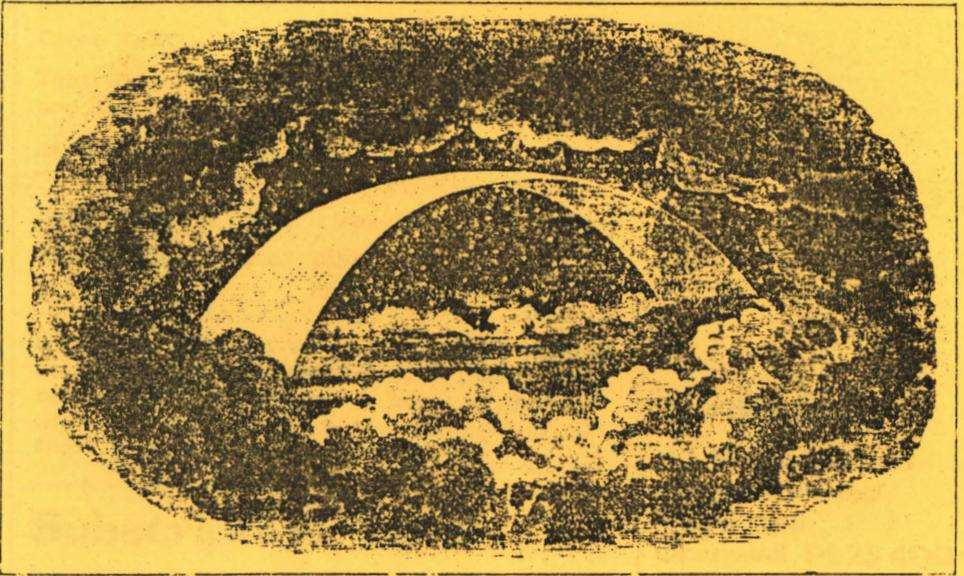


The Wild Places



THE SUMMERLAND ZONE WITHIN THE MILKY WAY

The Wild Places

No.5

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Talking to Strangers



I had a marvellous weekend at the IUN UFO Conference at Sheffield in the middle of August. Speaking, listening, and having the opportunity to talk to all the excellent people in this field who don't often pass my way down here in Cornwall. The organisation was excellent, and I'd strongly recommend anyone to make the effort to attend next year's event.

The 'star' speakers were the legendary John Keel - certainly one of my main influences over the years - and William Moore, the co-author of famous books on the Philadelphia Experiment and the Roswell 'crash', and the force behind much of the ongoing research into Roswell, and the MJ-12 material. Both proved to be superb speakers, though it was intriguing to see them covering the same cases from almost diametrically opposed viewpoints. Re. Roswell, in particular, Keel came over as debunker, Moore as committed to the likelihood that there are ETs somewhere out there, probably.

Jenny Randles spoke about Rendlesham, which is as intriguing as ever - I was in on the early stages of that investigation, and it was interesting to see how much more there is to the case now than I had ever imagined there could be. And Ralph Noyes hinted that there are physical characteristics to some crop circles that would be impossible for hoaxers to replicate. I look forward to hearing more details about this important factor.

In a way, with my taste for odd beliefs, the most enlightening element of the weekend came from speakers Robert France and Graham Allen, supported by members of the audience. These seem to represent the British alternative to abductees - more genteel, perhaps, but none the less impassioned about their mission.

It would seem that there are some forms of aliens - good and bad - not only in contact with certain chosen human beings, but actually living among us. It would seem there are large UFOs landing and that their occupants are communicating telepathically with the chosen human beings, though other people can't see them. It seems that this is somehow all associated with Rennes le Chateau, the Merovingian Dynasty, the unknown relatives of Jesus, and the end of the world. Of course, as one of the speakers explained in reply to my lecture, as I am not one of those who have been chosen, I can't be expected to understand what it's all about. These people appear to be involved in psychic questing, mysterious power sources, and to believe themselves key to the 'transformation' of humanity: as they, apparently, have been transformed.

The collective noun that came to my mind for these people is the New Pilgrims. I shall watch their progress with interest.

The Haunted Mountain

by Joyce Cooper

Ben Macdhui, remote, lonely, wild and desolate, the highest mountain in the Cairngorms of the Scottish Highlands, rises to a height of 4296 ft and is only 110 ft lower than Ben Nevis, Britain's highest mountain.

One fine spring morning in May 1945 Peter Densham, an experienced mountaineer, set out from the town of Aviemore to spend the day climbing to the summit of the mountain. About midday, he reached the high plateau, and sat down in the warm spring sunshine to eat a well-earned lunch. As he was finishing his meal the sun gradually disappeared and a thick mist descended. It completely obliterated the surrounding terrain and enveloped the climber in a swirling white cloud of dampness and silence. The silence was soon to be broken by faint noises - noises which sounded like footseteps crunching on loose stones, all the time becoming louder as they approached.

Up to this time, Densham had not been unduly alarmed, thinking that the noise might be the result of contracting rocks but suddenly, for no reason, he felt terribly frightened. The crunching noise seemed only a few feet away and he had an overwhelming desire to get off the mountain as soon as possible. He stood up and began to run wildly through the fog, unable to see in which direction he was heading. It dawned on him that he was running toward Lurcher's Crag, a sheer precipice over which he would plunge to his death unless he changed direction. At this point he felt as if he was being pushed from behind, and only by sheer determination and effort of will did he manage to change course and head off towards the Lairig Ghru Pass, down which he raced like a madman. He only stopped when he reached the loch, where the mist had cleared and he felt safe.

Peter Densham's experience is only one of many strange episodes reported to have happened on or near Ben Macdhui, the haunted mountain. As early as 1831, Sir Thomas Lauder wrote a letter to the Edinburgh Philosophic Journal, claiming that he and his companions had witnessed what he called a 'Spectre of the Brocken' on Ben Macdhui. It was not until the beginning of this century, when mountain climbing became a more popular pastime, that the mountain gained its sinister reputation of being haunted by the apparition known as the 'Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui'.

In 1925 Norman Collie, professor of organic chemistry at London University, gave a lecture at the AGM of the Cairngorms Club in Aberdeen, recounting an unnerving experience he had had whilst climbing on the mountain in 1891. He told them that as he was returning from the cairn on the summit, in a mist, he heard a loud crunching noise not far behind him. It sounded as if someone was following him, but taking longer steps than his own. As the noise came gradually nearer, "I was seized with terror", he said, "and

took to my heels, staggering blindly among the boulders for four or five miles, down to Rochemurchis Forest". He added, "There is something very queer about the top of Ben Macdhui. I will never go back there again by myself".

Later on in the same year, a letter was published in the Aberdeen Press and Journal, from a Mr W.G. Robinson, telling of the experience of his friend Dr A. Kellas, a famous mountaineer who had been a part of the 1921 Everest Expedition. Dr Kellas and his brother, Henry, had been near the summit of the mountain late one afternoon, looking for crystals, when they suddenly became aware of a giant figure coming towards them down the slope from the cairn. It then passed out of sight below, but they were certain that it was trying to reach them and overcome with panic, "tore down by Corrie Etchachan to escape it". Dr Kellas had said that there was a mist on the hill at the time, but that the figure could not have been a shadow or optical illusion - both he and his brother were quite convinced that it was real.

Peter Densham had a friend, Richard Frere, whom he had met during the Second World War, when they had both been members of an aircraft rescue team. On one occasion during the war they were sent to search for a missing aircraft, believed to have crashed in the area around Ben Macdhui. As they stood by the cairn near the summit surveying the surrounding mountains, Densham was surprised to hear his friend apparently talking to someone on the other side of the cairn. Densham then went round and joined in the conversation, with what he later realised must have been an invisible being. The strangest aspect of the affair was that afterwards neither could remember what had been said.

Richard Frere had another mystical experience whilst on the mountain. This time he was by himself: he described the event in the magazine Open Air. As he was climbing up the Lairig Ghru Pass, he became aware that close by his side was what he called a 'Presence, utterly abstract, but intensely real'. As he continued to climb, he began to hear strange music, like someone singing on a high note. At first he thought it might be the result of atmospheric pressure on his ears, but the sound grew louder and 'seemed to come from the very soil of the mountain'. Two hours later at the summit, the phenomenon was still with me. I was not alone and the thin whine of the ethereal music still came to my ears'.

Frere also recounted the different experiences of another mountaineering friend who, for the purpose of a bet, had gone to spend a night in winter, camped at the summit, to prove that he could withstand the harsh weather conditions which prevailed. During the night, which was fine but extremely cold and frosty, he awoke suddenly feeling very scared, and saw a shadow outside his tent, highlighted in the bright moonlight. As the shadow dissolved he opened the flap of his tent and saw, twenty yards away, a huge shambling creature, walking slowly down the slope. As far as he could make out the creature was covered in hair, had a large head and massive shoulders, but was not ape-like: its arms were of normal length. In the morning, by measuring the distance from his tent to the spot where he had seen the creature, he estimated that it must

have been at least twenty-four feet high.

A later encounter was described by a photographer, Alexander Tewnton, in the Scots Magazine of June 1958. He had gone climbing on the mountain in October 1943, intending to shoot some game, but as he reached the top of Lairig Ghru Pass, the wind began to rise, and fearing a storm he decided to return the way he had come. As he was descending a mist began to roll in and it was then that he heard footsteps behind him. He turned and saw, through the eddying clouds of mist a strange shape, which lurched towards him and appeared to be threatening him. "Without hesitation", he said, "I levelled my gun and fired three times at the figure. When it still came on, I turned and hared down the path, reaching Glen Derry in a time I have never bettered. Was it really Fear Liath Mor? (the Gaelic for Big Grey Man) - I think it was".

