

Magonia 38

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"Ufology and the abduction stories throw considerable light on a matter of social importance. However this fact will probably play little part in future developments as a result of the low status and seriousness assigned to such reports"

Over the past year there have been allegations that children in Britain have been sexually abused as part of 'satanic' rituals. In particular in a case in Nottingham where several adults have been imprisoned after being found guilty of abuse, and in Rochdale, where a number of children have been taken into local authority care after allegations of abuse were investigated by social workers. In neither case was evidence for the alleged 'ritual' aspects of the abuse introduced into the court proceedings, and in Nottingham the police have gone out of their way to deny 'satanic' allegations. The British cases have followed on from a wave of similar reports in America, although in America the accusations have usually been made against child-care workers rather than parents.

Most of this issue of Magonia is given over to looking at these allegations, and the context, both historical and contemporary, in which they are made. We are obviously not attempting, at a distance and without

full knowledge of the evidence, to pass any sort of judgement on the case, nor are we seeking to deny in the Nottingham case that the children involved have been very seriously abused (the Rochdale cases have not yet come to criminal prosecution). However we do find disturbing parallels between what is being alleged and the way these allegations have been treated, with the type of material we are dealing with as ufologists and folklorists - particularly when we examine the abduction cases. Some researchers, including Rima Laibow, a professional psychologist, have already hinted at links between UFO abduction reports and incidents of childhood abuse. Both social workers, and increasingly, it seems, anomaly researchers, are dealing with severely traumatised people, adults and children. It is important that both groups should be aware of what the other is uncovering. It is clear that ufology, particularly abduction research, is becoming a very serious matter indeed.

Magonia

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IT is difficult for me to remember the thrill of my first meeting with the editors of the then **Merseyside UFO Bulletin** on that December Saturday twenty years ago. Here was I, a humble teenage ufologists, supping with people who had been quoted in **FSR**, who had actually met J Allen Hynek (and who could recount how he had stormed out of a Chinese restaurant in a rage over the quaint British licensing hours). Gee Whizz!

Ah, how the memories return: the little pub in Oxford Road, Manchester where the cover for the great 'Alive and Well and Living in Fairyland' article was revealed; Mr Harney's ufological poetry, sung to a variety of well-loved hymn tunes; my first visit to Liverpool, and the never-to-be-forgotten Fred O. Gardner letter.

My first acquaintance with this august journal was when I read a few copies of it, and its predecessor **MUFORG Bulletin** in the **DIGAP** library (a box of old magazines hawked around in someone's car). I remember the horrified looks when I laughed aloud at a satirical description of a **BUFORA** AGM, interrupting the local contactee's latest revelation. A couple of months later I read in **FSR** that **MUFOB** was available to the public for one shilling (that's 5p, kiddies, we had real money in those days) and sent off my postal order: it came back marked 'incorrectly addressed', which I first read as 'deceased'. All was well, however, and a couple of issues later I had my first embarrassing teenage letter published (Not that bad - Ed.) Unlike other journals the editors had special psychic powers which enabled them to read my barbaric scrawl (Absolutely that bad - Ed.)

A few months later, at my bidding, John Rimmer gave a talk to



PETER ROGERSON'S NORTHERN ECHOES

DIGAP. Highlight of this meeting was the revelation by the local contactee-cum-psychic quester that 'John Harney had been silenced by the MIB'. Afterwards the leader and magus went round shoring up the party line, like an East-European

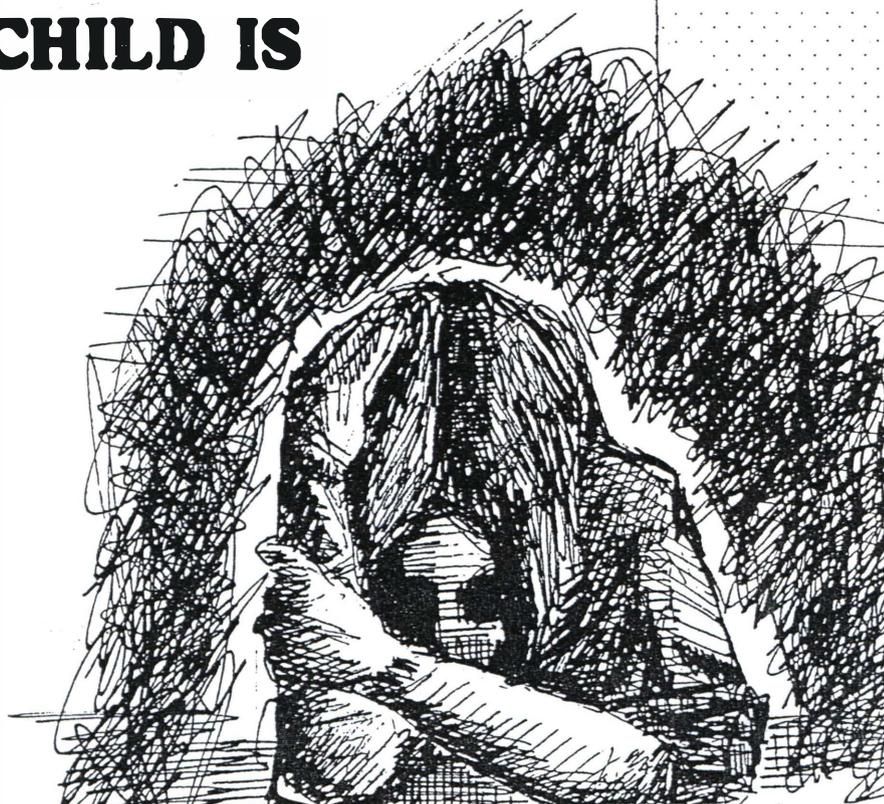
leader in late 1989, after Rimmer's terrible psycho-social heresies. In those days a brutal sceptic was someone who entertained doubts about Cedric Allingham. (Said magus was heard doing the same thing after 1990's Sheffield conference.)

At that meeting I expressed the view that the previous few issues of **MUFOB** were getting a little tame, so I was told to do something about it. The upshot was a series of deliberately offensive letters which brought screams of protest from the then **BUFORA** establishment. Chief target was John Cleary-Baker, the **BUFORA Journal** editor, who was intensely proud of a completely worthless PhD awarded by 'University College of St Andrew's', London, a body which had no connection with the prestigious Universities of either St Andrew's, but was a diploma mill run by a clerical con-artist from a disused Methodist chapel in Seven Sisters Road, Tottenham.

I know there are those who think that **Magonia** is sinking into a respectable middle-age, and has lost the fire of its youth. It gratifies one's middle-aged heart however, to know that we can still evoke howls of anguish in true believers. A recent editorial in **International UFO Reporter** reminding us so much of the great furies of the past that for a moment we wondered if its editor was a medium and the shade of old J.C.B. was thundering back from beyond. □

SOMEWHERE A CHILD IS CRYING

PETER ROGERSON



As I note in *Northern Echoes* it is twenty years since I began my association with MUF0B/Magonia. Looking back at some of my comments in my very first article *Apocalyptophilia* written as 1970 turned into 1971, I get a vague sense of *deja-vu*... or was it precognitions? In it I wrote: "It seems like the rational universe described by 19th century positivism... is fading. Horrors long buried in the recesses of the mind surge out, obliterating all reasonable critical faculties... There has been an unprecedented rise in superstition, nightmares known only from obscure Latin tomes translated by Montague Summers emerge to inspire terror across the land... It seems that society is almost ready for the reappearance of Matthew Hopkins the Witchfinder General."

HE and she have come. It doesn't matter really whether we are listening to Budd Hopkins, or Beatrix Campbell or Janet Dawson, or dozens of other voices. The message is the same. If people say it happened to them you've got to believe or you are a heartless monster who is prolonging their pain. How can you be blind and deaf to this distress and agony. Thus was Rebecca Nurse, an innocent woman of Salem, condemned. After the jury, using their last gasp of common-sense had acquitted her, the accusers went into another fit: How can you be blind and deaf to the pain? So they changed their verdict and hung her.

The child satanic abuse fear and the abduction fear are the most visible, but not, I suspect the only, manifestations of the 'great

fear' of our times: that of the Secret Victim. 'Michelle' remembers being abused by a satanic cult, 'Cathie' remembers being abused by the greys, Candy Jones remembers being abused by the CIA. In other times people remember being abused by Gipsies, Jews, monks and nuns, Mormons, fairies, demons, and, yes, Christians.

Testimony can so easily be shaped. Foster parents in Nottingham interpret children's tales in terms of "what happened to them before we got them". Children's real parents can interpret these tales in quite different fashions; one being reincarnation. The children's stories recounted in Peter and Mary Harrison's *The Children That Time Forgot* (1) recount the same motifs as the Nottingham children: detailed knowledge of

places they should not know about, descriptions of traumatic events, unexplained phobias. One particular piece of evidence identical to the satanic abuse testimony is that of J.T. of Dagenham. Barely two years old, J.T. compulsively draws witches, saying "that's me when I was a witch", and "when I lived before I used to drink blackbird's blood". She 'remembers' the sacrificing of a sheep, draws a group of people around a fire in the centre of which is a naked baby. How long today before that little girl got taken into care?

