mary' or 'being possessed by the Devil'. Each individual will choose a suitable framework in which to externalise his own hang-up, just as the Greek myths gave Sophocles and Euripides archetypal stories within whose framework they would construct their own dramas. The plays of Sophocles and those of Euripides may each tell the same 'story', but they do so in quite different ways to achieve quite different ends.

This is the essence, too, of the psychodrama we call the encounter experience. The story is, on the one hand, stereotyped sufficiently to be recognised and accepted as authentic, and on the other, individualised sufficiently to be meaningful to the individual for whose benefit it is taking place.

The paradox of unpleasantness

The strength of a hypothesis is best seen when it is confronted with its most formidable challenge. How does the 'psychodrama' hypothesis fare when faced with the objection that, though a majority of encounters are pleasant, there are quite a proportion - particularly among the later generation of abduction stories with their scenarios of kidnap and rape - which are frightening and alarming? why, it is asked - and reasonably - if the individual is himself responsible for creating his own encounter drama, why would he inflict on himself something so unpleasant?

First, let us note that extraterrestrial abductions are not the only instance of this paradox. Possession by the devil is also unpleasant and frightening, so were many of the activities to which witches confessed: yet both of these are widely accepted today as being self-induced, often being included in the manifold diversity of psychological afflictions loosely labelled hysteria. And indeed we don't even have to look as far as that for evidence that our subconscious selves often involve our conscious selves in unpleasant experiences: that universal experience, the nightmare, tells us as much.

But that doesn't answer the question, why would someone's subconscious self subject his conscious self to an unpleasant experience? And ultimately, the question can't be answered except on an individual basis; we would have to analyse each individual to establish his personal circumstances on the one hand, his psychological make-up on the other. But we can make a few general suggestions. Here are some of the subconscious motivations an individual may be expressing when he claims an encounter experience:

- * To attract sympathy: 'My life's a mess and no one will help me: but if they think aliens are responsible, they will'.
- * To shift blame: 'I know everyone thinks my life is a mess, but it's not my fault - look what these awful aliens have done to me!'
- * To establish identity or win self-respect: 'Everyone thinks I'm just a nobody, but look, 'they' are interested in me!'
- * To authorise a change of direction: 'I need to make a break with the way of life I've had up till now; if I were to just drop everything everyone would think I was crazy, but if I attribute it to Cosmic Guardians, they'll understand and respect'.

I will not risk libel suits by suggesting how well this model fits such individual cases as those of Betty Andreasson, Whitley Streiber, Kathie Davis and the rest. And we can see how in the present cultural context, in communities where this is an acceptable myth, an extraterrestrial encounter might be the way to say it most effectively.

The 'psychodrama' model, unlike the alternatives, does not presuppose any global plan; its premise is that each encounter story, despite its surface similarities, is a one-of-a-kind event, originating with the witness himself. The 'psychodrama' hypothesis explains why encounters are clandestine, and why there is no tangible evidence for them. It explains why they happen to

obscure members of the public and not to heads of state, and why they occur in some parts of the world more than others. It explains why each event affects each witness in an individual way, and why each story is dotted with bizarre and paradoxical features.

This paper has been about three contrasting theories: and it may seem as though the contest between them is academic game playing. But we must not forget that behind the debate there is reality: and what the debate is about is, what kind of reality it is.

The answer is important to those who are having these experiences. If extraterrestrial visitation is a reality, then I dare say we shall know it for a fact any day now. But if it is not, then to allow someone to rest in the belief that he has been abducted by extraterrestrials, when in truth the experience was of his own making, is irresponsible and wicked.

We can't blame the abductees if they find it difficult to doubt the reality of their encounter experience, for no matter which scenario we favour, either reality or the illusion of reality is an essential element in the experience. But the rest of us have a duty, surely, to establish whether the abduction experience is what the protagonists claim or what the antagonists propose: fact or fantasy?



The Kansas City Prophets

I suspect that if we stopped trying now to find scientific evidence for psychic abilities - and scientific proof for their non-occurrence, too - we would miss nothing, and save a good deal of time. But anecdotal evidence still intrigues, particularly outside its usual context. Much as it would be fascinating for a vision of the Virgin to occur in a non-Catholic context (they don't), it is worth noting the occurrence of what we might term 'super-ESP' in an evangelical Christian church in the U.S.A.

My sources are the book Some Said It Thundered - A Personal Encounter with the Kansas City Prophets by Bishop David Pyches (Kingsway 1990) and the magazine Prophecy Today. The former is for, the latter against.

Briefly, the Kansas City Fellowship is an evangelical or 'restoration' church, six congregations totalling some 1600 souls, that has grown up over the past seven years or so. It has caused considerable interest - successful evangelism does - been favourably reported in the Church Times, and much boosted by Some Said It Thundered. And it has been the 'prophecies' that have given the KCF its following - and its fame.

These are not prophecies in the Old Testament tradition - there is little of Messiahs, or great movements of nations. Though set in a framework of how the prophet has been chosen, and the great revival that will be achieved, they are often small or short-term pronouncements, aimed at specific targets. Of course, the success of the one supports the credibility of the other. Paul Cain is said to have forecast to a woman, by name, when she would conceive: that someone came from San Antonio: that someone on the phone had just showered, and on which side his hair was parted. Bob Jones predicted a drought: the eruption of Mount St. Helens: worldwide famine: a flood: that certain people would be in particular places at specified times. Others made similar observations and predictions, and though the meteorological facts did not always support them, the veracity of the prophecies became accepted: hence the excitement.

Other claims were made, too. Of divine and angelic visions: of Jesus sitting disguised in a car with Paul Cain: of out-of-body experiences, of conversations with God. There has been healing, and speaking in tongues. And physical effects have been claimed, fuses blowing, the fire brigade arriving because the energy forces had activated the fire alarms, and so on.

To Clifford Hill, the highly literate editor of Prophecy Today, all this smells of 'the occult', and "demonic sources". He acknowledges that, "the principal purpose appears to be to show how a few men are able to predict events accurately, and to have supernatural knowledge of other people's lives. The only test of authenticity appears to be that no rational explanation can be offered for their paranormal experiences."

Though it seems that many of those involved have recently admitted that they were 'in error', and that the source of their abilities may not have been as they had assumed, it is interesting to see the credibility of the predictions and events themselves surviving such critical attention.

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

While the most important research and investigation may eventually be best presented in books, that is seldom where it first appears. Ours is a field blessed with journals and magazines, some established, some transitory, most labours of love with limited circulations. In these, most of the ground-breaking material first sees the light of day, cases and theories are discussed, developed, often discarded. When publishing Common Ground eight or nine years ago, I found many readers commenting on the usefulness, not just of information on how to buy other publications, but of summaries, or abstracts, of what appeared in them. This in turn led to other editors selling more of their magazines, so everyone was happy!

In News from the Front we continue in that role, hoping that you'll both be better informed about the range of research going on in our field, and want to obtain the original sources, into which go so much work. You'll find addresses and subscription details in our Journal Listings section.

Amskaya - Newsletter of the Star Fellowship. No.18. April 1990 Edited by Jimmy Goddard, who has "practised thought communication with extra-terrestrials for many years and received nothing but friendship from so doing." This issue features a communication, 'On Coveting - The Tenth Commandment', received by the legendary Tony Wedd in 1961, and a piece on Orthoteny from 1969, by the nearly legendary Paul Screeton.