George Duncan, a member of the Scottish Mountaineering Club of Aberdeen, claimed to have seen a tall figure in a black robe on the mountainside, whilst travelling down the Derry Road. The writer Joan Grant had a psychic experience in the Rochemurchis Forest one summer afternoon, when out walking with her husband. She was also attacked by similar feelings of panic and horror, which made her turn and run back down the path. She recounts the incident in her book, Time Out of Mind . . . "Something utterly malign, four-legged and obscenely human, invisible, yet solid enough for me to hear the pounding of its hooves, was trying to reach me. If it did, I should die, for I was too frightened to defend myself. I had run about half a mile, when I burst through an invisible barrier, beyond which I was safe. I knew I was safe now, although a second before I had been in mortal danger".

The authoress of the book The Secret of Spey, Wendy Wood, describes a mysterious encounter when walking up the Lairig Ghru Pass. At that time she had not heard of any odd happenings on Ben Macdhui, and was completely unaware of any mystery. In her case there was no mist, but she heard a loud harsh voice that seemed to be speaking in Gaelic. She thought at first it must be an echo, but then realised that the sound seemed to come from beneath her feet, from the heart of the mountain itself. In growing panic, she turned to make her way down the mountainside, but then became aware of heavy footsteps following her, taking gigantic strides. Extremely scared by this time, she ran as fast as she could down the pass until she reached the lower slopes, where the footsteps ceased.

The identity of the Big Grey Man of Ben Macdhui still remains a mystery. Is he human, animal, ghost or merely a myth? It would be easy to dismiss him as a creature of imagination, if it were not for the similarity of accounts and descriptions given by different people at different times. There seems no doubt that someone or something inhabits the high plateau of Ben Macdhui, but it seems highly improbable that any living creature, human or animal, could find enough food or shelter to sustain life in such inhospitable surroundings, given the harsh conditions of a Scottish winter. We are reminded, of course, of the Himalayan Yeti and the Bigfoot of California, but these do not seem to be in quite

the same category. Certain aspects of the Ben Macdhui phenomena suggest a link with the supernatural.

Our prehistoric ancestors were believers in Earth Magic, and they worshipped the gods and spirits of nature. The ancient stone circles are permanent reminders of long lost pre-Christian faiths. Modern occult researchers give convincing accounts of the highly charged psychic impressions they receive when near the old 'sacred sites'. George Russell, known as the 'Irish Mystic', and a friend of the poet Yeats, once told of the mystical beings he saw whilst in the mountains of Western Ireland. In an interview with W.Y. Evans-Wentz, the author of Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries he said, "The first time I saw them, I was lying on a hillside in County Sligo. I had been listening to music in the air and what seemed to be the sound of bells, and I was trying to understand these aerial clashes in which wind seemed to break upon wind in an ever changing musical sound. Then the space before me grew luminous and I began to see one beautiful being after another".

Different kinds of entities were contacted by the medium Geraldine Cummins, when she tuned in psychically to a period of 'ignorant and primitive practices' at a stone circle in County Cork. She saw, "A tall man, a priest, and a bound man being dragged forward for sacrifice. They called upon the Spirits of the Elements to guard the site, and any man or stranger who disturbed it came under the shadow of the Great Curse".

Could, therefore, the apparition seen and heard on Ben Macdhui be a spirit of the elements, a metaphysical creature sometimes called an 'earth - deva', guarding a place where once the early religion had been practised, and intent on discouraging intruders by scaring them half to death? Paul Devereux, editor of the Ley Hunter, says in an article entitled Gremlins at the Gates of Dawn, "It has been noted by earth mystery researchers from time to time, that things seem to go wrong when ancient sites are being investigated . . . as if some invisible guardian of a site is making things difficult".

After her frightening experience on Ben Macdhui, Wendy Wood wrote, "We are no nearer a reasonable solution of the identity of the huge being who is seen, felt and heard by persons of such wildly differing proclivities in the same vicinity. Are such things the imaginings of the race, clinging to a particular place, discernible only to those whose racial sensitiveness is open to receive the primal impressions and fears of a bygone day?"

The strange music heard by Richard Frere and George Russell's ethereal wind song are very similar. The blackrobed figure seen by George Duncan from the Derry Road resembles the tall priest described by Geraldine Cummins. Perhaps one day, scientific research will be able to prove the existence of invisible, non-human intelligence, a separate order of beings - the spirits of fire, air, earth and water, known throughout history as fairies, gnomes, goblins etc. To quote our old friend Shakespeare, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy".

End Times Bulletin

One of the most extreme religious magazines available on public sale is Prophecy Today - the 'journal of the Prophetic Witness movement'. While the other popular evangelical Christian magazines like Alpha and Family seem to have been less contentious recently, PT continues to amaze me. The July/August 1992 issue starts with an Editorial Policy Statement that includes the following cheerful judgement:

"We also believe that the present world situation is so serious that the very existence of mankind is under threat. In all the nations a spirit of violence and disorder appears to have been loosed that is disturbing family life, disrupting the community, overthrowing moral and social stability and threatening to lead to worldwide destruction".

Of course, PT has a solution to this problem - to understand the Bible, through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Naturally, the team producing PT works with the Holy Spirit, and they are thus able to tell us what the Bible really says - and they define their own role unequivocally:

"We note that in times of crisis in ancient Israel God used the prophets to alert people to danger and to correct their ways, to call them back to him and to direct their steps - so today we believe God is longing to use his church in this prophetic role in the world".

It's not difficult to set these attitudes in the context of those of UFO contactees - both have this sense of mission, of being special or chosen. The difference is that, via many of this country's Christian bookshops, PT and its views can have a much wider influence.

The July/August PT includes an article railing against the creation of a Buddhist retreat in Scotland, a feature on the 'Hindu Challenge to the Church', an attack on abortion, and lots of news of earthquakes, disasters, wars and droughts. These people seem to be fascinated by mass, unexpected, death. This fascination is partly explained by the Editorial:

"There has to be a death before there can be a resurrection. The Western world has gone beyond repentance and turning, the hope now lies in breaking and restoration. This is the essence of the Gospel". And it concludes, "It is time to stop trying to appease the Muslims or the Hindus, Communists, humanists, or the secularists. It is time to stop being driven by the fear of man and to respond only to the fear of God"

These are people waiting for the end, as only through disaster and destruction can they envisage their own victory. So much for Christian charity. But the lesson that emerges from this, for me, is of an underlying urge in humanity to anticipate - even seek - dramatic change, at any cost to life. How that drive is shaped,

what form it takes, is almost entirely a matter of prevailing cultural and social influences. If thousands accept what the staff of Prophecy Today perceives as reality, the believers in alien abductions seem almost reasonable by comparison.

Cross Talk

The recent extensive revelations of child sexual abuse by members of the Roman Catholic clergy - hardly surprising as they were - will be used by some of the more vocal occultists in this country to try to prove the falsity of the allegations of Satanic child sexual abuse. It's an argument that has been used before and, of course, it proves nothing of the sort. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that there are men in all walks of life, and all belief groups, who will abuse if they can. If they have a position of authority over a child, or can create such authority by threat or promise, they are the more likely to succeed in their intention. What they supposedly believe in has little to do with it: two wrongs don't make a right, and vigilance shouldn't be reduced because of personal prejudices.

While bigotry and narrow-mindedness certainly aren't faults exclusive to the mainstream religions, I was recently impressed by the open-mindedness of a Christian group who took a stall at the Cornish Festival of Mind, Body and Spirit in Truro. The people were willing to talk, and to consider my comments on the books that they had on sale. Unfortunately, the stock had been supplied by the rather zany evangelical bookshop that has survived for many years here in St. Austell, and they obviously didn't know what they were offering to the public.

This raised an interesting point. I suspect - having met some of the staff there - that the people who run the bookshop probably aren't aware of the content of much of their stock, either. Which means that in all likelihood a mere handful of people are both deciding what should be published, and are also distributing it, and making their livings from it. Is this how rubbish like the 'I was a Witch Queen' ravings of Doreen Irvine or Audrey Harper get into print. How feeble-minded Fundamentalists get hold of manuals of do-it-yourself exorcism? Are these the people who are responsible for the books about how homosexuality can be 'cured' because it offends God? There is a wide and successful network of shops peddling this dangerous nonsense. Perhaps it is time that the people behind them were identified, and subjected to the sort of scrutiny to which any other extremist leader or publisher would expect to be an unavoidable part of life.

That Which Cannot Be Said - Censorship and the Paranormal by Leslie Price

All editors are obliged to reject material or change it. Sometimes authors believe they are being censored - and sometimes they are.

When I was editing The Christian Parapsychologist, I solicited an article from the veteran Dutch parapsychologist George Zorab on the Resurrection of Jesus, about which he had written a book in Dutch. A long paper duly arrived. Unfortunately Mr Zorab had become more sceptical with advancing years. Whereas he had once held a Myers-type view of psi, in which some phenomena involved the discarnate, by 1975 he preferred this-worldly explanations. This now meant that the post-mortem appearances of Jesus were not initiated by Him, but by the stressed and bereaved disciples.

Thus I had obtained for a Christian publication an article repudiating one of the basic tenets of the faith. Although I was subject to no formal hindrance, I did not publish it.

In 1991, a similar case involving the CP arose. My friend Mike Taylor, who holds a demonic theory of psi, wrote a long critique of Agnes Sanford, the pioneer healer whose life and beliefs raised some questions. This could not be published in CP in any part because, although Mr Taylor was an orthodox Christian, his views were outside the liberal Christian consensus and readers might be upset - just as the agnostic Mr Zorab would have distressed them from a different angle.

Dogmatic censorship is not of course the prerogative of any particular religious group. They all have their sore points. While editing Theosophical History I drafted an editorial on the role of esoteric sections, secret groups established first by Madame Blavatsky and later by the various theosophical leaders, which were held by friends and enemies alike to have exercised a major role in the development of the theosophical cause. I was warned by a sympathetic reader, himself a critic of the 'esoteric sections' concept, not to publish this as it might prejudice some of the Theosophical powers that be, against the wider work in which I was involved. On this occasion I did publish, and one of the powers later became a subscriber.