C.E. claims he was a German pilot and walks around goose-stepping; his mother comments on his strange eyes. A.D. of Rochester 'remembers' being a corpse in a grave, and being a ghost haunting the churchyard - this is revealed as his mother

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walks him past the churchyard. Other children's fantasies are seen as evidence of *ante mortem* existence.

We can see that, for example, past lives, possession, haunting and abuse can all provide reasons for forbidden knowledge, for a failure to act like a 'real child should'. Indeed, the past-life motif may well be a modern version of the changeling motif.

The stories of the 'phantom social workers', the strangers who know everything, who appear out of nowhere and disappear after acting in a strange irrational manner, more than echo the motif of the Men in Black. None are caught, no car number plates are recorded. Another MIB-like motif occurred on the **Points North** regional TV programme when 'Sarah', and alleged satanic abuse victim, told her psychiatrist that 'they' were visiting her house. So he goes out onto the moors to investigate, but before 'they' arrive he is called

away by his bleep. When he gets to his office it is 'Sarah' on the line: 'they' have called her and told her to "get that interfering bugger off the moor". "She could not have known I was there" says the psychiatrist. "'They' can read my mind, anticipate my every action" says 'Sarah'. her actions are similar to crash-retrieval witnesses, who give anonymous testimony, even though their identity would be obvious to their supposed oppressors. In both cases going completely public with the maximum publicity would seem to be the safest thing to do.

The motif of the Secret Victim is timely, because it represents the privatisation why 'things fall apart, the centre cannot hold'. It is not because of any great failing in society or ourselves, but is the result of 'them'. It is in many ways comforting to believe that people's lives are ruined because of events that happened in some unchangeable history, that the victim is being punished for their past lives' misdeeds, or that abuse is perpetrated by inhuman, soul-less grays, or by those so anti-human and different from ourselves that they eat their own babies. It helps us forget that most child abusers are not 'monsters' but everyday boring people like ourselves. It helps us forget that sexual abuse is just one of the innumerable abuses of both children and adults going on in the world. Helps us forget the children starving to death because the gangsters and drug-pushers the superpowers imposed on them make them grow cash crops rather than food for their own subsistence; forget the kids stolen by the juntas; forget the kids shot down by the police in the name of tidiness for the decent and respectable; forget the kids dragged up in squalid bedsits; forget the kids roaming the motorways at midnight; forget the kids victims of their scrap-heap parents' terminal despair; or that Joseph Mengele was a "decent and upright man". Forget that for children born in years before this one, the threat of annihilation abused their lives.

While it is not very likely that flesh and chlorophyll aliens are taking people from the farms of Kentucky, or sheep being slaughtered in the council houses of Nottingham, we cannot hide from the existential terrors which have been moulded into these nightmares, by which people struggle to express "the worst thing there is". beneath the surface of the green fields and regimented terraces, there may indeed be a bottomless darkness and wounds no social worker or therapist can, or should, seek to bind.

IN A recent *Magonia* I wrote of the current US moral panic over alleged Satanism, and signs that it was about to spread to Britain. At the time the main evidence was the distribution by British evangelicals of US anti-Satanist tracts, and a sensationalist edition of TV's *Cook Report* on the menace of Satanism. Since then the story has taken a rather surprising turn

FROM EVIDENCE OF ABUSE TO ABUSE OF EVIDENCE

Roger Sandell



A few months ago the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) endorsed stories of Satanic abuse in a press conference highly publicised in the national press (a position from which it appears to be trying to back down). Such claims were featured prominently at a national conference on child-abuse held this summer, attended by police, psychiatrists and social workers. A number of children have been taken into care in a case in Rochdale that the parents claim involves false allegations of Satanism. Most surprising of all, Beatrix Campbell a well-known feminist and radical journalist has endorsed such claims in a TV documentary and articles in the *New Statesman* and the Communist Party publication *Marxism Today*. In order to examine what is going on it is best to take the questions arising one at a time.

First of all: are there any Satanists? The stereotype that is being presented, of groups in highly civilised societies who kidnap and murder children as part of sinister rites, is a very old archetype. As far back as first century Rome the Catelline conspirators were said to have sealed their plans with an oath on

the body of a murdered child. Since then similar stories have been told about the early Christians, medieval heretics, the Knights Templar, and the victims of the witch mania. Such accusations against Jews occur repeatedly in medieval history and apart from their revival in Nazi Germany were also prominent in the 1905 Russian pogroms (in this context it is striking that the emergence of ritual abuse stories in Britain has coincided with the revival of such claims in literature produced by British neo-Nazis).

However Jews, Templars, etc. were certainly not imaginary in spite of the fabricated stories told about them. With Satanists and witches the position is more complex. The revival of witchcraft in the twentieth century can be traced to the writings of Dr Margaret Murray who argued that the victims of the witch trials were practitioners of traditional paganism, surviving as a widely popular religion until at least the seventeenth century. Although this view has found little favour with serious historians it has exercised a big influence over popular accounts and stories about witches. In all probability it inspired the writings of Gerald B Gardiner who

A comprehensive work on the history of the great European witch-hunt is *Europe's Inner Demons*, by Norman Cohn. (Paladin, 1976). Cohn is also the author of *Warrant for Genocide*, a study of the Protocols of Zion forgeries. Both books are highly recommended.

GARDINER,
Gerard B.
*Witchcraft
Today*, Rider,
1954

in the 1940's and '50's claimed to be the high priest of a surviving coven, of whose rituals he gave guarded descriptions in his book **Witchcraft Today**.

Gardiner's works seem to have inspired the whole proliferation of modern witch groups, with a variety of different features. To judge by some elements of the (presumably self-devised) rituals he describes, Gardiner seems likely to have been a flagellant sado-masochist for whom witchcraft served as an element of sexual theatre. Other witch groups have simply served to confer some historical element to vague pantheist beliefs; while since the 1960's others have been explicitly based on the idea of witchcraft as a feminine religion worshipping a mother goddess and preserving the memory of sixteenth and seventeenth century women victims of male inquisition - an idea which makes

Gardiner's works seem to have inspired the whole proliferation of modern witch groups.



For a fuller account of the remarkable career of Leo Taxil, see: WEBB, James, *The Flight From Reason*, Macdonald, 1971

the involvement of the feminist Beatrix Campbell in promoting fear of witchcraft highly ironic.

While the terms witchcraft and Satanism have generally been used interchangeably in recent controversies, the record concerning Satanism is somewhat more confused. Many aspects of modern occultism owe a large part of their origins to the occult revival in late nineteenth-century France. In particular to the spectacular hoaxes of Leo Taxil, the author of such works as **Satan in the Nineteenth Century**. Taxil attracted large amounts of publicity in 1890's Paris with his claims to be a renegade Freemason, revealing the true secrets of how Masons worshipped Satan, who in his turn manifested himself at Lodge meetings. The clergy and political right took Taxil seriously enough to buy his books and attend his meetings in large numbers, and to subscribe money for him to rescue 'Helen Vaughan', a young woman he claimed was under threat of human sacrifice from the Satanic Masons. They were seriously embarrassed when Taxil confessed his hoaxes,

which parallel closely some more recent anti-Satanic claims. (A recent figure very reminiscent of Leo Taxil is the confidence trickster Denley Mainwaring-Knight who a few years ago was sent to prison for having defrauded several clergymen and wealthy church-goers out of large sums of money by claiming he needed it for his crusade to expose a Satanic ring led by Lord Whitelaw.)

It is not clear whether Taxil was responsible for the vogue among the clerical right of the period for believing that their enemies were directly inspired by Satan or whether he played on already existing beliefs, but such beliefs were not confined to France. In Czarist Russia, the notorious anti-Semitic forgery **The Protocols of Zion** first appeared as an appendix to a work on the coming of the Antichrist by Sergei Nilus, a religious mystic. The anti-Semitic Russian 'Black Hundred' gangs of 1905 took St Michael slaying the dragon from the book of Revelations as their emblem, a device later copied by the Romanian Fascist Iron Guard.

An important part in moving Satanism from such obscure milieu to public consciousness has undoubtedly been the novels of Dennis Wheatley, whose fictions clearly owe something to the world of French right-wing clerical anti-Semitism. His heroic fighter against Satanism is the Duc de Richelieu a French aristocrat, and his Satanic foes are quasi-political figures engaged in fomenting revolution. Michael Goss has pointed out that one Dennis Wheatley novel, **The Haunting of Toby Jugg** concerning a youth who gradually realises that his foster-parents' strange fancy-dress parties are witchcraft rituals, strikingly resembles Satanic abuse tales.

Once a stereotype has been established there are those who seek to live it out as a means of profit or self-publicity. In the case of Satanism the pioneer of this was Alastair Crowley, who compensated for a childhood spent on a Plymouth Bretheren household obsessed with the Antichrist, by spending much of his life titillating the popular press with hints of orgies, human sacrifice and black masses. The black mass, although central to many popular images of witchcraft, played little role in the witch-trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries, and seems to owe its origin to eighteenth-century tales of the Hell Fire Club and similar groups. It did not emerge into its present stereotype until the nineteenth century French anti-Satanic scares, and its present predominance as a stereotype of witchcraft appears to be due once again to Dennis Wheatley, and to the 1950's book **The Satanic**

Mass by T F Rhodes, a work full of misinformation.