Caveat Emptor - A New Age Journal. No.22. Summer 1990. Edited by Gene Steinberg, the material in this excellent, high quality quarterly is much more UFO than New Age. The editorial here intelligently damns the MJ-12 documents, John Keel damns ufologists ("even collectors of matchbook covers, Teddy Bears and Wizard of Oz books are better organised, better led, and more rationally motivated than Ufologists"), the feature interview is with Jenny Randles, there are good pieces on the National UFO Conference and Himalayan Yeti Traditions, and useful news, reviews and letters.

The Cereologist - The Journal for Crop Circle Studies. No.1. Summer 1990. Edited by John Michell, so this is naturally literate and beautifully produced, with fine and informative illustrations. This is substantially 'new knowledge' that we are still assimilating, so most of us will regard it as indispensable. The articles are by luminaries like Ralph Noyes, Bob Rickard, George Wingfield, Patrick Harpur and Michell himself, all of which I recommend highly. But I cannot avoid a slight shudder reading that "a communication was received that advised us to turn off our machines and use our minds to tune into the world of the 'Circle-Makers'" and that the ubiquitous Rita Goold channelled, "A deep-voiced entity (who) claimed to be a Circle-Maker." This 'circle-makers' concept has all the makings of a serious obstacle in the way of balanced and objective research. We'll watch it with interest.

The Christian Parapsychologist The Journal of the (Anglican) Churches Fellowship for Psychical and Spiritual Studies. June 1990. Consistently original, and a vital source of material for TWP. The lead articles here concern the fascinating 1939 Bishop Underhill Report on Spiritualism, plus features on the deliverance ministry, and 'A Psychiatrist looks at Possession', mostly on a biblical basis. It's hard to imagine even the most Christian doctor looking at, say, appendicitis in the light of medical knowledge available in 60 a.d., but never mind! The reviews, letters and reports of events in CP are invaluable.

Dark Lily - The Reality of the Left Hand Path. No.11. If I'm going to run a journal that covers beliefs relating to exceptional human experience, then I'm going to include publications of this ilk in our listings. This is an alert, considered journal, based in what has been termed 'atheistic satanism'. Satanism without Satan, if you like: the attitude without the entity, or the concomitant worship. This issue is particularly interesting for its account of doctrinal - and other - disagreements between the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set, a look at Conspiracy Theory, the customary exchange between Editor and readers, and extensive advertising for a wide range of publications, some more extreme than this. Maybe the Fundamentalist understanding of U.K. Satanism is about as informed as their knowledge of the paranormal!

Flying Saucer Review. Vol.35. No.2. In which the Editor, Gordon Creighton, decides to call the 'alien critters' "vermin", but also explains that though "Angels . . . are not normally visible to human eyes . . . there is plenty of evidence of their work and their abiding presence. Let every one of us remember that, and cling firmly to it in the extraordinarily grave times which lie ahead for mankind." Otherwise the UFO content is steadily improving, with good features on the Belgian Wave of 1989, UFOs and U.S. nuclear sites, The 1964 Big Sur UFO film, and more. The letters tend to match the editorial, but the production remains first rate, and as a whole FSR is still worth having.

Fortean Times No.54. Bob Rickard and Paul Sieveking, editors of this finest of journals of 'Strange Phenomena' are planning to make FT an even bolder and more sophisticated venture, but this issue will do nicely for now. 'The Disappearance of Benjamin Bathurst', by the excellent Mike Dash, is one of the classic debunkings, and in addition to the usual marvellous collection of Fortean events, there is also Heuvelmans and Meurger on the Cryptozoology/Folklore debate, a listing of early Irish Fortean, The Death of Charles Fort by Mark Chorvinsky, and Steve Moore on Men In The Moon, from Ancient Greece onwards. Brilliant. Don't miss it!

International UFO Reporter May/June 1990. Journal of the Center for UFO Studies. Edited by Jerome Clark, consistently one of the most stimulating writers in ufology, every issue of IUR has content of great importance, written by key figures in the field. Here, we have 'A Forum On MJ-12' - essentially calling "forgery". There's Bruce Maccabee on the Lindstrom photographic case, an update on Australian abductions, Greg Long (of Yakima fame) reviewing Paul Devereux's recent Earthlights work, and Jerry Clark himself with a thundering editorial finding severe fault with the Psychosocial Hypothesis, countered in a letter from Hilary Evans.

Journal of the Society for Psychical Research July 1990. It's easy to criticize the SPR Journal as dry and dusty, and I've done it myself in the past. But this is quite a lively issue, and it does present material you won't find anywhere else. Here's an intriguing and comprehensive report of a very physical Brazilian poltergeist, and the letters and reviews - including Crop Circles and UFOs - show a real willingness to grasp the nettle of dealing with modern phenomena. Of course, the ability of the SPR to attract 'name' writers lends many of the Journal's comments a considerable authority.

Magonia No.37. October 1990. Always at the leading edge of 'social phenomena' thinking about the field in general, and UFOs in particular, this is a particularly fine issue. Peter Rogerson is given his head to review the Sheffield UFO Conference and a number of key books all in one go, and the result is a fascinating overview of ufology as of now. There's also news from Gulf Breeze, Thomas E. Bullard with some strong folklore-oriented analysis, and a wide range of reviews: in Magonia, reviewers are encouraged to voice their own opinions, which makes the pieces even more valuable. If TWP comes near this standard, I shall be well pleased!

MUFON UFO Journal June 1990. The journal of the major U.S. investigation network this could, with MUFON's essentially E.T. stance, be biased and of little value. However, Dennis Stacy's deft and balanced editing makes it a must, and its monthly schedule gives it a topical edge envied by others. This issue, Stacy reviews Vallee's 'Confrontations', Greg Long discusses BOLS, Implants and Abductees are speculated on, and there is the usual wealth of historical material and news.

New Age Bulletin June 1990. A Christian publication from Ray Livesey, a prolific author who writes well. This does not only warn of the dangers of the New Age Movement as a whole, but also looks at Alternative Medicine, and what Livesey sees as New Age influences in the Churches. I do not really agree with any of the positions taken, but this is good source material, and the discussion is intelligent. I hope to return to this material in more detail in the next TWP.

Northern UFO News June 1990. Jenny Randles, the Editor, has had a pig of a time recently, and she deserves the support of all of us. This is No.143 of a journal that consistently presents more case material, briefly and succinctly, than any other publication in this country, as well as bringing together news, book reviews, magazine listings and a decent editorial in every issue, this time on Crop Circles.

Pagan News July/August 1990 Intelligent but approachable, PN is edited by Phil Hine, and provides a wide range of information, media news, interviews, ads and, praise be, humour, all based on a genuine concern for paganism/shamanism. This issue has an interview with Monica Sjoo, the Colin Wallace affair, I Ching, Paganism and Eco-Fundamentalism, and more.

Reachout Trust Newsletter No.22. Summer 1990. You will find Reachout mentioned in TWP quite frequently: it is an effective and organised Fundamentalist lobby against all other forms of belief, that uses all forms of media with great skill. Actually, it would be easy to think that their attacks were only on the 'occult', but here their

priorities are Bible-based critiques of the Jehovah's witnesses, and of the Oneness Movement, plus an interesting reprint of a debunking of two women who had pretended to have battled satanic forces and groups in the U.S.A. There is, of course, plenty of anti-occult material, but the sound presentation apparent here makes me wonder if there might be more sense and sensitivity among those who produce this newsletter, than those who front-up Reachout? Time, and media pressure, will probably tell.