Even opponents of dogmatic beliefs can have their taboos. In an earlier article in Wild Places I have noted the significance of Arthur Findlay's interpretation of religion and psi. Although he was a militant opponent of Christian orthodoxy. Findlay contributed to the formation of a Spiritualist orthodoxy which fossilised in 1939 when his magnum opus The Psychic Stream was published. For many years, his books were published by the company which issued the main Spiritualist journals. It was apparent by 1969 that some of his views had been superseded by the normal discoveries of scholarship but I did not find Maurice Barbanell, editor of Psychic News and the monthly Two Worlds, keen to make this known in his pages. Recently Two Worlds has come under different Spiritualist ownership, and the same company is re-issuing most of Findlay's books. An ironic fact became apparent when

I compared early editions of Findlay's The Rock of Truth with the 1968 version. The text had been changed in some places though the reader would not always know. To appreciate the significance of this, one must be aware of the strong criticism for tampering with the Bible and other Christian texts directed against the Church by orthodox Spiritualists.

The Theosophical Publishing House has for many years been discreetly correcting the editions of the books they publish by earlier leaders whose remarks about black people, for example, or the working class are no longer acceptable. I found myself criticised from two angles when Theosophical History in 1988 reprinted a description of canal life among Martians clairvoyantly perceived by C.W. Leadbeater, which does not appear in the Quest edition of his classic The Spiritual Life. To someone pro-C.W.L. this might seem to undermine him (Mars has no canals, though the idea was popular when C.W.L. was young. Madame Blavatsky's teachers, however, indicated that Mars was not active. See The Secret Doctrine). Yet a correspondent in the anti-C.W.L. The Eclectic Theosophist deprecated any attention to the reprobate Leadbeater. (In 1982 Greg Tillett in his biography of Leadbeater, The Elder Brother printed evidence that he had fabricated the official version of his early life. This book could not be named, let alone reviewed, in The Theosophist, a sad commentary on a society whose motto is "There is no religion higher than truth".

An amusing example of Theosophical censorship occurs in a letter said to have been received in 1900 by Annie Besant from one of the Mahatmas associated with the Society (it was precipitated on another letter through the post, as used to happen also on occasion in the time of Madame Blavatsky, who died in 1891.) The 1900 letter was not made public until after the book Who Wrote The Mahatma Letters? had appeared in 1936 and had accused HPB of authorship of the original letters received around 1882. But the 1900 letter contained some sharp criticism of Mrs Besant and of the esoteric section of Theosophists she headed, so this was edited out in the 1936 version issued by the Theosophists. The Mahatma K.H. had also written in the 1900 letter that, "Misleading secrecy has given the death blow to numerous organisations", and this sentence was omitted too! Even the warning by a senior Mahatma could not prevail over the political advantages of secrecy. The uncensored text appeared first in a publication from another Theosophical group, The Eclectic Theosophist (Sep. 1987). One of the few advantages of schisms in such groups is that one group will often publish material which the other group has suppressed, especially if there is a quarrel about who has historical authority.

Accusations of fraud pose particular difficulty. It may be held, in Psychic News for example, wicked to accuse a deceased medium or researcher of fabricating phenomena, when they are not in a position to reply to the charges. But to publish such a charge against a living person may bring ruinous libel actions. When I came into the psychic field, in the mid-60s, the late Trevor Hall was suing, after a sharp review by the late Fraser Nicol in the International Journal of Parapsychology. A number of researchers in the States and U.K. divided into two groups minutely scrutinising the Victorian records. When the dust cleared, the IJP was no more.

Ten years ago, the London Spiritualist perished after it libelled several Spiritualist officers. A High Court jury awarded damages of £225 in total, a tiny sum, but the sting was in the costs payable by the monthly. Part of the offence of the LS was to reprint an offensive nickname being used, it was said, about a Spiritualist conference centre. Merely to give currency to a libellous charge may be sufficient to put printer, editor and author in court.

I lost the friendship of a warm-hearted Spiritualist journalist over a suggestion of fraud. Anne Dooley took grave exception to an article I wrote for Alpha in 1979 about the complex work of the medium Geraldine Cummins. I repeated in my article the doubts of Professor E.R. Dodds about her probity. Both Dodds and Miss Cummins were Irish and acquaintances of many years standing. In my view, Miss Cummins produced some of the most outstanding work of the century, notably the scripts which appear in Raynor Johnson's book The Light and the Gate. But Dodds could not be ignored. Interestingly, his remarks about Miss Cummins in his autobiography were toned down, but I had access to the proofs of that section in the SPR archives.

That probably would not happen today because the SPR archives are in Cambridge, and largely out of reach of all but Cambridge members. There are several layers of truth in most cases in psychical research. After the short summaries in the popular works, there is the original published report, say in Proceedings SPR and very often a collection of relevant papers in archives, where survival may be hazardous. Deeper still, there are the spoken recollections of participants, such as doubts about the competence of particular researchers or equipment, that might never find their way to paper.

Phenomena that transcend the boundaries of disciplines or societies are often subject to exclusion. Ralph Noyes, now the hon. sec. of the SPR and a big wheel in the crop circle field, called attention to this in his paper, 'Entities: is there a pecking order?' (SPR Journal Jan. 1989). "I get the impression", the author commented, "that the SPR's field of enquiry has been strongly (if inadvertently) biased by the hope of many of its founding (and perhaps present) fathers that proof of survival after death is a primary objective of the Society, and that only those 'entity encounters' which seem likely to settle the matter are worthy of study. There is a comparable bias in ufology, many of whose members are impatient of any line of enquiry which seems to run counter to the hypothesis that we are being visited by wholly material extraterrestrial beings".

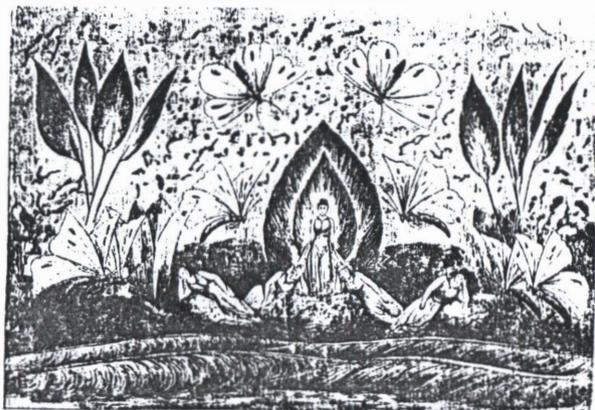
I once discussed with Dr Dingwall the presence of sexologists in psychical research; there have been quite a few, including Ding. It might be expected that the sexual complications of phenomena are rarely brought out, despite the diligent work of Peter Underwood. More than one major investigation has been compromised, moreover, by suggestions that the medium and the researcher had become more than friendly, a situation put in entertaining fictional form by the late Paul Tabori. There is also a homosexual dimension in psychical

research. Frank Podmore is a major figure here, and I wonder if the scepticism to Spiritualism, which he developed, was informed by his perception of the gay scene among male Victorian mediums.

Language is a powerful form of unintentional censorship. The problem was most recently discussed by Carlos Alvarado in the Journal of Parapsychology (June 1989) ('The Language Barrier in Parapsychology'). English-language researchers infrequently read or cite papers in other languages. Without German, we cannot know how much Resch has given to Christian parapsychology and without Dutch, we have only a fraction of what Tenhaeff and Zorab achieved. More than one history of psychical research in English leaves the Continent isolated. Attempts are being made to remedy this through review articles, bibliographies and translations. The last named too may not be taken at face value.

Translation is a fertile field for censorship, with a long history. In one of the earliest near-death experiences in England, a monk of Wenlock in Shropshire in 715 brought back a criticism of the local King who was shortly expected in Hell - but this section was suppressed in the Old English translation of St Boniface's letter about the vision. The terms used to translate references to psychic practitioners in the Bible also reflect the prejudices of the translators - it may be expedient in one generation to describe a medium as a witch, and in another to make a condemnation of sorcery one of mediumship. As a rule, in holding an English translation of a foreign book on psychical research, one should never assume that it is the same as the original. Even an English edition of an American book may have had deletions to meet our stringent libel laws.

By this time, the reader may be wondering if anything can be believed in this subject. It certainly can, but caution is always necessary, and censorship is a reality that cannot be disregarded.



Heaven and the Dying Brain

by Susan Blackmore

Raymond Moody's best-selling book Life After Life, in 1975, took the public by storm. It transformed the near-death experience, or NDE, from an obscure medical phenomenon to a part of popular culture. The stereotype it engendered goes something like this: A person comes dangerously close to death, but is resuscitated at the last minute. Afterwards they describe how they rushed down a dark tunnel to a blinding white light at the end, left their body and watched the proceedings as though as a spectator, and then experienced their whole life flash before them in a kind of modern-day judgement scene. Finally they passed on to a heavenly realm replete with dead friends and relatives where they would have loved to have stayed: only they were told, or decided, that their time had not yet come. So, reluctantly, they returned to the pain and stress of ordinary life: except that it was a transformed life. After their close brush with death they seemed less materialistic and more spiritual. People and relationships seemed more important and material gain and success less so.

Perhaps surprisingly, that stereotype is not far from the truth. Sceptics who thought the story was wild exaggeration were silenced by continuing research showing that all these features - the tunnel, light, out-of-body experience (OBE), life review and transformation are quite common. In 1980 Kenneth Ring reported a survey showing that over half of people who came close to death reported peace while the other phenomena were increasingly uncommon with about 10% reporting OBEs. Other research confirmed that the experience was widespread and at least similar in other cultures and at other times.