The most prominent recent imitator of Crowley has been Anton Sandor LaVey, a Californian (of course) self-publicist who founded the Church of Satan in the 1960's. Since then he has frequently been featured in the press for activities such as demanding the US Government appoint Satanist chaplains for his followers in the armed forces. Many modern anti-Satanist books contain lurid accounts of LaVey's activities.

In addition, Satanism seems to be a popular theme for pornography. Antony Summers and Steve Dorrel's book on the Profumo affair refers to orgies with a Satanist theme taking place in London in the early 1960's.

So much for the origins of modern witches and Satanists. Are they abusing children? There is nothing inherently improbable in the idea, since sexual exploitation of disciples is a recurring theme in the more cultist and leader-oriented varieties of religion. Among many examples of this are the careers of Ron Hubbard and the Bhagwan Sri, the recent sexual scandals around US evangelists, and the child sexual abuse practiced at the evangelically run Kincora Boys Home in Northern Ireland. **The Independent on Sunday**, a newspaper that over the past few months has shown a commendable readiness to examine Satanic abuse claims in a serious and critical manner, has found that in the past decade some six or so self-proclaimed Satanist have been found guilty in British Courts of sex offences against children, a figure which should be set against the thirty or more Christian clergymen found guilty of similar offences in the same period. However the facts in the cases bear as little relation to what is being alleged by anti-Satanist crusaders as the reality of village charms and curses bore to the tales told at witch trials. The cases concerned involved single individuals and the forms taken by the abuse differed little from what is commonly reported in other child sex-abuse cases.

By contrast the idea of ritual abuse, as being put around by its proponents, involves mass ceremonies with elaborate rituals at which babies and other children are habitually sacrificed. This is apparently present to a degree that permeates all society. According to Gordon Thomas, the author of the widely available recent book **Enslaved**, there are 100,000 Satanists in Britain who include senior police officers and Salvation Army members. At American seminars claims have been made that 50,000 human sacrifices take place every

year in the USA - twice the FBI figures for murders of all types.

What evidence is produced in support of these claims? At seminars 'experts' claim to have anonymous informers who tell tales that bear suspicious resemblance to long established apocryphal stories. The NSPCC press statement included an anonymous claim of a sacrifice at which a dead baby was cooked in a microwave, a claim that pretty clearly derives from a US rumour concerning a baby-sitter who puts a baby into a microwave while under the influence of LSD.

The Nottingham case, which was the subject of Beatrix Campbell's **Despatches** programme provides a lot more detail in support of such claims than is generally given, but merely succeeded in underlining the problems with such evidence. Briefly, the case

RHODES, T.F.
The Satanic Mass, Rider, 1954

SUMMERS, Anthony and DORRELL, Stephen.
Honeypot: the secret world of Stephen Ward. Weidenfeld, 1987

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In the past decade some six self-proclaimed Satanists have been found guilty in Britain of sex offences against children, which should be set against the thirty or more Christian clergymen found guilty in the same period

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centres on a group of children on a Nottingham housing estate, members of an extended family, several of the adults of which were in 1988 sentenced to prison for a variety of child sexual abuse offences. Under the subsequent care of foster parents some (but not, sceptics claim, all) of these children started to tell strange tales and exhibit curious phobias. Foster parents and social workers deny claims made in an official enquiry into the case that they were involved in prompting the children. But it seems fairly clear, even from Beatrix Campbell's account, that a fair degree of selectivity has been needed to fit them into supportable claims of Satanic abuse. Some stories featured not only witches, but sinister Santa Clauses and clowns (sinister clowns seem long established figures in urban legends; Loren Coleman has recorded several such cases in America). One child was apparently afraid to take a bath because the water might contain sharks, an idea that can hardly be based on real experience.

Beatrix Campbell attempted to produce

evidence in support of the idea of Satanic abuse. This included a visit to Woolaton Hall, where children claimed to have told of being abused (an aspect of the story that only seems to have been hinted at in published accounts is suggestions that 'powerful people' were involved). No mention was made of the fact that the Hall is now a museum rather than a stately home, but the camera lingered over a statue of a satyr and a mural of signs of the zodiac, features that could be found at many old houses. A tunnel leading off a local cemetery, apparently a popular resort of prostitutes, tramps and glue-sniffers, was found to have an 'altar' (a small alcove in fact), signs that candles had been lit, and vague scratchings on walls that were claimed to be 'Satanic signs', even though they included a cross and a CND emblem.

Regular **Magonia** readers may have been struck by the resemblance all of this seems to bear to the hunt around various stately homes and old paintings for clues to the treasure of Rennes la Chateau, or Andy Collins's psychic questing, in which mysterious messages and artifacts guide Collins and his followers as they travel the country to do battle with the spirits of long dead magicians, and it is certainly hard to take it any more seriously.

What really happened in Nottingham remains obscure, since most media descriptions have given little basic information such as an account of evidence given at the trial of family members. It is certainly quite possible that the abuse carried out involved the watching or making of pornographic videos with a witchcraft theme, or threats to children that the 'bogeyman' or similar figures would punish them if they told anyone what was happening. The abuse may have involved drugs, or left the children so traumatised as to be unable to distinguish fantasy from reality. However the proponents of the Satanic stories seem to have attempted to conceal major problems. One child's story as recounted by Beatrix Campbell describes having her stomach cut open - something which would presumably leave scars. The Satanic rituals, including mass chanting and human and animal sacrifices are said to have occurred in a council house on a large estate, without attracting the attention of neighbours.

Proponents are fond of pointing out that there are many ways of abusing children that go unpunished because of the difficulty of proving them in court. This is probably true, but child abuse of the type alleged in Nottingham hardly comes in this category, since it involves claims of sacrifice of babies, of whose birth one would expect some record, and the use of costumes and ritual equipment, some of which one would expect to have turned up in the normal post-arrest search of an suspect's house.

So where are these stories coming from? The genesis of the popular fears of Satanism can be traced back to the late 'sixties and early 'seventies. The counter-culture of the period saw a revival of occultism and similar beliefs, and the Manson gang case exposed the more sinister side of the cultist beliefs that this might lead to. The early 'seventies, with Watergate, US defeat in Vietnam and the 1973 Middle East War followed by energy crisis, led to a more general climate of uncertainty.

It was against this background that the revival of fundamentalist Christianity began. Its earliest manifestation, Hal Lindsey's best-selling paperback **The Late Great Planet Earth** was marketed to resemble the occult paperbacks of the period, but came with a new message. US weakness was a sign of apocalyptic times. Changes in social customs and the rise of occultism were the work of

Satan. Moves towards European union were preparing the way for the coming of the Antichrist. Middle East crises were the first signs of Armageddon. Similar messages were the themes of the 1970's wave of films about Antichrist and Satanism, such as **The Exorcist** and **The Omen** series, which centred on the theme of Satanicly possessed children, expressing the feeling of many parents that, as a result of the cultural changes of the 'sixties, their children were beyond their understanding.

As well as books and films these ideas began to express themselves in the field of rumour. The wave of mysterious mutilations of cattle led to tales not merely of alien landings and sinister government experiments, but to stories of secret groups of Satanists. Other anti-Satanist rumours began to proliferate. The story that the Proctor and

The story that the Proctor and Gamble 'Man in the Moon' trademark represented Satan became so widespread as to constitute a major embarrassment to the company

For a typical account of 'psychic questing', see for instance Andrew Collins's **The Black Alchemist**, ABC Books G.E. Andrew Collins), Leigh-on-Sea, 1988

LINDSAY, Hal. **The Late Great Planet Earth**. Marshall Pickering, 1987

Gamble 'Man in the Moon' trademark represented Satan became so widespread as to constitute a major embarrassment to the company. (This rumour incidentally, is very reminiscent of the belief of Sergei Nilus that trademarks resembling stars were sinister signs of Jewish control)

The book **Michelle Remembers** by Lawrence Padzer, a Canadian Catholic psychiatrist, was published in 1980. He described how a patient, Michelle Smith, a young woman with a disturbed family background (whom he married after publication of the book) was hypnotically regressed. She told how, at the age of five, she had been consecrated to Satan in a series of ceremonies involving sexual abuse, human sacrifice and ultimately the appearance of Satan. Dr Padzer amplifies the story with a series of fantasies of his own. The Church of Satan is an organised body centuries old with its headquarters in Genera. Satanic priests can be recognised because their middle fingers are cut off (a claim later anti-Satanist appear to have dropped, presumably because it could easily be checked).

Followers of the abduction debate will be well aware of the controversies concerning the use of hypnotism. Although it seems possible that Michelle's story was triggered by some suppressed memory of more mundane abuse as a child, many of the details closely parallel UFO abduction claims. She remembers being tied down on a table surrounded by strangely garbed figures. Ointments were smeared over her, her body cut, and blood drained out. At the climax, when she describes Satan wrapping his tail round her, a mysterious mark appeared on her neck. A photograph of this resembles of some of the marks that are claimed as evidence in UFO abduction stories. It seems likely that had Michelle approached Budd Hopkins instead of Lawrence Padzer she would have been cited as one of his abductees.