Saucer Smear 25.8.90 Edited by Supreme Commander Jim Moseley, reading 'Smear' is like having a good friend in a sensitive job, who is willing to tell you just a little more than he ought to about what's really going on. Moseley is a sort-of believer, with a hot line to Phil Klass and matching senses of history and mischief. This is a fascinating issue, with the latest on Gulf Breeze - six soldiers pretending to be members of an apocalyptic cult, maybe looking for the Antichrist, maybe thinking he's Ed Walters! Also Bruce Maccabee on Gulf Breeze, too.

The Black Flame Vol.2 No.2. If you're looking for a dangerous Satanist journal, this is probably the one. Not because it offers rituals, pacts or sacrifices - those are in the nonsense magazines I won't even bother listing - but because it's so well done. Based on the works of Anton LaVey, maybe even a little devoted to them, this is a product of the Church of Satan, and like Dark Lily it again stresses the non-deistic nature of their belief. No God, no Satan. No demons. No worship. None of the ritual, the exploitation, the devil-entities of Fundamentalism. In their place, humour, selfishness, superiority, a high level of intelligence, and an apparent desire to say "boo" to a goose, even when there isn't a goose. The main article here is a learned one on Satanic Roots/Socrates & Plato, but there's plenty to leaven that elsewhere. I have the impression that these people would regard relaxation as an offence!

UFO - A Forum on Extraordinary Theories and Phenomena. Vol.5. No.3. Formerly California UFO, this is a superbly produced, mass market magazine, which takes a broad approach to UFO theories. This issue's theme is 'Atomic Perspectives' - nuclear base overflights/Indian Point UFO Sighting and so on. But the real value of UFO is in the news and contactee report sections. Personally, I think this one may have peaked, because there are only so many good UFO stories, so many people who are really worth interviewing. It used to be livelier and more original, but even so it's reasonably priced, and fine source material.

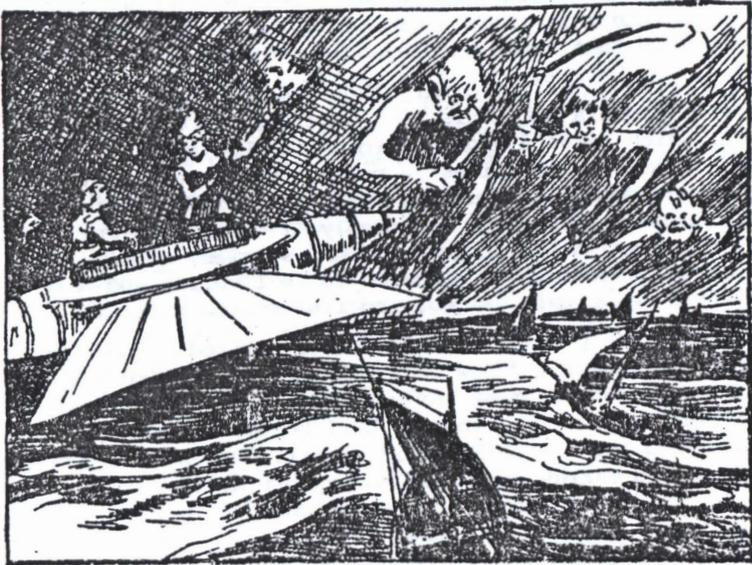
UFO Brigantia July 1990. Double issue. Edited by Andy Roberts, who with his conferences and new book Phantoms of the Sky has through hard work become one of the most influential figures in British ufology. In this indispensable issue, Andy's 'WWII Document Research' demolishes a specific - and key - 'Foo Fighter' report. MJ-12 receives excellent coverage, David Clarke continues to explore mystery lights, and the uncovering of a Crop Circle hoax makes one consider how many more there may have been. I think Andy must be trying to 'balance' the magazine's essentially sceptical outlook by publishing the occasional 'speculative' article. In my humble opinion, if he can't find better than the one here it may be better left unbalanced!

JOURNAL LISTINGS

The UFO Debate No.4. Aug 1990. This has moved from a shaky start to being a varied, lively UFO/paranormal magazine, less than scientific, but well worth having. Corn Circles, Nessie, Nigel Mortimer on Wharfedale, Adamski, a BVM in West Yorks, Earthlights and more.

UFO Quest International (The Journal of UFO Investigation) Time was that just listing Brigantia and Quest together in the same magazine would have resulted in sparks emitting from the printed page, but that period seems to have passed. Quest and its matching research journal Twenty Twenty Vision are largely the work of Graham and Mark Birdsall, and while there is a bit of personality cult involved, and the cases are more speculative - for instance, the South African 'crash retrieval' - than in other journals, these are neat and attractive magazines. The writers/editors often make a point of leaving the choice of belief up to the readers, and if there is no deliberate deceit - what editor in this field ever knows if he's publishing 'the truth' - then I don't think that's unfair or dishonest. Anyway, you won't be bored by either title. Definitely part of a balanced approach to ufology.

UFO Times No.7. July 1990 The Journal of BUFORA. I have a lot of respect for BUFORA, and the content of this issue - Benelux UFOs, Crop Circles, Anamnesis, and Thomas Bullard on the Hill abduction - is perhaps the best yet. But quite apart from the desparately boring title, there's no need to publish it on glossy paper, and there's room for plenty more text than actually appears. Add to this some shortcomings in literacy and editing, and BUFORA is not helping its own case. Please keep trying!



We are printing these separately from the abstracts in News from the Front, for ease of reference, and in the hope of reducing the typing for each issue. Where U.K. magazines don't specify foreign rates, or vice versa, we haven't tried to make any up - just bear in mind that international postage can be quite expensive! Most editors are happy to supply their current issue for a proportion of the subscription rate.

Amskava From J.Goddard, 25, Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2PX. £2 for four quarterly issues.

Caveat Emptor From 8, Gate House Lane, Edison, NJ 08820, U.S.A. Single copy \$5. 4-issue sub. \$15. Add \$1 foreign postage for each issue ordered.

The Cereologist From 2, Blenheim Crescent, London, W11 1NN. £2.50 an issue, thrice-yearly.

The Christian Parapsychologist From CFPSS, The Priory, 44, High St, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8BZ. Specimen copy £1.25. 4-issue sub. £5. Foreign sub. £6 (surface) £7 (air). Payments to CFPSS.

Dark Lily From BCM Box 3406, London, WC1N 3XX. £1.50 an issue, 4-issue sub. £6. Foreign sub. £8 (air).

Flying Saucer Review From The Editor, FSR Publications Ltd, P.O.Box 12, Snodland, Kent, ME6 5JZ. Single issue £4. 4-issue sub. £15. Foreign - £5 (\$9) surface, or sub. £18 (\$35).

Fortean Times From FT, 20, Paul St, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX. Single issue £2. 4-issue sub. £8. Foreign £3 (\$5). 4-issue sub. £9 (\$16)

International UFO Reporter From 2457, West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659, U.S.A. 6-issue sub. \$25. Add \$10 for foreign postage.

Journal of the Society for Psychical Research From 1, Adam and Eve Mews, London, W8 6UG. 4-issue sub. £20 (\$36). It doesn't cost a lot more to become a member, so do enquire if you're interested.

Magonia From John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London, SW14 8HB. 4-issue sub. £4. Europe £5. U.S. \$10. Elsewhere £5.50.

MUFON UFO Journal From 103, Oldtowne Road, Seguin, Texas 78155-4099, U.S.A. 12-issue sub. \$25. Foreign sub. \$35.

New Age Bulletin From Roy & Rae Livesey, Bury House, Clows Top, Kidderminster, Worcs, DY14 9HX. Will actually be sent free, but I'm sure a couple of stamps would be appreciated.

Northern UFO News From 37, Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP. Sub. £3 for 3 issues.