One aspect of the stereotype is certainly not true. You do not have to be physically close to death to have all the features of the NDE. Thinking you are about to die can be enough as, for example, in mountain climbers who fall from a terrifying height only to land safely in a pile of soft snow, or drivers who are thrown from their car to survive terrible accidents unscathed. This important fact must be accounted for by any theory of the NDE.

How then can NDEs be explained? Are they temporary excursions of the soul into another world where we shall all go after our 'real' death? Or are they just "meaningless hallucinations"? These two theories have quite different implications. One suggests that NDEs might be evidence for the existence of a separate mind, spirit or soul, with paranormal powers and the ability to survive after death. The other denies there is anything meaningful to the experiences at all. Indeed it suggests that any spiritual transformation that survivors claim must be delusion.

So which is best? In my view both are wrong. To see why I think so, and what the alternative is, we need to consider some of the arguments used. There are four main arguments often put forward for the 'Afterlife Hypothesis'.

1/. The 'consistency argument' is that NDEs are similar around the world and throughout history. The only possible explanation for this, so the argument runs, is that NDEs are just what they appear to be - the soul's journey out of the body, through a tunnel to another world which awaits us after death. Consistency, it is argued, amounts to evidence for an afterlife.

2/. The 'reality argument' is that NDEs feel so real that they must be what they appear to be, a real journey to the next world. Anyone who has had an NDE, so this argument runs, knows it is real because they have been there. Those who haven't cannot know what it is like. On this argument feelings of reality amount to evidence.

3/. The 'paranormal argument' is that NDEs involve paranormal events which cannot be explained by science. These are therefore evidence that the NDE involves another dimension, another world, or the existence of a non-material spirit or soul. No purely materialist hypothesis can explain the paranormal so paranormality amounts to evidence.

4/. The 'transformation argument' is that people are changed by their NDEs, sometimes dramatically for the better, becoming more spiritual and less materialistic. This proves, so the argument goes, that they have had a spiritual experience involving another world. Only for this reason could their transformation have come about. It is the after effects that amount to the evidence.

All these arguments appear again and again, in conversations over dinner or a drink, as well as in the popular or scientific literature. They are often put up against the 'hallucinations' argument. But this really only amounts to the assertion that the NDE visions are 'all in the mind' and unimportant, and it does not deal adequately with the known facts. People really do seem to be transformed in a manner not consistent with the hallucinations of delirium, or excessive alcoholic lubrication. NDEs are reported as real in a way that the (otherwise similar) hallucinations of LSD and marijuana are not. So we need a better explanation.

I suggest that it is to be found by exploring what happens in the brain when faced with the prospect of death. We might call this the 'Dying Brain' hypothesis. I would like to explore what this can tell us before returning to see how well it deals with the four arguments.

If death is really imminent there will at some point be a lack of oxygen to the brain, or anoxia. This has several consequences. For example it is likely that the lack of oxygen affects inhibitory cells before excitatory ones. This causes disinhibition, or a release of the normal inhibitory mechanisms, causing many brain cells to fire more rapidly and randomly than usual. Increasingly this is just what happens with drugs such as mescaline or LSD: the very drugs that produce experiences similar to NDEs.

Anoxia can also be produced deliberately, for example in what is called G-LOC, or Gravitational loss of consciousness. Pilots who are training for high-gravity environments are knocked suddenly

unconscious and they, too, feel as though they have travelled out of the body and are helpless to control it.

It might seem odd to claim that something as specific as a dark tunnel with a bright light at the end could be induced by anoxia, but I think it may well be. Throughout the visual system cells are organised in such a way that many are devoted to processing the part of the visual field you are looking at while the density falls off rapidly towards the edges. Disinhibition would mean random firing of all these cells - we can then ask what that would 'look' like. Presumably it would look like lots of light in the centre fading out towards dimness at the outside. At Bristol we have tried simulating this on a computer and it does indeed produce a tunnel-like perspective with a bright light at the centre. Imagine now that the oxygen levels decrease and firing gets faster: the bright light would seem to come towards you - that is, until all the cells run out of oxygen and everything ceases. This suggests that NDEs, especially with tunnels, are likely to occur when there is anoxia proceeding fairly slowly; for example with cardiac insufficiency rather than sudden cardiac arrest or (at the other extreme) slow illness. There is evidence to suggest this is right.

On the other hand there are powerful arguments against the anoxia argument. For example Michael Sabom, one of the pioneers of NDE research, reported the case of a man who claimed to have watched blood being removed from his femoral artery and the blood test showed normal, or even slightly elevated, levels of oxygen. This has often been taken as evidence that anoxia is irrelevant to NDEs but this won't hold water for two reasons. First, if his heart had stopped the blood would be stagnant and little oxygen removed from it in the arteries. In the brain, however, oxygen would be rapidly taken up from the veins and have no new blood coming along to replace it. So brain anoxia alongside high oxygen levels in the arteries is just what you would expect. In addition hospital staff often give extra oxygen and if this cannot be pumped round the body and used it will produce even higher levels than usual in the arteries - just what was seen in this case.

Perhaps a more important argument is that many people have NDEs when they are obviously not suffering from Anoxia, such as those that happen when there is no real threat to life. The answer may lie in the release of endorphins. These are morphine-like substances made by the brain itself to reduce pain and induce euphoria in times of stress. They are responsible for the 'runner's high' as well as the well-known observation that you often don't feel an injury or wound until after the excitement is all over. The endorphins may well be responsible for the peace and bliss of the NDE. But they have further effects, one of which is to reduce the seizure threshold in the temporal lobe. Interestingly, it has long been known that NDEs resemble the experiences that come with temporal lobe epilepsy, such as visions, bright lights, conversations with friends or dead relatives and so on. Also the classic experiments of Wilder Penfield in the 1930s showed that electrical stimulation of this part of the brain could induce memory flashbacks.

The reliving of one's past now seems quite explicable in terms of what happens in the dying brain. The hippocampus, a brain structure closely associated with the temporal lobe, is especially sensitive to anoxia and is involved in memory storage. Either by this route, or by endorphin induced seizures, recall of past events will occur. Some theorists, such as Kenneth Ring, argue that a 'being of light' is involved in the judgement, but not all NDErs encounter such a being. For most the experience is more one of self-judgement - often a very salutary and valuable experience.

If I am right, that nothing is involved here beyond the dying brain itself, why should all these experiences seem so real? This is important because it is quite clear that NDEs are not like ordinary imagery, yet seem completely convincing. The answer depends on understanding that what seems real is a decision the brain has to make all the time in life. It is not obvious, as far as the brain is concerned, which parts of its own activity relate to external reality, and which to internal processes. I have proposed that it simply takes the best or most stable model it has at any time and treats that as 'real'. If this is the case the tunnel induced by anoxia may well be the most stable pattern in the dying brain, as may the memory flashbacks induced by temporal lobe firing.

Finally this same suggestion helps us understand the OBE. Our normal sense of where we are, if you like our 'model of reality' comes from a mixture of sensory input and body image. But near death both these will be severely disrupted. In this event the brain may be trying desperately to find a stable model of self in the world and failing. The best it can do, in the absence of sensory information, is to construct a model from memory and imagination. One thing we know about memory models is that they are often built in a bird's eye view. In the absence of anything better, the brain will take its own construction from memory as 'real'. So it is not surprising that the OBE seems so real.

I have only been able to sketch out some rough ideas for a 'Dying Brain' theory of the NDE, but this should be enough to tackle the four arguments . . .

First, we would expect NDEs to be consistent because all our brains are basically similar. Second, we should expect them to seem real because of the way the brain makes its decisions about reality.

The third argument is more difficult. Is there really evidence for people seeing things at a distance or getting right the details of events that were happening when they were close to death. I have long been trying to follow up the best sounding cases and find out how strong this evidence is. It has been a frustrating process. Two recent examples will illustrate. One is probably the most famous case of all: the tennis shoe seen on an outside ledge of a hospital by a patient who was unconscious and had been brought in at night. I have totally failed to find out anything further about this case in spite of many attempts. The second is a case recently reported of a woman called Sarah who had an NDE, observed complex visual details of the events going on at the time and yet had apparently been totally blind from birth. This case seemed so

extraordinary that I immediately wrote to the author of the book concerned to ask for further details. In this case I was more fortunate - if that is what you would call it. He politely wrote to tell me that he had made this case up to illustrate his point, and had not realised how seriously people would take it.

Like Kenneth Ring, who also wrote to him, I was grateful for his openness. However, for me it was just another nail in the coffin of the evidence for paranormal powers during NDEs. Sound evidence may yet be forthcoming but in my opinion we do not have it yet. So the third argument is not enough to knock down the 'Dying Brain' hypothesis.

Fourth and last there is the question of the after-effects. This is where I differ from the 'meaningless hallucinations' theorists. For I believe that NDEs, like many other mystical experiences, can blow apart our usual sense of self. This is the illusion we all live in - that there is someone lurking inside who makes the decisions, is the 'centre of consciousness', feels the sensations or carries out the actions. It seems to me that two very powerful lines of thought are now converging to show that this is an illusion. Progress in modern neuroscience seems to point ever more directly to the fact that there simply is no one in there. We do not need to invoke an inner controller or experiencer to understand the workings of the nervous system. From a totally different age and culture Buddhism teaches the doctrine of no-self. That the root of all suffering is the construction of a false self and clinging to that self, the way it is perpetuated.

One way to see through the illusion is by diligent meditation or mindfulness practice. But something similar can happen, out of the blue, with an NDE. As the brain begins to die that false self, that mental construction, can no longer be properly sustained. It may even be totally destroyed, yet experience continues. In this way, I suggest the NDE can, often for the first time in a person's life, provide experience without a self. No wonder that, when the self is reconstructed afterwards, it no longer has the same power to produce greed and clinging. Self and the world seem transformed. The insight is not always long lasting but I believe it is a genuine insight and not to be dismissed.