Similar experiences and half memories crop up in other contexts. The book **Operation Mind Control** by Walter Bowart, seeking to prove claims of mind-control experiments by the US Government, includes the testimony of various former US soldiers who tell of abductee-type gaps in their memories. One involves an ex-soldier who claims to have a curious memory of standing in a room with others and watching while a robed man (described as 'an Arab' in the context, but had the frame of reference been different could equally well have been a Satanic priest) beheads another soldier. The witness claimed that this was an experiment to see if he had been reduced to a state too passive to intervene, but could just as

well be described as a human sacrifice.

While US anti-Satanist beliefs are spread on two different levels, both as popular rumours, and by 'experts' at seminars, so far in Britain it is largely confined to the latter level and has not achieved a wider public resonance. While professionals have been influenced by US reports (largely, one suspects unaware of their more bizarre aspects) popular fears and rumours have recently focussed not on Satanism but on the equally strange wave of reports and tales of attempted abductions of children by 'bogus social workers'. As a result while some US allegations have involved individuals respected in their communities, the two major British allegations, at Rochdale and Nottingham, have involved working-class people living on council estates.

Whether these tales will have as wide an impact in Britain as in the USA remains to be seen. According to the **Independent on Sunday** some evangelical groups are running counselling organisations in which people suffering from a variety of traumas are told that these result from suppressed childhood memories of Satanic abuse, in a manner strongly recalling the equally dubious activities of some UFO abduction researchers. According to the **IoS** one woman has committed suicide while undergoing this counselling.

There are other possible developments. The establishment of Satanic abuse stereotypes may lead to real-life abusers being influenced and copying such reports (something which may already have happened). Another possible future development may be a political scandal in which a prominent politician is accused of being a Satanist (already some American fundamentalists have accused George Bush on the basis of his membership of the Yale University secret society, 'Skull and Bones').

Satanic abuse stories and abduction reports may move closer together: Whitley Strieber's **Communion** has made the theme of sexual abuse, hinted at in many abduction cases, explicit. One American Satanism case has involved tales of a 'mystery aeroplane' used to fly children from a day-care centre to rituals in a desert.

What is clear is that ufology and the abduction stories throw considerable light on a matter of social importance. However this fact will probably play little role in future developments as a result of the low status and seriousness that is usually assigned to such reports, and the uncritical attitude those who collect them take to their own data.

SMITH, Michelle and PADZER, Lawrence. **Michelle Remembers**, Michael Joseph, 1981, originally published New York, 198080

Recently, some police investigating the 'bogus social worker' cases have suggested that some incidents may have been caused by local 'vigilantes' checking out families they suspected of cruelty or abuse following previous highly-publicised cases of alleged negligence by official social workers.

THE LESSONS OF FOLKLORE

Michael Goss

1 Folk-Lore Record III, pt III, 1881 and Folk-Lore Journal, 5, 1887.

2 BARING-GOULD, Sabine. Curious Myths of the Middle Ages, 1892, pp.417-446.

3 See 'Nurse's Stories', originally one of The Uncommercial Traveller series, All the Year Round 8 Sept. 1860. Included in most minor-Dickens anthologies.

"Folkloric": a slightly gawky adjective and perhaps one that exudes too much an aroma of musty libraries and still mustier academics who browse in them. But, a convenient adjective for all that. Can mean more or less what you want it to mean.

What I want it to mean when I'm writing on Satanic child abuse - and what I don't want it to mean - goes like this. When we refer to something as 'folkloric' we do not wish to imply that the thing in question has no literal reality, that it's "just a story" - we don't mean that *necessarily*, though that may turn out to be a true assessment. To call a thing 'folkloric' means that it displays aspects familiar to us from the study of folklore. The narrative(s) contained in it show certain similarities, perhaps structural or conceptual with those found in the folklore canon; there may be types, motifs and subdivisions of either. Even more important, the audience's response to the narrative(s) may fall into a category wherein general rules relating to conviction and perception apply after models we have encountered in contemporary folklore - in which case this response too can be called 'folkloric'.

A folkloric approach to Satanic child abuse reports can discern several motifs without looking too hard - and without prejudging the question of whether or not these reports contain a factual basis. But even before we get down to motifs, what *kind* of story have we here? Had I to jot out a Stith Thompson or Ernest Baughmann-style plot outline it might go like this:

Aliens, a covert crypto-conspiratorial group in our midst, are kidnapping and subverting (abusing) children in and for their obscene rituals. We are looking at kidnap stories.

We are looking not only at the stories, for with any legend we can anticipate that they will remain dreadfully the same, with only the specifics altering. What also interests is the popular *reaction* to those stories. I suppose you could say that too will be moderately predictable: a mixture of uncritical belief, hysterical outrage, and a demand that someone in authority does something. The two latter facets draw power from the fact that the victims are children, for children symbolise purity, innocence and helplessness. We feel at our most vulnerable through our children.

A good illustration of the force which kidnap rumours unleash, and none the worse for being over a hundred years old, took the form of a hysteria that afflicted Madras, Ceylon and other parts of India in the 1880's (1)

Orally-communicated warnings that the British needed child victims to placate the angry gods opposing their incomprehensible engineering projects depopulated schools and encouraged isolated outbreaks of violence, during one of which a 'moorman' who ill-advisedly accosted a nervous boy was badly beaten. Few, not even the most educated (as the reporter put it) questioned the truth of the allegations. In a curious demonstration of backward projection which is not unknown in kidnap rumours, the alien minority - the British - was accused of unspeakable beliefs and child-murdering rituals which they had traditionally imputed to the native majority. That Indians accepted and practiced foundation sacrifice to ensure the stability of new buildings was attested by several Western folklorists; it was as if the rumour-mongers could not believe that the aliens did not follow the same practices which they themselves believed in and followed even to the point of having to placate the same gods.

But then the group which promotes such allegations of kidnap and sacrificial abuse is not untypically one which

has suffered from the same kind of rumoured allegations in the past. Take in evidence the conflated medieval legend of William of Norwich (c.1138 or 1147) and Hugh of Lincoln (1156), that latter being better known for the fact that Chaucer put it in the mouth of his Prioress as her contribution to the *Canterbury Tales*.

Exceedingly popular if we judge from the sheer number of versions and variants, the legend tells of an innocent Christian child murdered (ritualistically in some tellings) and secretly buried by one or more cruel Jews. By the grace of Christ, Hugh is allowed to call his mother to the well or ordure-heap that hides his body. Like most of the *Canterbury Tales* the story was already in its senior years by the time Chaucer came to retell it, but the prioress's conclusion, "for it is but a litel while ago" makes it plain that for the audience the narrative had a certain topicality. C. G. Coulton believes Chaucer wrote his new Hugh of Lincoln as "a satire on childish legends", and one would like to agree with him.

Local conditions may have encouraged the promotion of this medieval audio-nasty; the invention of William of Norwich has been credited to a plan to found a cult that would generate money for church building projects. But its popularity as attested by the surviving versions suggests something deeper and darker. All too patently the legend expresses a perennial suspicion, resentment and fear of the 'heathen', too economically-successful Jews - a tight-knit group of outsiders firmly entrenched within the medieval urban community, and supposedly committed to its subversion and overthrow by foul means or fouler.

But the supreme irony is that the Christians were accusing these child-molesting devils of the sort of thing that they themselves had supposedly done. In Imperial Rome it was the Christian minority whose unfathomable private rituals inspired accusations of child sacrifice - and castration as we will hear a little later on. Once the persecuted minority became a state-sanctioned majority, it remembered a useful rumour-legend which, though they would scarcely own as much, enabled its followers to deal with other suspect minorities.

Before Chaucer, before Hugh of Lincoln, conceivably before the pre-Christian Romans, crypto-conspiratorial child abductors had paraded through folk-lore in guises that sometimes stopped short of ritual murder, and sometimes didn't. And for long afterwards. Fairies were always on the look-out for human children (the changeling motif). Look what nearly happened to Hansel and Gretel - stay out of woods, caves, and most of all gingerbread houses. If you had a rodent infestation problem,

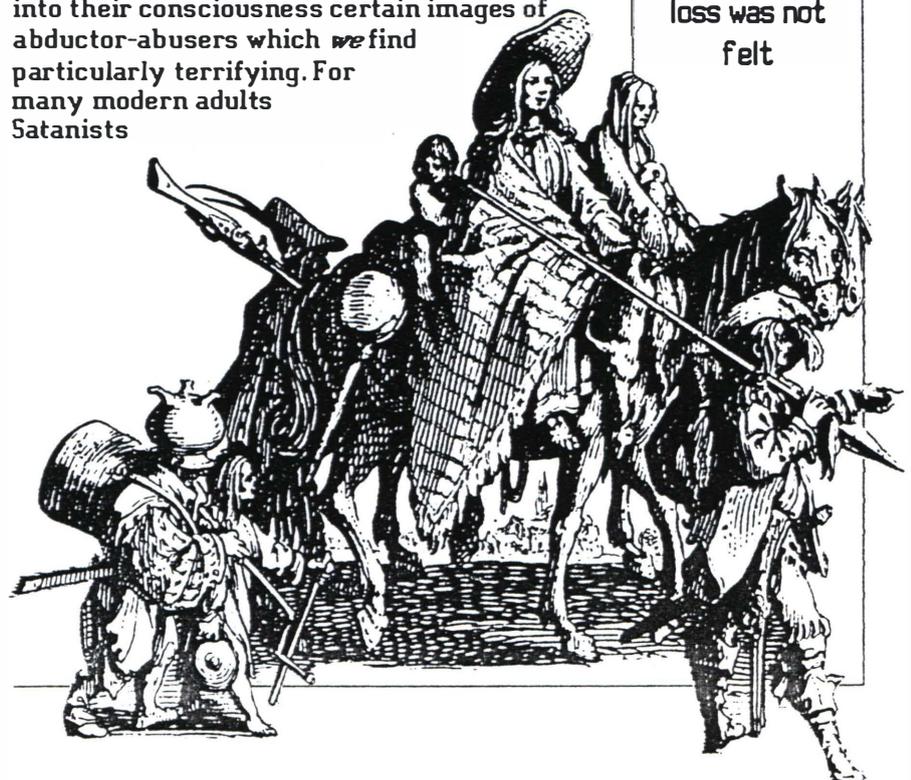
thing seriously before you hired that notorious child-enticer the Pied piper. The Rev. Baring-Gould detected him as the Fiddler of Brandenburg and the musical hermit of Lorch. (2) Folklore has its alarmist tales and seldom tires of repeating them.