Pagan News From Box 175, Call Lane, Leeds, LS1 6DT. 6-issue sub. £4.50 in stamps. Europe £5. U.S.A. £10.

Reachout Trust Newsletter From Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4LX. £1 an issue, I think.

The Black Flame From P.O.Box 499, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10101-0499, U.S.A. Single issue \$3. 4-issue sub. \$12. Foreign S4/S16.

UFO From California UFO, 1536 S.Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90035, U.S.A. 6-issue sub. \$18. Foreign S26.

UFO Brigantia From 84, Elland Road, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 2QR. 6-issue sub. £6.

UFO Debate From D.Barclay, 40, Stubbing Way, Shipley, West Yorkshire, BD18 2EZ. Single issue £1.50. 6-issue sub. £8.50.

UFO Quest International From The Secretary, 18, Hardy Meadows, Grassington, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 5DL. Single issue £1. 12-issue sub. £12. Europe £14. Elsewhere \$25 (surface). \$35 (air).

UFO Times A privilege of BUFORA membership. Please write to J.Darby, 16, Southway, Burgess Hill, Sussex, RH15 9ST for details.

Expecting the worst?

Believing in one thing can lead to problems in dealing with another. In Psychic News, Carmen Rogers, a fine speaker and impressive clairvoyant, runs Carmen's Column, dispensing very belief-oriented advice to those who write in with their problems and experiences. In the issue of 6.10.90, she gets a little tangled in the physicality of physical mediumship, responding to a question that runs, in part, "is it still possible for a pregnant person to sit in a physical development circle? If not, why not?"

Carmen responds,

"It would be most unwise for a pregnant woman to attend a physical development circle due to the complex physical and psychic energies being manipulated by spirit workers in order to produce physical phenomena.

When a physical development circle is in the process of developing an individual to produce physical phenomena, such as ectoplasm, certain physical as well as psychic energies are extracted not only from the developing medium, but also from the sitters who are monitoring the development.

Therefore, it is necessary to conclude that these people are healthy and without any physical condition that may put them at risk. A pregnant woman could put her unborn child at risk."

I had the impression that since Alan Cleaver left Psychic News, the physical mediumship revival had more or less ground to a halt. Maybe I was wrong. It might be that such clearly measurable, specific, physical effects could be the key to proving beyond doubt the reality of physical phenomena. It would be interesting to know if any such measurement and investigation has yet been considered, and if any medium - developing or developed - has offered to be so investigated. And if not, why not?

REAL POWER?

I don't mind respecting other people's beliefs, but I do object to being expected to stand back and let them force them on others. I hope that Real Power will develop into a series of articles dealing with those who actually claim to do things, to have powers, to interact with non-human intelligences and so on, particularly when their belief in those claims effect others, whose own right to freedom of belief is consequently diminished. I'm sure this won't be the last time TWP deals with possession and exorcism. Indeed, it is a vast research area that has only been touched upon. Any replies or comments relating to this article will be gratefully received, and probably printed!

Possession and Exorcism

by Kevin McClure

Q. Why have you got a banana in your left ear?

A. To keep away the elephants.

Q. But there aren't any elephants?

A. Effective, isn't it.

There are many occasions when I notice similarities between forms of religious belief, and the holding and proselytising of political convictions. If this comparison is valid, then exorcism is the religious equivalent of fascism or, indeed, Stalinism. All display a tenuous construct of superiority and self-righteousness, used to justify the inflicting of purging or correcting action upon individuals not party to the conviction or belief.

Only in one major regard do the two differ - the element of the supernatural. Political belief is usually informed only by social prejudices - race, colour, sexual orientation and so on. Religious belief is supported by a cosmology of external influence and admonition, in addition to the usual worldly concerns. This provides a daunting variety of possible justifications for action, and increases the perils for the unbeliever.

If exorcism 'happens' - if it is a real event - then it puts our existence in a very definite perspective. Let's look at the psychological situation of an individual who believes that he (it's usually he) can exorcise demons from a possessed person. What does he need to be thinking?

An Exorcist's Litany

- * I believe in demons
- * I believe that demons can possess human beings and subject human volition to theirs.
- * I believe that I can tell (discern) when a human being has been possessed by a demon.

* I believe that I have the ability to force a demon to leave a human being that it has possessed.

Even though the 'power' to exorcise may be hedged around with the explanation that a divinity is acting through the exorcist - as may the power of discernment, too - this is an extreme position for any individual to take. Were it a UFO contactee, or a magician, or a medium talking in these terms, they would be ridiculed: most serious investigators would not bother with such a case. Yet the process of exorcism - which rests on an acceptance of possession - is not only acknowledged, but formalised and promoted, within many Christian churches. It also receives wide and vociferous publicity through books and pamphlets available from many High Street religious book-shops, and through the mail, too. I'd like to consider how the case for possession and exorcism is put over, before trying to assess whether this is all delusion or, as they say, 'real power'.

Within the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches at least, exorcism has become increasingly respectable in recent years. It would seem that most dioceses have an adviser on exorcism, and a number of experienced clergymen/priests, trained to an extent to deal with cases referred to them. Fortunately, this training often includes areas of psychology and psychiatry, which can produce far more plausible explanations for the presented behaviour - though sadly, the safeguards seem to be few, and the influence of an individual's judgement can carry disproportionate weight. And, at base, the 'exorcist's litany' still holds good - all those beliefs remain, as evidenced in two of the important Anglican source works. Both of these come from clerics closely associated with the work of the Bishop of Exeter's Study Group On Exorcism, and the consequent Christian Exorcism Study Group.

From John Richards' But Deliver Us From Evil (1)

"The casting out of demons is the work of God through his Church and a sign of the coming of his Kingdom, the doing of his will, and the deliverance from evil which every member so faithfully prays

a demonstration in power and love of the Lordship of Christ over his world: the 'manifestations' outlined in the last chapter are demonstrations against power, not demonstrations of it. The demons as I vividly recall Dr. Frank Lake saying in a lecture, "do not have that kind of reality which requires them to be destroyed, but they 'go to their place' until they take their place in the triumphant train of Jesus Christ"

Those who are 'in Christ' share the authority which is Christ's by right, and theirs by adoption and commission."

And from A Handbook for Christian Exorcists (2)

"Demonic possession . . . is when the soul and will of the patient are completely dominated by a demon. He has no independent power to do anything, and is compelled to act and behave in certain ways, always to his own detriment and that of his associates, and inevitably against his own will."

This interesting work also accepts levels of psychic ability almost

unheard of in a century or more of psychical research. One of the 'Signs of Demonic Possession' runs: -

"He will show extraordinary signs of clairvoyance, being able to recount accurately things and events happening at a distance in time or space (for example, details of the past history or childhood of the Exorcist) which he could not otherwise know."

That's certainly one way of casting doubt on the propriety of successful clairvoyance.

So, if even the Church of England backs the massive assumptions implied by the process of exorcism, it will come as no surprise that the less established churches and Christian belief groups - often Fundamentalist, believing in the literal truth and total correctness of their interpretation of the Bible - take up an even more extreme stance. Unfortunately, I don't have inside intelligence as to what goes on inside the house groups and local churches that form such an important part of the Fundamentalist movement, but anyone who watched Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit on television may have gained something of their flavour. However, I understand that the available literature plays an important part in influencing attitudes and beliefs, and we can certainly consider the ideas and attitudes, and instructions, to which such believers look in their dealings with those they regard as possessed.