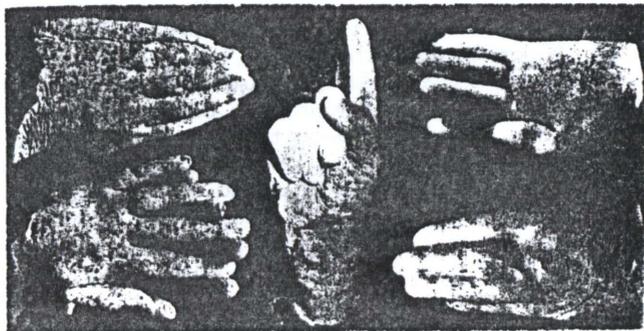
Of course I am suggesting that the transformation is not what it appears. It is not because the person has seen a life after death but because they have glimpsed the truth that actually there never was anyone to die. Does this mean I am denying many people's fervent belief that they have been to heaven? Yes I am. I only hope that research will be the way we find out which view is right. What I am not doing is denying the validity of their mystical experience or their transformation. It seems to me that the real insight comes with accepting that we are nothing more than impermanent bodies building temporary illusions. Soon we shall die and that's O.K.

FURTHER READING

- Blackmore S.J. 1982 Beyond the Body London, Heinemann
Blackmore S.J. and Troscianko T. 1988 The Physiology of the Tunnel Journal of Near-Death Studies NO.8 15-28
Lorimer D. 1990 Whole In One London, Arkana
Moody R.A. 1975 Life After Life Atlanta, Ga, Mockingbird
Ring K. 1980 Life at Death: A scientific investigation of the Near-Death Experience New York, Coward, McCann and Geoghegan (and New York, Quill 1982)
Sabom M.B. 1982 Recollections of Death London, Corgi

Susan Blackmore is a lecturer at the Department of Psychology, University of the West of England. She is the author of Beyond the Body (Heinemann 1982) and The Adventures of a Parapsychologist (Prometheus 1986) and many scientific and popular articles on parapsychology and NDEs. She is on the Council of the SPR as well as CSICOP (The Committee for the Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal). Sue is currently researching why people believe in the paranormal and the success of divination. Her latest book Dying to Live: Science and the Near Death Experience will be published in the spring of 1993 by Grafton.

(Editor's note: Sue is about the only research psychologist who has managed to break away from the fruitless lab-work of established parapsychology to actually dealing with claims of external experience. While I know that many Wild Places readers won't want to agree with her conclusions - and I don't share her gloomy view of death myself - it's no good pretending that her research and its implications don't exist. Personally, I'd love to see her try to tackle the psychological/mystical/transformational aspects of the UFO abduction/contact experience, as the only psychologists I seem to have seen quoted on the subject so far have been those with a clear premise of belief. That, I suspect, would be a real challenge!)



NEWS FROM THE FRONT

AKLO - A Journal of the Fantastic Summer 1991 Regular readers will know of my fondness for the classic 'real world' horror writers - Lovecraft, Machen, James and a few more. Consequently I have to give this original and literate journal a mention. It positions itself somewhere between horror and decadence, and this issue features Lovecraft (by Joshi), Machen, Baron Corvo, the marvellous M.P.Shiel, and plenty more first-rate writing, including some quality horror. £3 from Flat 3, Castlegate House, 10 - 12, Castle Gate, Clitheroe, Lancs, BB7 1AZ

ANCIENT SKIES May-June 1992 An issue strong on Biblical material: the 'secret code' (?) in Ezekiel, and items on both Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant. More in line with conventional Ancient Astronaut theories is a piece on the Chavin Temple in Peru. High standards, but only 4 pages. For members of the Ancient Astronaut Society, 1921 St John's Ave, Highland Park, Illinois 60035, U.S.A.

ANNALS OF THE ENQUIRING Vol.3. No.1 A good read, and definitely improving. Sharper, with some longer items including one on the genuinely occult Rennes-le-Chateau, Ball Lightning, a history of magnetism and masses more. £1.25 from Gerry Lovell, 8, St John St Wells. Somerset, BA5 1SW

ANOMALY - Journal of Research into the Paranormal (for ASSAP). Issue 10 In spite of a favourable review of psychic questing - surely the worst-evidenced and most overblown subject in our field - this is generally a good journal of active research. There's A Cornish Poltergeist, A Most Peculiar Tape Recording, A Haunted Castle, and an interesting discussion of the meaning of 'the genuinely paranormal'. Very well produced. £2 from ASSAP Secretary, Saint Aldhelm, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX

CAMBRIDGE UFO RESEARCH GROUP NEWSLETTER June 1992 Another whopping mix of original reports, worthwhile reprints, and great cartoons, put together with a light and intelligent touch. There's some Raelian material, some UFO pix, a Swedish abduction in detail, the raw material of a long abduction account from UFORIC, and more. Actually, the choice of cartoons is excellent. Try this one! S7 an issue from Bonnie Wheeler, 170, Strathcona St, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada N3C 1R4

CHRISTIAN NEW AGE QUARTERLY July-Sep 1992 Some interesting thinking here, tackling the differences between Christian concepts of salvation, and New Age enlightenment; a good review of Deceived by the New Age, the latest evangelical attack on the New Age as the work of Satan; and the first, intriguing 'Tale of Saint Iodosaph', a vaguely Mahayana lama who teaches the Buddhist dharma from the pages of the New Testament! S5 from P.O.Box 276, Clifton, NJ 07011, USA.

CORRUPTION CHRONICLE Issue 8 A super, lively, challenging magazine like International Times or Oz if they'd been edited by Robert Anton Wilson! Actually produced by Students for Freedom in Alaska, as well as UFO and conspiracy material it has all sorts of weird listings, a feature - from the inside - on 'Northern Exposure' (one

of my favourite TV programmes ever), urban legends, suicide, cattle mutilation, Manson, and other mass murderers. Very good value at \$3 from Nathaniel M. Naske, P.O.Box 80721, Fairbanks, AK 99708, USA

COSMIC CURRENT NEWS 2-92 An unusual 8-sheet quarterly with, perhaps, too many ads, but they're interesting ads, including 2 pages from the House of Divine Bread Inc, with recent BVM reports from the USA. Some worthwhile reprints, too. \$4 from P.O.Box 38037, Hollywood, CA 90038-0037, USA

THE CROP WATCHER Nos. 10 & 11 As excellent and scientific and statistically sound as ever, with useful surveys of the Crop Circles of 1990, plenty of material on definite and possible hoaxes, and some less than warm comments on the CCCS. I saw a chap called Peter Glastonbury representing them on TV down here recently (who next? Arnold Avebury . . . Stan Stonehenge . . . Tommy Tor?) and he said he could send corn stalks away for scientific tests that could establish whether or not the circle they came from was hoaxed. Oh yes he did! Make the most of cereology magazines while you can - it'll all be history by winter next year! £1.50 from Paul Fuller, 3, Selborne Court, Tavistock Close, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 7TY

DARK LILY 13 Sorry editor - I missed this title out last time. Britain's most available LHP magazine, less substantial maybe than it was, but well-written and particularly useful for some 8 pages of wide-ranging advertising from all over the world. A window on a universe of different attitudes and beliefs. £1.50 from BCM/Box 3406, London, WC1N 3XX

DELVE No.6 Snappily edited by Gene Duplantier, this is a neat mix of obscure reprints - including Tesla in an underground U.S. base in 1956 - and odd Fortean and allied material inc. Alternative 3 - one of our era's finest hoaxes! \$4 from Gene Duplantier, 17, Shetland Street, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2M 1X5

EARTHQUEST NEWS Vol.2. No.1 Great to see Andy Collins publishing a journal again - you can't fault him for commitment, enthusiasm, and belief in what he's doing - in this case, psychic questing. He's also sent a lively-looking book called The Circlemakers which I'll review in TWP 6. Anyone who's enjoyed any of Andy's previous work will love Earthquest News, but personally I really can't cope with psychic questing. For all that I, too, love historical research, the key investigation techniques here appear to be assumption, supposition and guesswork, supported by a variety of 'psychism' that never has to tangle with evidence, proof, or any real form of investigation. I'll try and make it to the Conference at Conway Hall in London, on 7.11.92 (details from Andy) as this is clearly becoming an important component in our field - maybe that'll cure my scepticism! Only £1 from ABC Books, P.O.Box 189, Leigh-On-Sea, Essex, SS9 1NF

ELSEWHEN No.10 An issue dedicated to Gene Roddenberry, and it's a pleasure to read. There's features on George Van Tassel, Giant Rock & the Integraton, Time Travel on the Television, The 'Hidden People' of Iceland, Roswell, a Japanese Lake Monster, Trolls, Strange

Stones and more. Well done that Editor! Elsewhen costs \$3 from SUPRA, P.O.Box 20173, Keizer, OR 97307-0173, USA

ENIGMAS Summer 1992 A good, wide-ranging issue, with plenty of intriguing material inc. Crop circles, Arthur's Seat, the Telluric Force & the Edinburgh Zodiac, a Nessie sighting, a Canadian abduction, BVM photos and more. There's also yet another piece on the perishing Enfield poltergeist, though it's hard to imagine why. £1.50 from Malcolm Robinson, 41 The Braes, Tullibody, Clackmannanshire, FK10 2TT, Scotland

EVIDENCE - the magazine in support of Psychic Science No.2 Pursuing the contention that quantum physics can supply 'proof' of survival, this pleasingly literate journal includes features on physical mediumship and 'chess with a dead partner'. Interesting, but as yet it hasn't come close to fulfilling its title! £1 from Michael Roll, 28, Westerleigh Road, Bristol, BS16 6AH

FATE Aug.1992 I'm delighted that this is available in the U.K. again. It was the first magazine of its kind, and despite various vicissitudes and a grim 'new age' phase, it has survived pretty well unscathed. In addition to various columns from the best writers in their fields - John Keel, Jerome Clark and Mark Chorvinsky - there's some lively, if often speculative features, intelligent reviews, readers experiences, and great ads. Here, the major articles are about Sai Baba, UFOs in the Caribbean, and a classic FATE story The Restaurant that Disappeared. For details of U.K. price and availability write to Enigma, 18, Rydal Street, Burnley, Lancs, BB10 1HS.