The Georgians, and the Victorians after them, were too sophisticated to fear that their children might be kidnapped by fairies. But as they had nomadic gipsy bands whose entire *raison d'être* seemed to involve stealing chickens or children, the loss was not felt. The ever-mysterious gipsies were another 'alien insider' group, of course, and quite as effective in 18th and 19th century rumour-legends as Jews had been for Chaucer's contemporaries.

The gipsies, rather than the real-life paedophile rings such as those uncovered by W. T. Stead in the later 1800s, were useful in the nursery too. Several Victorians have left testimony to the traumatic power of behavioural control stories told to enforce obedience in the nursery: I suppose Dickens' 'Captain Murderer' is the best known. (3) If you weren't good who was it would come to carry you away? Well, not necessarily the gipsies. There was a queue of drooling monsters waiting to bear naughty kids away. Kidnap by aliens looms large in the peculiar folklore told to children at bedtime by adults and specifically to curb incipient rebellion. Who first dreamed up the original bogeyman, when and where?

Maybe those questions are redundant. We can see well enough what the bogeyman was *for*. We are so concerned for our children's welfare - we are so terrified that they will be abducted and abused by aliens - that we project into their consciousness certain images of abductor-abusers which *we* find particularly terrifying. For many modern adults Satanists

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Witches and demons present a child sacrifice to the Devil at a Sabbat. (from a 17th century engraving reproduced in C. J. S Thompson's *Mysteries and Secrets of Magic*.)

4 SMITH, Paul (Ed.) *Perspectives on Contemporary Legend*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1984, pp.128-140.

5 Foafale *News* 17, March 1990, p.10.

6 Fate, March 1982, more or less repeated in Coleman's *Mysterious America*, 1983, pp.211-217.

probably pose a more credible and invidious threat than those old-time Jews, fairies, gypsies ...

We could ask, for instance, who began and propagated a most anti-Ray Bradbury image of Halloween that manifested as what Sylvia Grider calls 'The Razor Blade in the Apple Syndrome'. (4) The rationale is awesomely simple: given justified concern among parents over the safety of their children as they went door to door trick-or-treating - and on Halloween which is a suspiciously pagan festival, and one now associated with vandalistic violence - at a time when children are in danger from strangers for all the other 364 days of the year, a rumour-legend arises in which the treats are laced with pins, poison or razor blades. It *may* have originated amongst the children themselves - that much is not clear. What shines like crystal is that, encouraged by corroborative elements which include media warnings, publicity given to hospitals offering free x-ray services on dubious treats and mercifully rare cases in which the treats certainly *were* laced with poison (strychnin, 1974; tyranol since then), parents uncritically believe the rumours and transmit that belief to their children.

In recent years the mere event of

Halloween has depopulated some American schools as effectively as the foundation sacrifice rumours of 1880 depopulated schools in India. Moreover, the festival's pagan origins naturally revive fears of Satanic child abuse. In one version recorded by Bill Ellis, the proposed victim was to be blonde and blue-eyed, which I'd take as yet another kidnap rumour-legend motif. (5) Halloween's future as a spontaneous or uninstitutionalised ceremony does not look good; not in the USA at least.

If only the image of the Abductor was always or even most times an adult construct! But there is a strong possibility that whereas children may adopt and react to an evil image projected by their nervous parents or by other adults - and if the real villains of the Satanic child abuse panic are the horror films on TV or video the latter would have to be true - it seems equally certain that in other kidnap flaps the point of origin lies in what children themselves fear. Take Loren Coleman's accounts (6) of a spate of 'phantom clowns' attempting frightening children across a wide geographical span of America - Boston and outlying Massachusetts cities, Kansas City, Omaha, Pittsburgh - over a relatively short

space of time (May-June 1981). He is not entirely certain that, despite the lack of arrests, the alleged incidents were entirely without foundation. We could also say that the element of risk or kidnap was more potential than actual. Mr Coleman writes of "Ronald McDonald, a modern Pied Piper with a mission", but who was the first to notice the bizarre ghastliness that dwells in the clown-caricature features we are supposed to love? Was it the parents who, unnerved by the numbers of people children are taught to take on trust, suddenly perceived that clowns maybe aren't so loveable after all? Or was it the children who first admitted that a strangely behaving, garishly abnormal fellow with a smile too big and too bright to be reassuring, is fundamentally untrustworthy.

Stand back from the situation - look at children as symbols of purity and innocence at its most vulnerable - and perhaps you may feel that Satanic child kidnap and abuse allegations are a subtype of a subtype. For kidnap rumours function just as well when the beautiful, blue-eyed (preferably blonde) victim is an adult or nearly so.

In the classic Abducted Girl legend we have the same elements of force, cryptoconspiratorial alien groups, and (though often implied rather than explicit) sexual abuse. The finest examples have a young girl drugged while trying on clothes in some boutique; she has ended up as part of the white slave trade. You can meet her in Brunvand (7) where he tells us that "hardly an urban center in the United States that is large enough to have suburbs and shopping centers" has been free of the legend. You can also meet her historical (late 19th, early 20th century) version in your Magonia editor's *The Evidence for Alien Abductions* (8) which also draws attention to Edgar Morin's treatment of a fairly recent 'Rumour in Orleans' (9) that inspired violent vigilante action against certain Jewish-owned shops. This cycle appears to antedate slightly the run of kidnapped female customer stories centred upon an accessories shop in Tienen, Belgium. (10)

Here, true to narrative format, the victim's helplessness is induced not only by the fact that she is taken by surprise in supposedly safe surroundings, but by drugs - more specifically in a hypodermic needle inside the glove she is trying on. Drugs, whether injected by means of a needle (e.g. through a cinema seat) or on a pad, chloroform style, or even puffed mysteriously into the victim's face (as in some of the 1880's Indian foundation sacrifice rumours) are fairly essential to kidnap legend. They add another unhallowed criminal secret to

the abductor's nefarious repertoire. Recounting the understandable disquiet aroused when gangs of black girls in Upper West Side Manhattan took to jabbing female passers-by with pins or needles (11) Bill Ellis aptly invokes white slaver kidnap rumours from Massachusetts and Baltimore in 1914 and 1920 respectively. He adds that poor Blacks of Washington DC fear, or used to fear, abduction by white 'night doctors', medical students who needed subjects for dissection and other experiments; it was as though the Manhattan girls had taken revenge on their behalf.

Or perhaps here we have another example of a legendary abuse by one race being swung round and used against it. Still, at a time when the approach to interpreting legends is undergoing vigorous reappraisal, we ought to be cautious as to how we isolate possible meanings. the Orleans boutique kidnap cycle suggests, as I may have implied, a vicious germ of anti-semitism; the shop owners were after all, Jewish. And yet this example, or the Kidnapped Female Customer legend overall may not come down to racism purely. The disguised criticism in these stories *may* be directed at modern female emancipation - the folly of letting them out on their own; and/or at that easiest of easy targets for moralists, female frivolity and vanity. The girls are struck down doing, by implication, unnecessary shopping in a clothes-shop: *vanitas vanitatum* or something like that. On this score and scare, Eleanor Wachs' fine paper on 'The Mutilated Shopper at the Mall' (12) surveys Bostonian legends about women attacked as they shop late at night in boutiques. The mutilation element takes the form of the woman's finger being severed by a man who wants her valuable ring. The legend, Ms Wachs says, can offer a variety of meanings and the caution to women not to show off their finery, not to be mesmerised by such rampant consumerism as the modern mall symbolises, must be numbered among them.