Let's start with a rather unexpected Anglican, the influential Revd Kevin Logan, in his Paganism and the Occult. Earlier in the book he recounts his own abilities in discerning and dealing with demons. In the chapter 'How Christians Can Help', he explains: -

"Do act when necessary. We can be over-cautious and freeze, especially when we read or hear of deliverance ministries that have gone tragically wrong. If you have discounted reasonable doubts, and you are sure that a person is demonised or affected by the occult in some way, then do something about it."

"Controlled anger can also encourage the counsellor in his authority over demons. As we exhibit the justifiable wrath of God, the demons shudder and flee"

"More often than not spirits have gained access through a perversion, habit, or chronic state of sin. Look for the perversion. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal this supernaturally, if this is not evident"

"Blessings and curses do not stop at one generation. It is a foundational truth enshrined in the Ten Commandments that the sins of the fathers will affect the children to the third and fourth generations"

"We need to remember that the devil and his spiritual forces dislike a head-on confrontation with Jesus' people." (3)

I can only imagine that if this were racial, rather than religious bigotry, then there would be a clear, criminal offence of incitement. Another British writer is Peter Anderson, described as an 'evangelist with Christian Ministries'. In Satan's Snare (4), a book that seems based in a fearsome knowledge of the Bible, and a passing acquaintance

with the works of Dennis Wheatley, he suggests a handy test for would-be exorcists to discern the possessed from the mentally disturbed: -

"No mentally disturbed person is indwelt by another being. Christian hymns and Bible readings will always quieten a mentally sick person, but in demon possession there is immediate antagonism. Clairvoyancy is not a symptom of a psychiatric illness, neither are the voices of other people and there certainly is no transference of spirits from one person to another. However, all of these signs can be observed in a person possessed by an evil spirit."

A best-seller in the DIY exorcism field is Bill Subritzky's Demons Defeated. The whole book is worthy of your attention, but going beyond some vital advice

"Demons can be clearly distinguished from angels because angels usually have wings"

there are some remarkable statements throughout. I fully acknowledge that it may be unfair to take the following out of context, but I do not think I am misrepresenting the author's intended meaning: -

"It is very easy for demons to be transferred. In the act of sexual intercourse outside marriage, demonic activity can occur readily as demons are transferred from one body to another."

"One way in which I find immediate release in the case of demons within people is to encourage them to breathe in the Holy Spirit and breathe out sharply. If they will do this say four or five times, they will find that the demon has left them as it has been expelled from their body and the Holy Spirit has refilled them."

"Homosexuality is demonic . . . Many allergies, heart conditions, arthritic conditions, cancers and similar activities are demonic"

"In the case of yoga . . . many exercises are positions of worship to demon gods"

"The navel is often an entry point for demon power which has come down through the umbilical cord before birth, or at birth. Demons have told me that they have entered through the seed of the male into the female and then down through the umbilical cord into the person to whom I am ministering." (5)

You're probably beginning to see by now what is being put over, what world these writers inhabit and how, by a mix of carrot and stick, of promises of power and threats of damnation, they can attract and convince the exorcists of the future. Before we try to assess the objective reality of these claims, I can't miss the chance to present a few lines from the classic Pigs in the Parlor - A Practical Guide To Deliverance by Frank and Ida Mae Hammond. This is among the most specific of the 'how to do it' books, and it expresses some remarkable opinions: -

"Does everyone need deliverance? Personally, I have not found any exceptions. While we have walked in ignorance and darkness the enemy has successfully made inroads into each of us . . . the organisation of Satan's Kingdom enables him to attack each one of us

personally. There is not a person on the face of the earth who escapes his notice"

"Arthritic spirits often manifest themselves in the hands. The hands will become very stiff and the fingers gnarled"

"During a pre-ministry interview a young minister disclosed that he had been obsessed with 'worldly dancing' and that he would rather dance than eat. When the 'demon of worldly dancing' was called out, the man began a rhythmic pantomime"

"Demons can be called out of children in the same way they are called out of older persons. There will be manifestations of the spirits leaving through the mouth and nose as in other deliverances"

"Indwelling demons are seldom found singly: they are together in groups. Such groupings may be referred to as colonies, clans or families. When one demon is detected or discerned, one should immediately be alerted to look for its companions." (6)

And so it goes on. I don't have all the available DIY exorcism manuals - I couldn't afford them all if I wanted them! We've only begun to skim the surface here, and I won't even start trying to draw parallels with other areas of belief and contact with non-human intelligences. But hopefully, something of the strange logic of the Exorcist's Litany comes across; together with an added factor - the drive to exorcise, to purge, to correct. This is what I mean in drawing the political parallel: the same sort of reasoning fuelled Hitler's Final Solution, Stalin's purges, and other totalitarian excesses over the years. Pol Pot chopped down the trees that gave shade to make bearable the work in the rice fields in Cambodia: maybe he believed in the demon of arthritis, too. These are people with a mission, and an excuse for that mission. Class war, race war, spiritual war - where's the difference? They can all sell their mission, too. Who doesn't want to be superior, to manipulate, to dominate? What other chance would most of these people have?

So, are we talking about power, or about a complex, and tragic, delusion? I don't think there's any compromise between those two positions - there's either demons, or there's not. Undoubtedly, many of the psychological and physiological conditions interpreted by the exorcists as possession (or obsession, oppression, infestation, overshadowing or whatever) do occur, and as yet defy both conventional diagnosis, and treatment. And, too, I acknowledge that the Bible, on which most of the exorcists wholly base their understanding of reality, does speak in terms of possession and, if you like, dispossession. It would seem that linking the passionate belief in the latter with the world's frustration with the former has created, for some, a powerful reason to believe in the possibility of divine intervention, albeit through a self-determined human agency. Further, because much of the material we have on exorcism comes from within Fundamentalism - it is testimony from converts whose possession has often been discovered only after they have made some commitment to the belief group that then makes the diagnosis - consequently, there is a bare minimum of evidence with which to work to produce an objective conclusion. Researchers

in the UFO abduction and folklore areas will have met these problems before.

Given these limitations, how can we begin to come to a judgement about the true nature of the possession/exorcism process, and all it entails? We've looked at several of the ways in which demons are said to 'enter' people, but it is clear in both the quoted works, and most others, that the greatest single cause is involvement with 'the occult'. Richards devotes 71 pages to it, Logan journeys through all varieties of alternative beliefs before concluding that only his is non-Satanic, the Hammonds produce a numbered listing of 'demon groupings', including more or less everything Logan dislikes and Subritzky, thorough to the last, provides a comprehensive 'Occult Check List' of dangers, which bears dipping into. This includes Tea Leaf Readings; handwriting analysis; dowsing for underground cables; Hallowe'en parties; Yoga; Karate; Kung Fu; chain letters; Janis Joplin; the Jonathan Livingstone Seagull sound track cult (the what?); Buddhism; Hinduism; Islam and (you guessed) Japanese Flower Arranging. This is quite apart from the standard 'occult' scapegoats - spirit contact, astrology, witchcraft and the rest.

Overall, it is possible to conclude that any form of belief, knowledge, or self-exploration that is not consistent with Christian Fundamentalism is dangerous - and to Christian Fundamentalists, I suppose it is. But having kept a fairly sceptical eye on 'the occult' for the past twenty years or so, I can only comment that the Fundamentalists credit it with a great deal more potential than I do. At no time at all have I detected any evidence at all for the existence of demons - and precious little for the reality of 'occult' events and abilities of any kind. Certainly, I have come across those whose interest and involvement has amounted to an excusive - and unhealthy obsession. But that 's how some people are, at some stage of their lives. Substituting one obsession for another is not going to help.