FLYING SAUCER DIGEST Edited by Allan J. Manak in a sort of Fifties-style, corner-stapled A4 format, reading this is like watching The Time Tunnel: somehow, you're back in the Sixties, in a world of real saucers - flying, landing, crashing, and lurking around near Bigfoot! There's also some interesting UFO posters and greetings cards for sale. \$3 from UAPA, Box 347032, Cleveland, Ohio 44134, USA.

FORTEAN TIMES No.62 In yet larger and more professional format, this has a great cover of T. Lobsang Rampa, the latest in FT's 'Hoax' series - it certainly was one of the best! This is a great issue, with a crop circles pull-out, the Acid Tattoo Scare, Ulrich Magin on scaly people & UFOs, a fine feature on Spontaneous Human Combustion, and masses more. This should be in most decent newsagents, or send £2 to FT, 20, Paul Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DX

GHOST TRACKERS NEWSLETTER June 1992 Leads off with TWP subscriber Tom Perrott on his work on the Ghost-line Phone-In on The Sun, and the rest of this charming, relaxed magazine is also about actual experiences of ghosts, well-written, and placed in specific locations. Some good book reviews, too. \$5 from Dale D. Kaczmarek, P.O.Box 205, Oaklawn, IL60454 - 0205, U.S.A.

GLOBAL LINK-UP Spring 1992 One of the more belief-oriented New Age magazines, very well-presented, and packed with advertising as these things usually are. There's material about healing, dolphins, fear, dervishes, light, more light, London's sacred geometry (fanciful

stuff indeed), chakras, soul retrieval and more of equal significance. There's a lot about power here - I bet the whole lot of them couldn't raise the power to extinguish - let alone light - a single candle! This one seems to be available in most New Age shops, or for £2.25 from 51, Northwick Business Centre, Blockley, Glos, GL56 9RF

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER March/April 1992 As classy as usual, the editorial is a reasoned - but strong - attack on CSICOP, the U.S. 'skeptics' organisation. I reckon I'm pretty sceptical, but that lot make a religion of it! Also in this issue, some very intelligent suggestions re. hoaxes at Gulf Breeze, a UFO pic from Medjugorje (the BVM site), and an intriguing piece on possible crop circle links with the 1974 Langenburg case. Excellent! \$6 from IUR, 2457, West Peterson Avenue, Illinois 60659, U.S.A.

THE JOURNAL OF BORDERLAND RESEARCH May-June 1992 Speaking as someone to whom a circuit diagram conveys as little as Linear B, some of this rather baffles me! However it's very good, covering all sorts of fringe sciences, professionally presented and illustrated. Much on Multiple Wave Oscillators (for healing), solar power innovations, field generators and lots of news material. Comes with some good catalogues of relevant publications. \$5 from B.S.R.F. P.O.Box 429, Garberville, CA 95440 - 0429, USA.

JOURNAL OF UFO STUDIES Vol.3 Not so much a magazine, more the key book (183 pages) published in the UFO field each year. Intelligent, organised, challenging and totally essential, though the section on the analysis of soil from the Delphos 'landing' proves that it wasn't worth doing. The 110 pages dealing with aspects of abduction - Thomas E. Bullard's Folkloric Dimensions of the UFO Phenomenon, and the CUFOS Abduction Project - Psychosocial Characteristics of Abductees - are major contributions to the literature. I must admit that to me, it seems that the primary psychosocial characteristic of abductees appears to be that they claim to have been abducted, but maybe I'm just naive. \$18 (and worth every penny) from CUFOS, 2457, West Peterson Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60659, U.S.A.

KINDRED SPIRIT - The Guide to Personal & Planetary Healing. Summer 1992 A very glossy New Age quarterly, becoming more speculative - and overwhelmed by advertising - as it goes on. Where else could you find 'Holistic Alternatives to the Prison Service? (given a choice between a year in Dartmoor, and a fortnight of transformative shamanistic drumming, I reckon I'd opt for the former). The ever-creative Paul Devereux finds new ways of plugging books in 'Flying Shamans and the Mystery Lines' (eat your heart out Erich von Daniken), and there's a feature about a healer - Geoff Boltwood - whose hands apparently exude ash and aromatic oil. I seem to remember when he was a Spiritualist healer - now he channels, and believes that "we're on the brink of a major change in the evolution of mind". Isn't it all rather sad? Kindred Spirit is in many bookshops.

THE LEY HUNTER No.116 A challenging mix of levels of reality - and credulity - here, which may reflect the editor's apparent internal struggle between scientific method and instinctive belief.

Ulrich Magin presents 'The Christianisation of Pagan Landscapes', and there's some straight material on leys. On the other hand, there's a report on 'dream incubation' at 'sacred sites' (how come contemporary centres of worship - and their priesthood - are sneered at, while ancient ones get to be sacred?), and there is an attempt to re-launch leys and alignments by speculating about ancient shamanism, and the boring old Nazca lines, among others. TLH is £7 for 3 issues from P.O.Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall, TR182XL

LOBSTER I won't go into detail about issue contents - it's just that I know that many of you are interested in conspiracies and conspiracy theories, and this is the best magazine in the world on that subject. It's not light, it's not straightforward, but it's worth every penny of £2 from Robin Ramsay at 214, Westbourne Avenue, Hull, HU5 3JB

MAGONIA No.43 A super article by Nigel Watson dominates this issue - Down to Earth: the pre-history of Crash Retrievals - UFO investigation 1897 style. This is the best account yet of a time when an airship could be a UFO, and all the occupants could be Martians. There's also a good look at recent patterns of cat abduction stories across the country, and Peter Rogerson in good form. £4 for 4 issues from John Rimmer, John Dee Cottage, 5, James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB

MERCIAN MYSTERIES No.12 Aug.1992 A charming, intelligent and wide-ranging journal, very well-produced, edited by Bob Trubshaw and Paul Nix. Some of the best EM material around, enriched by a broad understanding of spontaneous abilities and events. £1.75 from 2, Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, LE12 6W

THE MESSENGER - A Magazine for the Golden Age Vol.12 Blavatsky, Melchizedek & the Dead Sea Scrolls, maps of the USA showing sites of potential dooms and disasters, UFOs, psychism during pregnancy, and more. \$3 for 2 issues from Lily O'Donnell, 1936 S.W.63rd Terrace, Pompano Beach, Florida 33068, USA

THE MISSING LINK Nos 113-116 These arrive with impressive frequency, and really are well worth having. Large, produced to a high standard, and featuring UFO contactee and channelling material, together with some good historical items, illustrated, and with some humour. Too much here to describe in detail - try one and see! \$3 an issue from UFOCCI, 3001 S.288th Suite 304, Federal Way, WA 98003, USA

MUNDO UPDATE - various issues. Based on the writings of the UFO researcher/writer Laura Mundo (1913-1989) these are single, but intriguing sheets based on and related to the many books and pamphlets you may have seen offered in booklists. Somewhere between contactee and apocalyptic, you can obtain details of the Spacepeople who are coming to collect our children from the Flying Saucer Information Center, 7803 Ruanne Court, Pasadena, Maryland 21122, USA

THE NEW ABYSS - Hollow Earth End-Time News No.4 A strange issue, largely devoted to the problems a friend of the editor has been having with the Police. Not much to do with the Hollow Earth, but

it seems like a story that needed telling! Otherwise William L. Moore, despite co-authoring The Philadelphia Experiment, explains away beliefs in the ideas of a hollow Earth and coming polar shift. And a good article copied from a U.S. paper makes clear that Robert E. Peary never reached the North Pole. \$5 (I think) from Ruth A. Leedy, RD3 Box 240-B, Dover, DE 19901, U.S.A.

THE NEW JERSEY CHRONICLE Vol.2 No.3 A sort of local MUFON Journal so it's not surprising that it combines good layout and a high level of credulity. There's a worthy graphic analysis of UFO shapes, but the key feature reports on a lecture by Budd Hopkins. On the basis that of an interviewed sample of 6,000, less than 10% had reported "strange lights or balls of light in their bedrooms", he extrapolates that 9 million people have had abduction experiences. He's going to mail his conclusions to every psychologist and psychiatrist in the country. Won't they be impressed! Send \$4 to P.O.Box 6103, North Brunswick, NJ 08902, USA

NORTHERN UFO NEWS No.155 (At the rate I've been publishing, it'll take me to the year 2022 to reach No.155!) As lively an issue as usual, with very good coverage of the R4 programme The Ufologists, and issues arising from it. There's crop circle news, reviews, and an update on the wondrous 'alien wasp' case, "a near indestructible mini-UFO disguised as a giant wasp appeared in a house during World War Two". I love it! Essential reading at £1 from Jenny Randles, 37, Heathbank Road, Cheadle Heath, Stockport, Cheshire, SK3 0UP

NOTES FROM THE HANGAR Vol.1 No.3 The Quarterly Journal of the (non-existent) National UFO Museum. Another good, chunky issue, full of the best of speculative, belief-oriented material. We have The Riddle of the Antarctic Maps, The Top Secret UFO Base called Area 51, Stolen by Aliens!, Ancient Astronauts of Japan and lots more. Not exactly subtle, but lively! \$6 from P.O.Box 20593, Sun Valley, NV 89433, USA

ORBITER Spring/Summer 1992 It's a pity Jim Melesciuc will only, he says, send this out on exchange. It deserves a wider audience. There's some excellent reprints from quality U.S. papers re. abductions, a great editorial about secrecy and 'silencing', and some original and important features about problems pertaining to the supposed UFOs at Gulf Breeze. If you're keen, write and plead to get on the mailing list to P.O.Box 652, Reading, MA 01867, USA

PENDRAGON Summer 1992 This neat Arthurian magazine maintains its high standards with interesting articles on Documentary Evidence, the third part of Rex Futurus, and the Welsh angle in Athwrys ap Meurig. Plenty of letters, news and commentary as well. £1.50 an issue from c/o The White House, Fleet Lane, Twynning, Glos, GL20 6DG

PSI REVIEW Winter & Spring 1992 To my shame, I haven't recently come across this excellent journal from California, edited by Florence A. Trouche. It describes itself as dealing with 'Ghosts, UFOs, Psychic Phenomena, Parapsychology, Brain/Mind', and each is an invaluable mix of short articles, quality abstracts, reviews, synopses and guidelines for further reading and research.