True enough, the shopper is not kidnapped; in fact she is belatedly succoured by a husband, a security guard or some other handy, hardy male. But *mutilated* she surely is, which leads back to abduction/child abuse allegations, via the Castrated Boy. Rediscovered in the early 'sixties, this unhappy little chap rates as one of the earliest urban legends; Brian Ellis has detected it as far back as second and third century Rome. (13) The Romans accused the Christian of castrating children, but what else would you expect? It is certainly one of the nastiest urban legends. Mother lets young son go to

7 BRUNVAND, The Choking Doberman, 1984, pp.78-80.

8 RIMMER, John. The Evidence for Alien Abductions, 1984, pp.50-53.

9 MORIN, Edgar. Rumour in Orléans, translated edn. 1971. Blond.

10 See Stefaan Top's article in *Foafale News* 17, March 1990, p.4.

11 *Foafale News* 16, Dec. 1989, pp.5-6.

12 'The Mutilated Shopper at the Mall' in *A Nest of Vipers; Perspectives on Contemporary Legends V*. Sheffield Academic Press, 1990, pp.143-160.

13 *Journal of American Folklore*, 1983, p.200-208.

14 'A Tale Told Too Often', in *Western Folklore*, 26, 1967, or Brunvand's summary in *The Choking Doberman*, pp.82-92.

15 *Folklore* 98-ii, 1987, pp.216-225.

'restroom' - possibly for the first time alone - during a shopping trip or outing. He doesn't appear for a long time - is found lying in a pool of blood having been castrated by a gang of (black/ Mexican/ hippie/ fill in current panic) youths as part of an initiation ceremony. As Florence H Ridley said, it is "a tale told too often". (14)

Michael P Carroll, who found that a sizable proportion of the 'Castrated Boy' stories did not single out black perpetrators or other minorities, resists the idea that the story is racist in meaning. He prefers to interpret it psychoanalytically as a legendary vehicle of female penis-envy. (15) I doubt he will persuade too many folklorists that racism or fear of the alien outsider, does not enter into this legend.

You may have read Thomas Bullard's article in *Magonia* 37 on the limits of treating UFO abductions in folkloric terms. It makes several cogent points, including one about folklorists underplaying variations in accounts in favour of spurious analysis. However, looking at the issue of Satanic child abuse reports in the context of other stories - the ones I have just summarised - I would still have to say that the similarities appear too significant to be passed over.

In one class of story (1880's India, medieval England and pre-Christian Rome) three alien minorities (British, Jewish, Christian - members of non-indigenous faiths) were said to have **abducted children** and murdered them in acts of religious observance (But note, the Indians appear to have assumed that the British were placating *their own*, i.e. Indian, native deities).

A second class of story from contemporary USA again features a perceived threat to **children** (Halloween rumours, Coleman's phantom clowns). There is no kidnap element (although it may be implied in the case of the clowns) and no murder. Against this a distinct **physical danger** to the children is envisioned even when it does not materialise. (Griver points out that the strychnine murder of 1974 was modelled on or inspired by the rumour-legend. It cannot be taken as confirmation that the rumour originally represents an actual danger borne out by events).

A third class shows a mixture of characteristics. We have Mormon rumours of **children abducted** by non-Mormons (?) or from non-Mormon settings (amusement parks). Insofar as *some* stories designate the victims as intended for the child pornography industry, we have a **physical abuse** element. The kidnap of poor Washington DC Blacks by 'white

doctors' involves **murder**, but the age of the victims is left open.

Finally the disparate groups can be made to contain the widest-spread rumours (France, Belgium, USA) of **young but not under-age girls and women** (ages not specified) **kidnapped** from clothing shops by Jewish or unspecified **crypto-criminal groups**. Since they are destined for the white slave trade and prostitution, we would be justified in ticking the **physical abuse** column for these stories.

The last category does not involve kidnap but certainly features **mutilation** (Wachs' mall-shopper, the Castrated Boy). The attacks take place in supposedly safe yet cloistered or cubicle-like environments which are feature of modern everyday experience: changing rooms, public conveniences. I would see here an analogy with the fully-fledged 'shopper-kidnap' stories from Europe and America just detailed in the third category, noticing that in some of these (e.g. Bill Ellis's Massachusetts and Baltimore examples) the victim is not enclosed by the physical walls of a 'cubicle' but by the encompassing darkness of a cinema.

Where do we go next? Can we go anywhere without crunching the data in an unacceptably unacademic fashion? I believe we can say that the material reveals a general or thematic pattern. Two symbols of innocence, vulnerability, and of our future are being threatened with blight and oblivion. They are being stolen from us: metaphorically as where the kidnap is replaced by corruption and subversion, which essentially alienates the victim from the rest of us; but also literally - the kidnap rumour *per se*. They are mutilated, again literally or metaphorically, and they may be murdered literally or metaphirically. The Enemy is always a self-contained alien group (which may however, possess so loose an identity that we can only label it as 'strangers' or 'perverts'). The Enemy strikes at us through our children (who will never grow to be adults like us). It is not merely that all we hallow in our culture is being corrupted and taken away. Without the bearers of children to continue that culture, without the children themselves, there *will be no* culture. This is what we are encouraged to protect by these stories.

I believe that Satanic child abuse allegations are, in these generic senses, folkloric. I do not say they are 'entirely folklore' or 'only rumours'. But in the broadest meaning of the adjective, they are folkloric.

BOOK REVIEWS

BLUM, Howard. *Out There: The Government's Secret Quest for Extraterrestrials*. Simon & Shuster, \$19.95, 1990.

"Last orders, please!"

The sombre words rang out across the Railway Tavern, Mortlake. However the scramble to the bar went un-noticed in one corner, where jovial librarian John Rimmer put down his pint of Wadsworth's 6X, rummaged in his briefcase and finally produced a copy of *Out There*, which he slammed on the beer-stained table.

"Tell me what you make of this", he snapped.

The following evening Roger Sandell zapped the video of *Your Cheatin' Heart* and opened the book. As he did so it was clear within a few pages that Howard Blum was out to become the Donald Keyhoe of the nineties, telling his story in a narrative style combining ridiculous accumulations of journalistic detail with detective story type atmospherics as he confronts tight-lipped, ashen-faced government officials, and ends chapters with one sentence paragraphs calling out to be followed by staccato burst of dramatic music.

All of this will no doubt put many people off the book, as will the author's reliance on un-named sources, and the book's sensational subtitle. This is rather a pity, since Blum is a journalist who clearly does have sources in government (a previous book of his, *Wanted: the Search for Nazis in America* is partly

responsible for the recent revival of interest in prosecution of ex-Nazis) and most of his story rings true in spite of subsequent official denials.

Basically he claims that since 1987 US Army Intelligence has been operating a secret study group on UFOs. This project was apparently set up as a result of an anomalous radar sighting by the US Space Command Center in 1986 (the Pentagon has since admitted this sighting but claims it has a mundane explanation) and an experiment with one of the Stanford Research Institute's 'remote viewing' subjects who apparently have a vision of an alien craft shadowing a Soviet submarine. The evidence for the powers of this particular remote-viewer is that when given a particular map-reference he correctly described Gorbachov's dacha; a feat which seems less than conclusive since it has been the subject of several articles in the Western press and seems the type of location liable to be of predictable interest to an intelligence group.

Anyway, it seems that on this basis one Colonel Harold Phillips, who is described as having a longstanding interest in UFOs since the late forties when he saw a "dome shaped object big as

a bus and bright as a Broadway marquee in the night sky" (a somewhat more Spielbergian object than most that were being reported at the time) managed to persuade his superiors to set up a study group. Blum is commendably non-paranoid on the secrecy of this group, noting that the participants were all aware that being identified by the press as 'Colonel ET' or similar would be unlikely to improve their chances of promotion. Furthermore any publicity would probably lead to their being deluged by an avalanche of reports of little value. In interviews since the book's publication Blum has further suggested that in the highly competitive world of US military budgeting, a project such as this, which failed to come up with answers, would be a major embarrassment to its sponsors.

If Blum seems to be intent on re-writing Donald Keyhoe, those he chronicles seem to have been re-inventing Project Bluebook. Rather than fieldwork, their starting point was apparently to commission a review of the history of the search for extraterrestrial life in the universe, in spite of the fact that this has been done many times before. Blum spends nearly a quarter of his book summarising this history back to the days of Percival Lowell.

The actual fieldwork carried out by the group seems to have been dominated by an awareness of their limited budget and centred on the need to come up with a 'good case' that would convince their superiors to cough up more money. Such a case would apparently have consisted of a reasonably good aerial object sighting, but nothing too sensational (no occupants or similar) in a way that would put off their sponsors. All of this once again seems very reminiscent of Major Keyhoe's NICAP, which saw itself as a pressure-group to interest establishment figures in UFOs and persuade the US Government to issue a 'UFOs are real' type of statement. To this end they too presented a carefully



sanitised version of the record, shorn of its more bizarre aspects.

Looking around for such a case, the group considered Gulf Breeze, then in its early stages, but rejected it on the grounds that some of the sightings might relate to Air Force experimental planes being tested in the general area. (In fact this could only account for a few of the marginal sightings, but in view of the later ramifications of Gulf breeze it is unlikely the group came to regret having steered clear.)

In the end they hit on Elmwood, Wisconsin, a town where, apparently, the locals had been seeing UFOs for years on end. Frustratingly, Blum does not give much useful information on specific sightings, but there seem to be several rural areas in the USA where lights in the sky crop up year after year, and it is in cases like these that some type of 'earthlights' hypothesis seems most convincing.