Having concluded that there are no demons - at least not outside the minds of those who believe in them - and that there is no externally-sourced form of possession, it becomes futile to try to assess the possible reality of the discernment of demons, or of exorcism itself. Hence the old elephant joke that led-off the article. We can only work from evidence and, Biblical record aside, there is remarkably little for possession. On the basis of simple probability, if a human being is in a fraught, troubled, or incomprehensible state of mind, I will settle for illness every time, rather than the immense construct of belief and unlikely demonic activity would imply.

So why do so many apparently intelligent people believe in the existence of demons and their ability to possess, and in the concomitant talents to discern and exorcise those same demons? How do those concepts fit into the broader pattern of belief in 'paranormal' events? I don't really have an answer to these questions of belief - I simply don't share that level of credulity. But I suspect that one belief leads to another, because human beings don't like to believe that the events that happen around

22 them are random, and beyond any control. If something goes wrong,

it is easy to blame a demon: if that same situation is resolved, it feels good to have someone on your side who has played a part in its resolution. These are conclusions that apply to a number of other areas of supposed contact/communication with non-human intelligences, and the length of their tenure - many hundreds of years - support the concepts of continuity of experience and belief that are likely to recur in TWP. The uneasy relationship between humanity, and the tendency for things to turn out badly or unpleasantly finds many forms of relief. Blaming demons - or other external forces - is historically the most common. And the spirit of the Inquisition, and all the other inquisitions before or since - lives on.

References

- (1) But Deliver Us From Evil - An introduction to the demonic dimension in pastoral care by John Richards. Darton Longman & Todd, 1974.
- (2) A Handbook for Christian Exorcists by The Revd Douglas Howell-Everson. Privately published. ISBN 0 95085335.
- (3) Paganism and the Occult - A manifesto for Christian action by Kevin Logan. Kingsway Publications 1988.
- (4) Satan's Snare - The influence of the occult by Peter Anderson. Evangelical Press 1988.
- (5) Demons Defeated by Bill Subritzky. Sovereign World Ltd. 1987.
- (6) Pigs In The Parlor - A Practical Guide to Deliverance by Frank & Ida Mae Hammond. Impact Books (U.S.) 1973.

Postscript

The above is all good, sound, psychosocial stuff, in a different context from that in which it is usually presented. It is worth mentioning here that the recent revival of interest in possession, exorcism and related beliefs may well have another motivation, rooted in propaganda, and not unrelated to the way in which the Satanic Child Abuse scare has been set up. This is apparent at times in the books from which I have quoted, and in others. It was clear in the Cook Report programme broadcast on the ITV network on 17.7.89, which featured the Revd Kevin Logan, and used even more extreme sources in its research and telephone counselling. It continues to be manifest in the publications of the Christian Response to the Occult, and the Reachout Trust, both Fundamentalist pressure groups making full use of the media to present their case. This is not the point at which to discuss the veracity of their evidence, but some brief quotes from CRO's introductory leaflet will end this piece on a note of caution: -

"Our society is being attacked and infiltrated by sources of darkness. Unfortunately most people are blind to the dangers of occult involvement and unaware of the influence these forces can have upon their lives

The objectives of CRO are to alert and inform both the public and Christians of the dangers of occult involvement, the reality of the Devil, and of the greater power of Jesus to give deliverance, peace and fulfilment.

We cannot engage in this spiritual warfare except with the whole armour of God, and in the power of our risen and victorious Lord. He has assured us of His presence, and only in His name and strength can we go forward to claim the release and deliverance of those ensnared"

Bear this in mind. We may see ourselves as reasonable people, investigating complex, worthwhile and intriguing mysteries. There are those who would rather we were seen as 'ensnared', and who think of us as obstacles in their spiritual warfare. Let us hope that, sooner rather than later, good sense will prevail.

SATANIC CHILD ABUSE

This is a difficult time at which to be writing about allegations of Satanic - or Ritual - Child Abuse, as it has become known. So much is under discussion, so much is sub judice, that it would be wrong to speculate on specific cases.

But we can't ignore it, either, not if we're looking at how beliefs interact with real life, or at how minority pressure groups can manipulate the media to their own ends. In the Postscript to the Real Power piece in this issue, I give some examples of the stated intentions of one such group, and there have been several others involved. All praise is due to the Independent, and to the Mail On Sunday, fired by the obvious errors in the Rochdale case, for eventually responding to crude and blatant propaganda with fair and balanced investigation.

However, the struggle to achieve balance and fairness both in the media, and in the action of the various 'caring' agencies, has been in progress for some time. It has always been a difficult battle to fight, because no-one can say for certain that child abuse - appallingly common as it is - is never perpetrated by someone who puts himself over as a Satanist, or that abuse has never been disguised as ritual. If the aim of an abuser is to continue the abuse, then it is vital to obtain the child's cooperation, or at least its silence: any analysis of court reports will show that abuse often occurs over a period of months or years. There is no doubt that to wrap abuse up in ritual, linking it with threats of dire, supernatural consequences to the victim if the truth is revealed, is a viable scenario. And its viability has clearly convinced many intelligent and professional people of its truth.

The balance to this supposition is the lack of evidence that the scenario is any more than just that, any more than a fiction. It seems that there is no court evidence, nothing proven beyond reasonable doubt, that there is any pattern to this form of abuse. If it does occur it is occasional, unrelated, and more connected to simple perversion than to any organised - Satanic - belief.

We will return to this subject in TWP 2, but for now I'd just like to mention briefly the two principal sources of counterbalance that have developed over the past year or two, and to commend their efforts to you if you are interested in following the continuing debate. Both are unashamedly 'occult-based' - seeking to protect the rights and beliefs of witches, magicians, shamans and pagans in general. And there are issues of personal freedom involved here, as much as there were in the debate over the Witchcraft Act as it affected Spiritualism. But for the Fundamentalists, these are the very groups they feel duty bound to attack. And, to an extent, it must be accepted that both sources do represent Satanists.

The first is the Sorcerer's Apprentice Fighting Fund, based on the bookshop of that name in Leeds, the largest bookshop of its kind in the U.K., target of abuse on the Cook Report in 1989, and of a break-in and deliberately set fire shortly after. The SAFF provides a remarkably regular flow of information, press releases, and accounts of their efforts to use legal means to obtain a fair hearing. They are well-informed, highly committed, and quite effective. At best, they are the targets of vilification, at worst, of persecution. They are targeted by the Fundamentalist groups, and they are driven to fight back. If their published material sometimes betrays a hard and unforgiving edge, it is understandable. Certainly, it is invaluable. The SAFF can be contacted at 6/8, Burley Lodge Road, Leeds, LS6 1QP. A few stamps should bring you their latest newsletter.

The second source I referred to is a magazine - actually one of the most professional productions in any area of the 'paranormal'. ORCRO - the Occult Response to the Christian Response to the Occult - consistently draws on a wide range of sources from all over the Western world. Much of it is obtained through access to computer data networks, which the editor, Peter Elliott, understands to a baffling degree. As well as substantial accounts of Fundamentalist meetings and other propaganda (including items presented at the U.K. seminars attended by representatives from various Area Social Services and the N.S.P.C.C.), there is material prepared for use by U.S. law enforcement agencies, and impressive critiques of the SCA myths as and where they occur. Currently on its sixth issue, ORCRO has largely overcome the initial desire to shock, seemingly replacing it with a keen sense of competition, pushing the Fundamentalists to challenge the comments and revelations made. So far, they seem not to have risen to the bait. ORCRO is an excellent source of information, and a good read! It is available for £2 an issue from BCM Gevurah, London, WC1N 3XX.