Particularly worthwhile in that it makes accessible the worthwhile areas of the dull-as-ditchwater world of parapsychology, too often closed to ordinary mortals. A single issue is \$7 from Florence A. Trouche Enterprises, P.O.Box 4123, Santa Barbara, CA 93140, USA.

RATTLERS TALE No.14 The prolific Anthony North has come up with his biggest - and best - issue yet, amalgamating various of his publications into a solid, literate, 80 pages of short fiction and new age/paranormal features. There's some fine material here - only £2 from Anthony North Enterprises, BCM Keyhole, London WC1N 3XX

REVELATIONS OF AWARENESS Issues 396 & 398 I don't know if the numbering really means this has been publishing for as long as it seems, but this is UFO-entity channelling at its richest and best, with layers of conspiracy material, race war, economic collapse and the reappearance of the dinosaurs(?) all built in to a quite coherent - if frightening - cosmology. Readers are encouraged to send in questions, which receive specific answers from 'This Awareness'. Try \$4 to Cosmic Awareness Communications, P.O.Box 115, Olympia, Washington 98507, USA

THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER No.48 Much more than a newsletter, this contains a wealth of information from the New Age wing of British science - or perhaps more accurately the scientific wing of the British New Age. I don't really understand the significance of all of it, but this is a guide to a whole field of thinking, with events, detailed reviews, abstracts and articles. Write for details to Garden Cottage, Newhouse Farm, Northington Down, Alresford, Hants, SO24 9UB

SECRETS No.69 This is a strange one. Nominally (and maybe in other issues) a UFO newsletter, this strays a long way into the area of right-wing conspiracy, racism and anti-Semitism. One needs to be pretty broad-minded reviewing in this field, but I do draw the line at references to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, one of the key elements in 100 years of racial hatred, and total and proven fakes. If we all understood that the things are a fraud, we could save a lot of time. Anyway, this dovetails pretty well with some of the Bob Lazar and John Lear material. Try \$2 to Norma Cox, HC80, Box 156, Marshall, Arkansas 72650, USA

THE SKEPTIC Vol.6 No.1 Another quality issue, with Hilary Evans showing his sceptical colours, Paranormal Trends in the USSR, a good analysis of the stupid, but very persistent 'Silver Man' alien photo, a painful review of failed predictions for 1991, Sea Bands, Psychic Questing, and plenty more. £2 from P.O.Box 475, Manchester M60 2TH

SKEPTICS UFO NEWSLETTER March 1992 This seems to be about all that arch-sceptic Philip Klass does now - I guess it's pretty hard being a nuts-and-bolts sceptic in a world of more or less fruitcake abductees. What can he usefully contribute? \$4 from 404 'N' St, SW, Washington DC 20024, USA

THE STAR BEACON - Earth Star's Monthly Newsletter July 1992 Here's something you don't find every day - Thokol of Saturn filling the 'Cosmic School' slot with the secrets of the Philadelphia Experiment,

plus responses to the film of 'Intruders'. Intriguing. \$2 from Earth Star Publications, P.O.Box 117, Paoula, CO 81428, USA

STRANGE MAGAZINE No.9 Absolutely cracking issue of this large format, high quality U.S. Fortean journal. Naturally, there's some follow-up to the revelations about Doc Shields' fake photos in the previous issue (who was daft enough to believe he'd photographed real fairies and monsters in the first place?) but of more lasting interest are UFOs and the Cult of Cargo, a feature interview with Jacques Bergier, Hoofed Mystery Animals, The Siberian Snowman, Peruvian Glowing Mummies, and masses more. I think this will also be available from Enigma (see Fate listing for contact details), or from the publishers for £4 - P.O.Box 2246, Rockville, Maryland 20847

UFO MAGAZINE Vol.7 No.4 Fairly off-the-wall issue of this quality U.S. glossy - dealing with right-wing conspiracy material. It seems that Mark Birdsall has discovered that foo-fighters were actually wholly physical primitive Nazi UFOs, with flight capabilities and physical characteristics mysteriously never replicated in the ensuing 47 years. Some channelled cosmic airhead called Hatonn gets a lot of free publicity for some very unpleasant racist and anti-Semitic material, including (second time in these listings) the snivelling lies of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion - which also appear in a lead-in article by editor Vicki Cooper. Naturally, this issue has some great material - including much about the 'Intruders' film - but I'm afraid that this fascist claptrap and 'weren't the Nazis really great scientists?' stuff is here in force less in the cause of balance and significance, than because it sells. It isn't censorship to refuse a hearing to dangerous, politically-motivated lowlifes: it's good taste at minimum, and at best is likely to enhance life a little. \$5 from UFO Magazine, P.O.Box 1053, Sunland, CA 91041, USA

UFO BRIGANTIA Spring 1992 A corking long feature from Hilary Evans, Abductions Are Really Something leads off another fine issue, including Clive Potter and David Taylor on Psychic Questing (time for objective observers to go out on a few missions with you lads, I think - let's see if they see what you apparently do), the Spitsbergen UFO Crash/Retrieval, and more about Roswell. £1.75 from Andy Roberts, 84, Elland Road, Brighouse, West Yorks, HD6 2QR

THE UFO BUREAU NEWSLETTER Edited by Billy J. Rachels. Apparently this lively little item has been publishing for 27 years now, and it includes news, personalities, and sighting reports. Try \$2 to UFOB, 516, Colton Avenue, Thomasville, Ga 31792, USA

UFO SEEING EYE July 1992 A quality Canadian newsletter, edited by Shirle Klein-Carsh. The lead article here is The Cosmic Water-gate by Stanton T. Friedman, about problems in obtaining key UFO material under the Freedom of Information Act. There's also some poetry, and info on Canadian crop circles. \$4 to Canadian UFO Contact Network, 6973 129th Street, Surrey, BC, V3W 9A9, Canada

VOICES FROM SPIRIT Recent issues have seen some rather daring spirit interviews - with Hitler, and with the 'Irish patriot' James Connolly. It certainly makes a change from entities going on

about the environment! However, my favourite comment from the Editor's communicators is the following:

"We recently saw the movie Communion in which humans are kidnapped by aliens and given rectal exams. I was asked to explain what is going on.

The answer my sources gave me is this. Illegal alien visitors to Earth have introduced a dangerous parasite similar to a tape worm, that takes up residence in the rectum. The aliens are performing a medical procedure to remove the parasite". So that's sorted that one out. \$3 for 2 issues from Voices, P.O.Box 5104, Ellsworth, ME 04605, USA

WOULD YOU BELIEVE? Summer 1992 Another worthwhile mix of obscure historical reprints and new material, with contributions from M.K. Jessup, Berlitz, James Moseley, Harold T. Wilkins, Norma Cox and the Editor Gene Duplantier, covering all sorts of UFO and Fortean stuff. \$5 from Armand A. Laprade, HC80, Box 156, Marshall, Arkansas 72650.

Psychic News

The editorship of PN has recently passed from Tony Ortzen to Tim Haigh, but with no reduction in the quality of presentation or content. Indeed, this looks like a very exciting time to have the job - it seems that physical and materialisation mediumship may be returning after an absence of 40 or more years.

For some time, there have been reports of the work of the Noah's Ark Society, and particularly of its medium, 'Lincoln'. Many of these reports have been cagey in the extreme, and I have myself commented on excessive responses to minimal results.

However, in PN for 22.8.92 Tim Haigh gives an account of a sitting with 'Lincoln' in Norfolk recently, at which he was apparently witness to some remarkable events, including the rapid, determined, and apparently unassisted movements of a trumpet wrapped in luminous tape, a floating luminous toy octopus which appeared to have two - presumably floating - fingers attached to it, and an apparently materialised face seen in the reflected light of a luminous plaque. To his credit, Tim does not commit himself to either accepting - or even believing in - the reality of these events, but his account is fascinating. I would strongly recommend anyone interested in this field to read Psychic News. Newsagents will be happy to order it for you, or write to PN at 2, Tavistock Chambers, Bloomsbury Way, London, WC1A 1LY. It only costs 30p.

Remembering UFOs of Times Past by Nigel Watson

The combination of Marcel Proust and the subject of alien abduction might seem bizarre. Yet the works of Proust can shed some light on the psychological processes that have a bearing on the abduction experience.

F.C.Green wrote that:

'Proust is beyond doubt the greatest literary psychologist whom we have yet encountered in fiction, and though his field of observation is limited to the aristocracy and the higher bourgeoisie, his power of penetration is unsurpassed. (Green, 1964, P.343)

In Swann's Way (1) Proust seeks to explore different levels of consciousness. Unlike most writers of his time he was not concerned with external, objective events perceived by our rational and conscious mind. Instead he wanted to show how our thoughts and feelings are a complex mixture. Our rational waking consciousness deals with the immediate demands of our psychological and physical environment by dividing time and space into units. However, as time passes our perceptions of the world sink into our unconscious. Here chronological time and mathematically-sound spatial relationships do not exist. This is the world of the imagination and it is Proust's goal to recover these thoughts which he regards as the 'truly felt emotions and sensations'. (Green, 1949, p.11).