At the time the study group started to take an interest in Elmwood, the local council had decided to erect a UFO centre visible from the air that, it was hoped, would persuade the aliens to land. Blum takes this seriously enough to spend about fifty pages narrating it in site of the fact that, from his own account, the project was quite manifestly an attempt to give the town a tourist attraction. However, this section of the book does give an idea of the status of the UFO as a contemporary myth and rumour, and presents a cast of characters straight from *Twin Peaks*, including a preacher convinced that ufonauts are demons, and an advocate of a plan to welcome the aliens by drawing on open ground a large representation of a naked couple having sex.

Having apparently failed to find anything of interest at Elmwood, the group went on to examine the MJ12 saga, and the final section of the book is devoted to this. Blum chronicles in detail the charge and counter-charge and elaborate pieces of textual criticism being flung back and forth between Phil Klass and Bill Moore, but carefully refrains from taking sides. However, elaborate textual criticism of the documents misses the basic point (apart from provoking some sceptics into unwise claims which believers have been able to rebut). The central fact is that if the US

Government had retrieved a crashed flying saucer in the 1940's, the history of the last forty years would have been very different. The US would not have neglected a proper space programme until the late 1950's only after being stung into action by Soviet space successes. Pursuing the Cold War would have taken second place to dealing with possible invasion from space, just as the US and the Soviet Union managed to sink their differences when faced with Nazi



Blum is a journalist who clearly does have sources in government and most of his story rings true in spite of subsequent official denials

Germany. The examination of such a craft would have had scientific consequences that would have made themselves felt in many ways (the statement in the MJ12 papers that the craft's propulsion system had been destroyed in the crash is an obvious attempt to get round this problem).

The book ends on an unresolved note with the UFO Study Group still in existence. However if Blum's account of

its proceedings so far is accurate it is hard to believe that it will contribute much in such future as it may have before its funding is cut off - if that has not already happened as a result of the USA's current budget problems. On the evidence, those who put up the money would have been better advised to spend a few dollars on Allan Hendry's *The UFO Handbook* which stands as a shining example of how to conduct enlightened field work on modest resources. The sort of insights that civilian researchers had long ago, such as Hendry's that identified flying object reports should be studied carefully to gain insights into the extent of the mind's capacity for misinterpretation, and Jenny Randles' that if one abandons the ETH the range of UFO phenomena cease to have any real connecting link, seem quite beyond those involved in the US Government's study.

Blum has done a successful journalistic job in uncovering a Government agency which is trying to solve a problem outside its usual area of competence by throwing money at it to little obvious effect, and this is of considerable relevance outside the ufology. However where he falls down is in trying to give a picture of the wider UFO field in the USA where, like the Study Group trying to impress its paymasters, he presents a very sanitised view, possibly unwilling to alienate readers. Thus the MJ12 story is told without reference to Len Stringfield's 'retrieval stories' of UFOs that keep crashing but only in the vicinity of US military bases, which sparked the whole business of. Nor does he touch on John Lear's allegations, and the way that the MJ12 story is intertwined by some of its followers with other, longer established themes for political paranoia such as assassinations, drug barons and 'treason in high places'. The whole abduction field which is taking up so much of the energies of some researchers also goes unchronicled.

Activities such as these have a desperate air to them which suggest that ufology is indeed dying. However the 1950's atmosphere of Blum's book and the activities it describes, along with the similar period air of recent Soviet reports, prompts the thought that it may possibly be beginning a new life cycle.

Roger Sandell

CLARK, Jerome. *The UFO Encyclopedia: Volume One - UFOs in the 1980s*. Apogee Books, Detroit, 1990. \$65.

As the first volume of a projected 'UFO Encyclopedia', this is a brave attempt to provide a situation report on events and trends in the recent past leading to the exciting, excited and excitable state in which UFO research finds itself in 1990. And who better, one might think, to compile such a book, than one who has been at the heart of American UFO research for so many years, and currently edits (and edits very capably) one of the leading journals in the field?

Well, the answer is: a very great many people would have done the job better. A few off the top of my head: Eberhart, Liljegren, Rimmer, Spencer, Stacy, Story ... Indeed, Clark is arguably one of the *best* fit people for the job.

Ironically, this is due more to Clark's talents than his shortcomings. Clark is one of the most intelligent people writing in the field: he is always perceptive, often penetrating; he is really quite honest, and sincerely strives to be impartial even if he does not always succeed. What's more, he handles words efficiently and economically. All this has enabled him to write well in the past, in his early days with *Saga's UFO Report*; in the splendidly maverick book he co-authored with Loren Coleman, *The Unidentified* (every copy of which I dare say he would now like to buy in and incinerate, but he's not getting mine for mine, with its fulsome dedication - Ed.); and in the diplomatically controversial editorials which are a key feature in making *International UFO Reporter* one of the four leading journals in the UFO field (You don't expect me to risk valued friendships by putting [Californian] UFO, IUR, Magonia and MUFON UFO Journal in anything other than alphabetical order, do you?)

But alas, perhaps inevitably from an author who has for so long been so actively involved, now that he comes to sum it all up in his encyclopedia, the themes he selects reflect Clark's own perception of what is important; and though he reports fairly on controversial subjects, his own views are clearly discernable

This can be seen most notably in the lengthy section on the 'psychosocial



Jerome Clarke

hypothesis'. To start with the phrase itself is a nonsense, for insofar as there can be said to be 'a' psychosocial *approach*, it certainly comprises *many* hypotheses. The case he presents against it is plausible and well-argued ... but should the editor of an encyclopedia be arguing a case at all?

That, then, is the first of this ill-considered book's three major defects: it is simply not an encyclopedia. For all its merits, and they are many, for all the nice things I said about Clark a moment ago, for all that he has put his editorial finger on the Significant Themes with reasonable accuracy, this remains, ultimately, a one-man book, and that is something few if any encyclopedias can afford to be.

There is a lot that is very good indeed. Dipping at random, I found his treatments of topics I reckon to know a little about, such as the Hessdalen Lights and the Cergy-Pontoise affair, to be capably written and concisely informative. While his overviews of such themes as the abduction phenomenon and extraterrestrial biological entities are capable summaries which manage to get across a wealth of detail without losing the wider perspective. In short, there is much that is really excellent about the book.

But having said that, I have to say that it is neither a comprehensive reference book (where are the tables, the comparative statistics, the bibliographies and suchlike that a true encyclopedia would provide?) nor is it a comprehensive history (no attempt is made to provide a chronicle of UFO-related events in the 1980's, which is supposed to what it is an encyclopedia *of*). Short on fact though generous with opinions, this book is best seen as 'Jerry Clark's view of UFO research'. Had he been content with that more modest label, it would have been welcome in many quarters.

The second major defect is the standard of production: as in most US reference books this is lamentable. We lose our bearings in featureless tracts of useless white space, we flounder amongst easily mistaken entry headings, inadequate signposts and cross-references. We pine in vain for figures, for tables or illustrations to relieve the monotony of unimaginative typography.

And the third defect? This is of course the price, \$65, which is simply outrageous. It is many times what we paid for the Story and Sachs books a few years ago - and they were both generously illustrated.

And they *were* encyclopedias ...
Hilary Evans

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LETTERS

Dear John

I was very interested in the comments you made in the last issue of *Magonia* and hope that the enclosed material will go some way to answering your very understandable criticism about the 'Warminster Non-Effect'. The letter (reproduced below) is from a Mrs Christine Dutton, now aged about 90, who reports she used to see crop circles on her husband's farm for almost every year between 1914 and 1956. The farm was Perrys (about five miles from Warminster) and is right by a steep hill slope. My colleagues have spoken to Mrs Dutton but it seems unlikely she will be able to help further. However I am carrying an appeal in the next issue of *The Crop Watcher* for someone to dig into the local history archives. I will be making every attempt to pursue this myself in the near future to try to determine whether or not the pre-war circles were anything like as complicated as those that appeared this summer. Somehow I suspect that they were just simple circles and rings.

In early November I gave a talk to a group of about twenty members of the National Farmers' Union in Winchester. They were happy to accept my proposed solution of wind vortices and hoaxing, but better still they confirmed many of the agricultural factors that I described which I believed would account for the sudden increase in crop circles, e.g. fifty years ago cereal crops were all six or seven

feet high and unevenly spaced. The effect this might have on a descending column of air needs to be considered carefully by crop experts before we can draw any conclusions, but this is an issue I intend dealing with in a future issue of *The Crop Watcher*. We have already held preparatory talks with Dr John Graham at Cranfield Institute of Technology and his views will obviously be very important.

I fully understand your scepticism about the amazing patterns we have experienced this year but if you are right about a massive hoax this would now involve some 1500 circles (counting a quintuplet as five, not one). I specifically checked with Hampshire Police back in 1987 about hoaxing and they denied having received a single complaint about crop circles in the preceding eleven years. None of the farmers at my talk claimed that they knew that hoaxers were responsible for all the circles but were happy to accept that some hoaxing was going on. This too will be the subject of an extensive article in *The Crop Watcher*. I'll keep in touch.