End Times Bulletin - getting carried away

As befits a magazine that intends to publish through the 1990's, each issue will have this column, covering various aspects of apocalyptic belief. We'll be delighted to receive material - newscuttings, leaflets, anything -- on this subject from anywhere in the world. Also on Survivalism and similar social movements. As the year 2000 approaches, we shouldn't be short of material!

Some factual input this time, concerning 'The Rapture'. Particularly appropriate when so many contemporary reports involve being taken off, unexpectedly, by superior intelligences, to strange places. Let's start with a chunk from the Bible: -

" For this we tell you as the Lord's word. We who are left alive till the Lord comes shall not forestall those who have died; because at the word of command, at the sound of the Archangel's voice and God's trumpet call, the Lord himself will descend from Heaven; first the Christian dead will rise, then we who are left alive shall join them, caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Thus shall we always be with the Lord. Console one another, then, with these words." (First Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians. Ch.4. v.15 - 18. NEB.)

" What I mean, my brothers, is this: flesh and blood can never possess the Kingdom of God, and the perishable cannot possess immortality. Listen, I will unfold a mystery; we shall not die, but we shall all be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet call. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will rise immortal, and we shall all be changed." (First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. Ch.15. v.50 - 53. NEB).

The verses from Thessalonians are those most often quoted, and from their original form derives the term 'rapture'. The meaning of these passages is fairly clear: the Christian dead must find their reward in Heaven, so they are taken. But those who are not yet dead, who are alive at the time the dead are to be taken up, must not receive inferior treatment. Therefore, they too must be taken up. However, they cannot be taken to the Lord in physical form, so their physical form has to be changed before the journey. The change will be instantaneous.

So now you begin to understand what theologians do: they think up very complicated explanations for things that might happen. Because God is involved in them, the explanations cannot be less than wholly logical, at least within their own terms of reference. To give some further flesh to these perfect bones, and to clarify the possible consequences both for those who are chosen, and those who are not, here are some excerpts from a variety of books and pamphlets . . .

" First of all, it only concerns the Lord's people. Only the dead in Christ receive their resurrection bodies, and only those who belong to Christ are caught up to meet him. Not one unconverted person will be

amongst these greatly privileged people. Secondly we should carefully notice that the passage (in Thess.) clearly states that this coming of our Lord is in the air, and not a coming to the Earth, which the writer believes takes place some time later."

" The Rapture will take place in a fraction of a second. As our Lord descends into the air, there will be a commanding shout, the voice of an archangel and a trumpet of God, summoning first the dead in Christ to arise and, immediately after, those of us who are still on the earth. We shall all be caught up in clouds to a grand assembly with our Lord."

" Someday, a day that only God knows, Jesus Christ is coming to take away all those who believe in him. He is coming to meet all true believers in the air. Without benefit of science, space suits, or interplanetary rockets, there will be those who will be transported into a glorious place more beautiful, more awesome, than we can possibly comprehend. Earth, and all its thrills, excitements and pleasures will be nothing in contrast to this great event. It will be the living end, the ultimate trip . . .

God's word tells us that there will be one generation of believers who will never know death. These believers will be removed from the earth before the Great Tribulation - before that period of the most ghastly pestilence, bloodshed and starvation the world has ever known.

Examine the prophecies of this mysterious happening - of the Rapture. Here is the real hope for the Christian, the 'blessed hope' for true believers."

That last quote comes from Hal Lindsey's book, The Late Great Planet Earth. This has sold the best part of 20 million copies, and along with the author's other work, and the many similar publications available, constitutes a very substantial influence on popular conceptions of the end of the world. The Rapture is broadly accepted as being the event that immediately precedes the seven-year 'Great Tribulation, during which occurs much of the intricate material extrapolated from the Book of Revelation: the Mark of the Beast, and so on. After that, and various wars, Christ comes to Earth (sometimes called the Return to Olivet) and the Millennial Age - 1,000 years of Christ's reign on Earth - begins.

Personally, I enjoy the intricacy of all this theological material: it is difficult to convey even a taste of its complexity. But for you historians of phenomena out there, here is surely the root of the 'salvation through aerial intervention' idea, that recurs so often in our research, through so many centuries. Intriguing, isn't it?

Mick Goss writes extensively in the urban legend/folklore field. He is an established author, with a bibliography of poltergeists, The Halifax Slasher and The Evidence for Phantom Hitch-Hikers to his credit.

MASTERFUL MESSAGES

by Michael Goss

Why were so many mediums of yesteryear controlled by Red Indian chiefs? What unique qualities did Red Indian chieftains - or possibly, what unique qualities did dead Red Indian chieftains - possess that equipped them so nicely for the role of mediumistic guides: even to the point where they became Spiritualistic stereotypes?

That was a question that drifted into my head around the time when I was studying early Spiritualist literature. It didn't bother me too greatly - certainly no more than the enigma of Silver Birch, Running Wolf and all the other otherworldly redskins being prone to couch their uplifting addresses in the orotund phraseology of a Cambridge Classics seminar. (Well, not all of them. Quite a few spoke the quaint me-talkum-you-heap-bi-medicine Amerind English of Little Plum your Redskin Chum in The Beano. Or was it The Topper?). In any case, when I was furnished with an answer I was dissatisfied. A writer, who may have been Conan Doyle but probably wasn't, informed me that the reason there were so many Red Indian controls all came down to a matter of karma. In short, they were working off a debt incurred as a result of infringing or insulting (or both) some Spiritual Law. The Red Man was karmically enforced to act as a guide to the White's stumbling efforts to penetrate the mysteries beyond the Veil of Flesh, just as in his earthly existence he'd sometimes been forced to guide white men's stumbling efforts to explore his unexplored continent. Terra incognita in both cases, though in the latter the guide occasionally got paid for his labour.

I held that answer suspect. I preferred to think that the super-abundance of Red Indian controls had less to do with karma than with an incipient image worship: the Red Indian as Rousseau's Noble Savage in beads and buckskins. All-wise, undecieved by White Man's specious, forked-tongued logic, in tune with Nature and all its grand forces, the Indian projected an alternative to rationalistic knowledge. He spoke not of knowledge, but of Wisdom - simply, directly, sans logarithmic tables. You didn't need to have to read up on Newton to understand what he was saying. The Red Indian spirit-guide knew what we had managed to forget even before he reached the Happy Hunting grounds. (Come to think, not many of the Indians who dropped into seances seemed to have much information on Happy Hunting grounds as such . . .) He was enlightened, attuned, undistracted by civilisation. For a person intent upon turning aside from the traditional rationalistic modes of evaluating the Unknown, which in some senses is what mediumship involves, the Red

Indian was a perfect leader. He dramatised that primitive, intuitive form of Truth which the medium had embraced.

Nowadays the role models have altered slightly. Spiritualists have not completely parted company with Running Wolf and his ghostly ilk, but outside the seance room Red Indian guides carry less eclat and clout than they used to. Their position has been usurped by: Oriental gurus (a trend which began in the late 1800's with Theosophy and peaked with those epigrammatic Chino-Japanese martial arts masters of the 1970's) or by channelling's unimaginably-ancient warrior-priests straight out of Robert E.Howard's sword'n'sorcery epics. Or by the consonantly-complicated names dear to contactee lore.

All share a certain alien quality. They are figures older than and opposed to the Western scholastic tradition of learning which, as I mentioned, is basically rationalistic and critical. The Control is never open to critical inquiry. What he states is to be accepted as it comes; indeed, there is no point in trying to question or challenge him when the tone and pitch of his address makes it patent that we poor worldlings don't know enough - are not enlightened enough - to be in a position to question or to challenge. The popularity of these self-assured and curiously assuring oracles probably suggests a dissatisfaction with systems wherein knowledge is a long, drawn-out cumulative process fraught with contradictions, refinements and even abandonments of hard won mental positions. It is easier, far easier, to accept the dogmatic word of a discarnate teacher than the elliptical, often unflattering words of an incarnate one whose aim is (or should be) to get you to arrive at the answer through your own efforts.