Voluntary memories are guided by our conscious mind and are 'censored' and channelled by it. Involuntary memories are experienced when the cosmic mind is not in full control. For example, in the stage between waking and sleep we can lose all sense of who, what and where we are. Proust observed that:

" . . . it was enough if, in my own bed, my sleep was so heavy as completely to relax my consciousness, for then I lost all sense of the place in which I had gone to sleep, and when I awoke in the middle of the night, not knowing where I was, I could not even be sure at first who I was; I had only the most rudimentary sense of existence, such as may lurk and flicker in the depths of an animal's consciousness; I was more destitute than the cave-dweller; but then the memory - not yet of the place in which I was, but of various other places where I had lived and might now very possibly be - would come like a rope let down from heaven to draw me up out of the abyss of not-being, from which I could never have escaped by myself: in a flash I would traverse centuries of civilisation, and out of a blurred glimpse of oil-lamps, then of shirts with turned-down collars, would gradually piece together the original components of my ego."(SW p.5-6)

After such awakenings the character Marcel grasped 'shifting and confused gusts of memory', and with the aid of his conscious mind he was able to recall again his childhood in Combray.

In his childhood world Marcel's fears reached their height at bedtime. For him the submersion into sleep was a form of death. This is made clear when he states that turning down the bedclothes is like digging his own grave and his nightshirt is like a shroud (SW p.30). To alleviate his anxieties he religiously waited for his mother to come upstairs to give him a goodnight kiss.

Such is Proust's skill we are given an insight into the mind of a child who has yet to form the psychological structures that divide thought and feeling.

In the ufological literature we can find many instances of childhood dreams or nightmares that feature UFOs and aliens. My book Portraits of Alien Encounters certainly includes many examples, but it is not unique. Whitley Streiber admits in Transformation (Arrow, 1989, pp.101-103) that as a child he had a whole variety of dreams and fears that featured spacemen. Many of his memories of them seem half-forgotten and jumbled-up. In later life such memories can be used to justify and 'prove' the reality of UFO encounters or sightings in adulthood.

We can probably all remember our childhood fears and how irrational or improbable they seem to us in the cold light of day. A depiction of such fears is neatly displayed in Steven Spielberg's production of Poltergeist (1982). The child, Robbie, is plagued by the fear of a lightning storm which illuminates the toy clown at the foot of his bed in a horrifying manner. Combined with this is his fear of the tree outside coming alive (a fear that haunted Spielberg in his own childhood).

The deep impressions made on our unconscious mind by our childhood experiences are usually hidden from us. Besides glimpsing them in the transition from sleep to wakefulness, Proust also showed that objects and the sensations they create can accidentally evoke past memories. When Marcel, as an adult, tastes a madeleine cake dipped in tea, he suddenly perceived that, "I ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal". (SW p.48). Ten times he used his conscious mind to seek out why, and finally from the abyss of his unconscious he remembered that at Combray Aunt Leonie used to give him a portion of madeleine that had been dipped in her tea. At first this is reminiscent of Pavlov's theories of stimulus and conditioned response but Proust does not deal with scientifically recordable overt behaviour. This stimulus evoked an ever-expanding remembrance of Combray that was unique to Marcel as a child, yet, at the same time, revealed universal psychological laws.

Proust shows that the inaccessible things in life are the most desirable. M.Legrandin wanted greater social status, whilst Swann would have been quite happy to dispense with his status to have Odette to himself. Humans are always seeking the unachievable. Only in obtaining access to our unconscious can we obtain some satisfaction in the 'real' world of the imagination.

Art can help retrieve and contain the world of the past. The conscious mind might want to create a 'work of art' but inspiration is needed to bring it to life. Young Marcel found this out when he tried:

"to discover some subject to which I could impart a philosophical significance of infinite value, my mind would stop like a clock, my consciousness would be faced with a blank, I would feel either that I was wholly devoid of talent or that perhaps some malady of the brain was hindering its development". (SW p.189)

Putting words on to paper is also an onerous task for M. Swann who for years attempted to produce an essay on Vermeer of Delft, but never had the will-power to complete it.

Marcel only is able to put pencil to paper one evening. He is intoxicated by the view of the steeples of Martinville, when:

"I had finished writing it, I was so filled with happiness, I felt that it had so entirely relieved my mind of its obsession with the steeples and the mystery which lay behind them, that, as though I myself were a hen and had just laid an egg, I began to sing at the top of my voice. (SW p.199)

Art for Proust is the uncovering of the past and the quest for beauty and happiness. Childhood best represents a period of grace and in this sense Combray represents Marcel's Garden of Eden. As time passes we lose track of our true identity and the world becomes less real.

There is something special about childhood and art. As John Rimmer has pointed out that the act of reporting UFO experiences can be compared to artistic creation, we have only to look at the reports of the activities of Doc Shiels in the latest issues of Strange and Fortean Times magazines to see that he regards creative hoaxing as a means of making 'real' mythical beings and legends. As adults, alternative possibilities are socialised out of us and seem less likely. The conscious mind is busy controlling our daily activities and the imagination of the unconscious mind is left to rot. Ufology, like art, gives us a means of bringing to life the magic of the unconscious imagination. The symbolism of UFO encounters can express in a far greater and more efficient manner our multiple concerns for ourselves and for our planet.

UFO memories (or supposed memories) might evolve over time, or they might be invoked by a totally different event in the way Marcel's memories were triggered by the taste of madeleine cake. We might speculate that a light in the sky, an SF film or an event that might be unconnected with ufology might trigger such memories. Like childhood, memories of encounters with space people, or memories that you are really a space person, represent a former state of grace that we have lost through neglect or ignorance. Francie Steiger, The Star People (Berkeley, 1982) thinks that:

" . . . the Star People's triggering symbol system is one that is linked to dormant memories. There is no interpretation necessary, for what is imaged indicates what the Star Person is to remember through the linkup with the ancestral Sowers or Initiates. (p.130)

Such privileged insights seem to indicate a 'reality' that seems more preferable to the one(s) we are educated to believe. Again, Spielberg has explored such thoughts in Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) which contrasts mundane suburbia with the secrets of the universe that the UFO beings seem to possess.

Just like his character, Marcel, Proust wished to seek renewal in the past through his involuntary glimpses of reality and their translation into written words. By writing Remembrance of Things Past, Proust achieved:

" . . . the desire to survey the whole of life in a single act of contemplation. But to contemplate life in this way is to experience it as reality is experienced during a privileged moment".

This 'privileged moment' which is usually invisible to us, is transmitted through Proust's style of writing. He tries to reveal the complexities of mental life by clear and exact writing. He does not include obscurity and symbolism for its own sake; just as in the objective world the conscious mind is plied with situations and facts in such a way that their 'true' meaning sinks into our unconsciousness. As a consequence Remembrance of Things Past becomes a part of our own mental history and we are left to share the reality of Proust's vision of life.

Proust cannot be said to be the sole initiator of such an innovatory outlook on the world. One reason for this was the rejection of positivism which limited itself to the study of unquestionable facts, and regarded unseen powers or forces as the worst kind of sophistry. This brought about:

" . . . the upheaval of the 1890s when a great flood of genius - Weber, Durkheim, Sorel, Pareto, Freud, James, Dewey, Croce, Bergson - broke free at last from the constrictions positivism had placed on social and psychological thought."

Even the certainty of the natural sciences was undermined by the work of Einstein which was published between 1905 and 1916, and earned him the Nobel Prize in 1922. Indeed, in 1921 many critics began to compare the works of Proust and Einstein. Proust was flattered by such comments but the enthusiasm for this linkage caused Harold March to write:

"Whether or not there was any useful connection between a principle of astro-physics and a reputed point of view on truth and morals, did not matter; the magic word 'relativity' was enough - 'everything was relative'".

The mathematical and physical aspects of Einstein's theories can be linked to Proust's writings because they saw the relationships between things in new ways. John D. Erickson commented that, 'Both have mapped the 'obscure zones' of phenomena, human and physical, inner and outer.'

Proust's universe has the following qualities:

1/. The feeling of constant motion experienced by the narrator, whose metabolism or extraordinary capacity for sensual perception causes him to believe nature had endowed him with different speeds for living.

2/. The basic laws of attraction between individuals (seen as worlds in motion) as deduced by the narrator after long and patient bouts of observation, laws according to which we attract, join each other, and then separate again, and which manifest themselves primarily by means of gravitational force.

3/. The human experience seen as a series of revolutions divisible in circles, traceable within the confines of the life cycle, each representing the totality of existence.

Humans are regarded as separate planets who might experience an infinite number of perspectives in their universe of social interaction. Spatial and temporal distance helps us put our current frame of reference into perspective, as the mature Marcel recalls his childhood he can see it from a child's view, aided simultaneously by an adult's knowledge. As Santayana states:

"Even if, by a rare favour, the original aspect of the past experience should be reproduced exactly, it will not be the past event, nor even the present one, that will be given in intuition, but the dateless essence common to both".

This is the very essence of Proustian involuntary memory, though it does have to be ordered by our own understanding. For, as Erickson says, "Outer being is, like the process of focussing binoculars, continually adjusted to conform to the inner being we have created".

Proust offers a vision of life that is the unique outcome of his social and intellectual experience. Like the work of Freud and Einstein (of which he was probably not aware when he wrote *Swann's Way*) it appears to spring from nowhere. Yet, it borrows from the pool of ideas that had found their time. Einstein and Proust had recognised that there are no absolutes, everything is relative to the observer. Freud and Proust gave more emphasis to sexual relationships than to God. Bergson and Proust acknowledged the importance of memory as a subjective phenomenon, rather than an objective repository of facts.

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