Best Wishes,
Paul Fuller, Romsey,
Hampshire

From the *Bristol Evening Post*, 17 August 1990: "If no-one has yet come up with the real explanation for the corn circles may I offer this from personal experience: they are caused by sudden sharp whirlwinds. My parents, grand-parents and great-

grandparents were all in farming and we knew of these circles from generation to generation. I saw several in my youth and they were accepted as perfectly natural. Once I saw another effect of a split-second whirlwind. My mother would often take a group of my small school-friends picknicking in the hay field. One hot afternoon a little breeze sprang up and suddenly a large armful of loose dry hay whisked up and we watched it scattering. My mother said 'Now that's a little whirlwind which makes rings in the corn, but the hay is loose and too light to resist taking flight'.
Mrs C. L. Dutton, Hartcliffe, Bristol.

John Rimmer writes: Paul's letter is interesting but does not alter the basic facts. The corn-field circle enigma did not exist in Warminster from 1965 to the late seventies. Although there are a number of vague, anecdotal reports of meteorologically-created markings in cropfields from earlier this century, if they were anything like as frequent and common-place as claimed in Mrs Dutton's letter, they would be as well-recorded as other curious natural phenomena, such as fungus-created 'fairy-rings', or on a more controversial level, will-o'-the-wisps.

The fact remains that even on Paul Fuller's own admission, investigators are prepared to admit that many circles may be hoaxed, and that many of these are indistinguishable from the so-called 'genuine' cases. On the analogy of the identity between UFOs and IFOs, there seems to be no compelling reason to accept the remaining cases as anything other than hoaxes. Jenny Randles suggests that "Britain may only generate 100 REAL cases a year" which indicates that she is prepared to accept that perhaps 1400 circles may be hoaxed (even if she is counting multiples as one case this still implies that the great majority are hoaxed). I find it no less remarkable that hoaxers can create, say 1000 rings than that they can create 1500. No-one said it was a simple hoax!

Dear John,

I would like to comment on your interesting 'Abductions: Who's Being Taken for a Ride' (Magonia 36). I'm afraid that you present a misleading picture of what's happening here in the United States on the abduction research front, though your misunderstanding is certainly understandable, given your distance from the scenes of the action and attendant squabbles.

First, it is simply wrong to state that Budd Hopkins "seems to be becoming an increasingly isolated figure with his naive scenario of alien inter-breeding and genetic experiments." Whether this scenario is 'naive' is itself disputable, but it is indisputable that Hopkins, far from being isolated, remains a central figure in American ufology. Not only that, he is the American ufologist with the largest number of close contacts with the mental-health community, including some of this country's most respected psychologists and psychiatrists, with prestigious academic and institutional affiliations. Their identities will become known in due course, and in the meantime we can all look forward to the publication of a major paper in an influential scientific journal.

I have spoken to a number of these individuals, and none contends, as you do, that "UFO abductions ... belong ... out of the hands of ufologists." To the contrary, the ufologists and the mental-health professionals complement each other nicely, each knowing something or possessing skills the other doesn't, and there is a happy level of mutual respect and co-operation. The first abduction research newsletter to be edited by a psychiatrist (David A. Gotlib of Toronto) exists to facilitate dialogue between ufologists and mental-health people. Each side, of course, has its own horror stories to tell: the ufologists who have dealt with abductees whom psychiatrists declared insane and attempted to institutionalize, and the psychiatrists who have encountered UFO buffs who were cloddish, insensitive and exploitative. But

ufology's professionals (i.e. non-dingbats) and psychiatrists who do not consider a belief that one has encountered non-humans *ipso facto* proof of madness have sought each other out and now are in the process of forming formal links, to be announced soon.

Rima Laibow was and is convinced - contrary to the impression your article gives - that abductions are physical kidnappings by extraterrestrials, and at one point she distributed an excellent (yet-unpublished) paper methodically debunking the 'psychological' explanations favoured by, amongst others, Magonia.

My own interactions with these psychologists and psychiatrists find virtually zero support for 'psychosocial' interpretations - to the contrary, in fact - and great openmindedness towards (and even quiet support for) the ET interpretation.

The psychological model adopted by psychologists and psychiatrists is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The working assumption is *not* that abductees suffered some sort of delusion for which they can be treated and of which they can be cured. These professionals recognise that something

extraordinary happened to these people, something that prior training or clinical experience does nothing to help them explain. Their professional interest is focused on the suffering of abductees, comparable to the suffering of victims of criminal assault or combat. Thus the emphasis on PTSD.

In short, abduction research in America is in good hands, and we may confidently expect some real progress in months to come.

Cordially, Jerome Clarke
Canby, Minnesota

John Rimmer writes: I find it no more surprising that psychiatrist and psychologists give 'virtually zero' support for the 'psychosocial hypothesis' and hint at support for the ETH, than the fact that most astronomers and astrophysicists give 'zero' support for the ETH, and hint at psychological explanations.

Dear John

With regard to your comments on crop circles: yes they must be a recently multiplying phenomenon, as I too used to frequent the Warminster area in the late '60s and early '70s and there were no circles then but the geology and weather were there.

However, most of them cannot be hoaxes for numerous reasons: they are known to form within seconds, often at night, often in remote areas away from roads or tracks. There is no evidence of human disturbance in the field before the subsequent visitors. Also there are ancillary phenomena in the form of odd lights, recorded on monitoring equipment.

Yet we are still faced with a borderland manifestation. If Mercurius is at work, he is working through a natural agency towards humans, not directly through them, so that we can indeed recognise a new, beautiful landscape art.

With the crop circles we do have an energy, and there is no reason why this energy should not be something like Meaden's plasma-vortex - plus Something Else. Meaden, as a scientist is primarily concerned with measurement, structure and analysis, non-personal and random forces. The opposite view, while alleging a less abstract and impersonal source, retains the still materialistic concept of 'messages from alien intelligence'. Both views are limited in scope. Increasingly science is having to combine the concepts of matter and spirit, and the connection of the human mind and consciousness with other living realms of nature. Both Earth's and man's evolution is working towards the breaking down of barriers, less opaque today, between the 'seen' and the 'unseen'.

The circles will probably go the way of Warminster. For a year or two we might see even more numerous and larger formations and shapes, then a diminishing. No theory will be 'proved', but the Meaden vortex will have the best chance of acceptance as a new atmospheric phenomenon, and as the circles are a residue to be viewed, will have more credibility than, say, ball lightning. In later years there could be another new phenomenon and this will be another way of creating a new psycho-social ontology

Yours sincerely
Raymond Cox, Halesowen.

HOLD THE BACK PAGE

Miscellaneous rambings from the ufological fringe

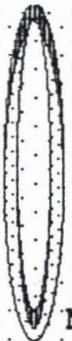
Some strange mail comes through the letterbox at James Terrace from time to time. I was surprised to find that the review copy of Jerry Clark's *UFO Encyclopedia* came addressed not only to me but to my old pal John D. Cottage - I've never been able to find out what the 'D' stands for. I think Mr Cottage might feature more in *Magonia*, perhaps taking over the controversial book reviews from the late lamented E.L.W. Another book for review came addressed to *Magomania* magazine. A belated edition of the Official Margaret Thatcher Fan Club journal, perhaps?

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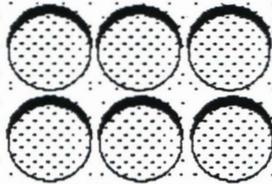
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Confirmation that corn-circles are *art* comes with the revelation of a complex at Ashdown Wigglesworth, Hants., with circles in the style of major 20th century artists. The local farmer has already applied for an Arts Council grant.



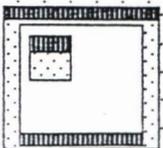
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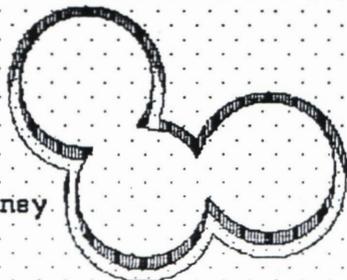


Salvador Dalí



Piet Mondrian

Walt Disney



Win a Corn Circle !!

Yes, a fabulous 'pictogram' type corn-circle can be yours in this amazing *Magonia* competition. Be the envy of your friends (and most of your enemies, more to the point) when you hang up a copy of the Led Zeppelin corn-circle poster on the wall of your den (that's, where you keep the UFO alarm, the huge map with the pins showing every landing report in the world, and your furtive hoard of YUFOS Quest magazines).

Atlantic Records have generously let us have one of the amazing giant (3 ft. by 4 ft.) posters which show the shadow of a Zeppelin (so there's one for you airship enthusiasts too!) across the glorious Alton Barnes formation. You've probably seen the poster around the streets; it really is a stunner.

So, here's what you have to do. In our letters column Raymond Cox suggests that the corn-circles may be replaced by another phenomenon in the years to come. We want to know what it will be. The poster goes to whoever can invent the next completely new, totally inexplicable, and just conceivably possible phenomenon. Send us a description of it in about 200 words, give or take a hundred or two, and you could be the first kids on the block to have this fabulous poster.

Usual rules: editor's decision is final, no correspondence will be entered into, employees of *Magonia* not allowed to enter - you know the score.

AND DON'T FORGET - keep hold of those Peter Rogerson 'Northern Echoes' photographs for another competition soon!