But never mind the width, feel the quality. When you look at them dispassionately, aren't these deposited gems of discarnate wisdom - the spiritual addresses of Silver Cloud on Man's Place in the Universe or remarks on Earth's environmental folly as seen by an informed Alpha Centauran - oddly disappointing? To a third party, I mean - the seance-goer, the contactee and the channeller won't find them disappointing at all. But that isn't the point. For those of us outside the enchanted circle, they are quite likely to appear the most turgid of fare. Is there any literature on Earth quite so dull as your average Victorian spirit-address? How could anyone have mistaken the verbal odysseys of Hudson Tuttle for spiritual manna? How could they even have mistaken it for English? Why does the average CE4 entity utter advice that sounds like a sixth form intellectual who's just discovered Herman Hesse or (still more terrible!) Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance?

I admit a weakness for those terse and paradoxical koans of the aforementioned Oriental masters and - yes, I can see the charm of some spirit-communicated books. A couple of years ago and mainly as a result of researching an article on the disappearance of Colonel Fawcett, I read Geraldine Cummins on that very subject - reasoning that anybody who wanted to know what happened after the jungle curtain closed behind him for the last time should read a book that purported to be his own version of those events: straight

from the spirit-world and courtesy of Ms. Cummins' mediumship. The Fate of Colonel Fawcett (1955) struck me as a pleasant enough adventure story and more fun than, say, Swiss Family Robinson, but as evidence of anything? I didn't believe a word the soi-disant explorer had to tell me. As for the library of plays and poems passed on from the next world by the departed literati like Shakespeare, Wilde and Wells, I concur with what Dr Gauld wrote in The Founders of Psychical Research: "One can only say that if the great minds of this world degenerate so much in the next, the prospect for lesser fry is bleak indeed".

If the content of what the Masters have to say seems to lack genuine intellectual grit and cogency, it must be because they weren't really talking to us. The Spiritualist seance, the contactee interlude or channelling session places the experient inside an enchanted circle, and we are outside it; we cannot appreciate the intimate directness, the sheer impact. The content loses by translation into cold print, rather like a wonderful Icelandic poem might be reduced to a series of trite, disjointed phrases when rendered into literal English. Only the sitter, the contactee, the channeller get the full message. What we get, critically regarded, is seldom worth having.

Or perhaps we ought to heed what Conan Doyle wrote in his History of Spiritualism: "We must cast away forever the idea that the discarnates are necessarily wise or powerful entities. They have their . . . limitations even as we have."

But it may be too late for that. We don't want discarnate guides with limitations - their appeal rests in their not being subject to them. They must necessarily be wise and/or powerful. From our mundane viewpoint, that is what they are for.

Research contacts

I guess that many of you are like me - keen to become involved in research, specifically interested in various areas of the field, but geographically isolated, and finding it difficult to obtain material with which to pursue those interests. Indeed, even in the middle of London, it can be impossible to find the sort of leads that a researcher needs, but which may be available to someone else.

We can't, of course, work miracles, but if anyone would like to send in a brief advert detailing what sort of research they're involved in, and what help or material they're seeking, I'll be happy to publish them. To set the ball rolling, I'll just mention that I'd be delighted to be able to borrow audio cassettes of lectures, talks, conferences and such, particularly in the UFO field. All postage etc. to be met by me!



Talking to Strangers

This will be a regular column dealing mainly - though not exclusively - with aspects of UFO abduction and contact: encounters where there is interchange with non-human entities. For this first issue I'd like to start on a slightly personal note, hopefully inspiring some interchange between us humans, too.

Many of you will be aware that in the typical abduction scenario, one of the key elements is a 'medical examination', which may involve the taking of samples, or other types of interference. When encouraged to remember, witnesses increasingly recall repeated encounters/abductions, often beginning during childhood. Additionally, witnesses report encountering alien figures, in various forms, that leave them helpless, powerless, unable to move.

I remember few dreams from my childhood, apart from the obvious ones of flying downstairs, or finding myself skyclad and embarrassed in the High Street at Barkingside. There were two fairly predictive ones, for which I make no claims, a nightmare, and a nasty, which bothered me for years. The nightmare occurred a handful of times: a snowman, possibly more than one, who wouldn't let me wake up, or move, or in any way escape from its presence. The scene I can recall of the 'nasty' - there was more - involved having a hollow glass tube, containing green or purple liquid, pushed into the left side of my groin, protruding by several inches. I can remember looking down at my naked, maybe 8-year old self, again completely helpless. I checked when I woke, and on occasions thereafter, to see if there was any mark. There wasn't.

No, I'm not claiming to be an abductee. But if I were in a social group that encouraged the making of such claims, if I were pressured into letting myself be hypnotically regressed, or otherwise opened up to the subtle influences that can lead an individual into all sorts of strange beliefs, I wonder if I might have been. Particularly if I had been the subject of the sort of interviewing - both with and without hypnotism - that has clearly been used in cases in the past decade.

Perhaps one direction for the investigation of abductions might be to take the component parts of the reported experiences, and to see if they have a basis in the internal experiences of childhood. If that is the time of origin the reports are suggesting, then perhaps we should be looking there, as well as in the immediate cultural context. If TWP is reaching its target audience, there should be both psychologists and abductees out there, reading this. Any suggestions, anyone?

In the beginning

I've written quite enough in this magazine not to wish a long editorial on you as well. The next issue will be out just after Christmas, and with letters and reviews to add, will be longer than this one. I hope you'll want to play your part in filling its pages!

In the course of putting this together, and some other writing I've done recently, I've been looking at attitudes to phenomena, and to witnesses. As you may have noticed, I tend to treat paranormal experience and belief more or less continuously with religious experience and belief. That isn't the whole story, but it'll do as a summary. I suspect that the same needs are being met in both instances, and that the perceived communications in both have the same sources. I'm just not quite sure what those sources are!

It was in that context, thinking about how child visionaries and other witnesses of the past have been treated - harrassed, used for political ends, marketed, or forced into religious orders and seclusion - that I considered how we treat witnesses now. I was particularly provoked at seeing a long-standing contactee (or alien?) in the South Midlands again in the UFO press, his story now adapted to current trends in ufology.

Often, too often, reports of experiences are treated as separated from reality, from the real, everyday life of the witness. We talk easily of social and cultural influences, but only in principle. We refer to psychological strengths and weaknesses, about whether their personality characteristics fall within certain norms. In our search for a good case, a good story, we write these people up as if what is important to us is also important to them: as if it is the only thing about them of importance.

Good case investigation can help a witness by explaining, informing, resolving an unwanted mystery. Many witnesses are perfectly capable of deciding the role they want to play, and how they want their 'case' to be treated. But some are not. Some will need to talk, from loneliness, or depression, or some other compulsion. They will be likely to say what they think the listener wants to hear. 'Attention seeking' is seldom a fault: it signifies a need to escape from being ignored. Investigators of claims of extraordinary events are among the few types of listener such individuals can be sure to attract.

But as in the past with experients of religious phenomena, so now with others who make witness claims. We all have lives to live, and a right to be allowed - even assisted - to live them to their fullest. It is our responsibility to let witnesses be themselves, and not allow what interests us to play a disproportionate part in their lives.