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Interpreting Contemporary Vision and Belief

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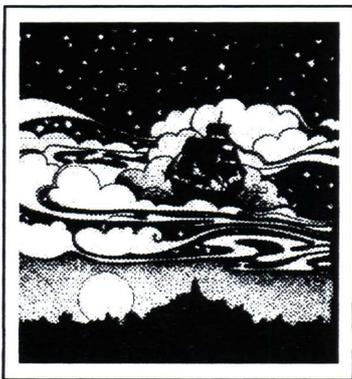
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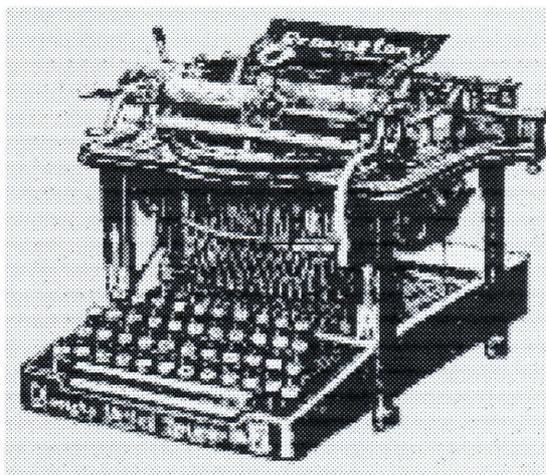
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I SUPPOSE THIS would be the logical time to do a looking back on the nineties, looking forward to the - well what, exactly... the noughties? - type of editorial. Never one to miss the chance of an easy editorial, here you are.

The last time we did something like this was when the sixties turned into the seventies, and I essayed a look at how ufology would develop in the decade of flares, strange lapels, kipper ties and footballers with perms. Amongst my less facetious comments was the suggestion that by the time the decade ended ufology would have split into a number of separate disciplines. One would have a traditional outlook which tended to the ETH, another would develop around investigating unknown and controversial but definitely terrestrial phenomena. Another would see UFOs from a psychological or even - remember I was writing this is the sixties - a parapsychological viewpoint. Now this was hardly Nostradamus stuff, as the tendency was beginning even then, with the so-called New Ufology lead by characters such as Keel and Vallée pitched against the traditional ETH of Keyhoe and the like.

Thirty years on it would seem at first sight that this has not happened. There is still something called 'ufology' publishing magazines, writing books and exchanging views on the Internet. But the more you look at this 'ufology', the less it seems to be a coherent entity. And in evolving to its present shape, some parts seem to have come full circle.

So much of contemporary ufological debate centres around the Internet, that it is difficult to avoid referring to on-line documents when considering the current ufological scene, however irritating this may be to readers who do not have access to it. But it's clear from reading and participating in Internet UFO newsgroups and mailing lists, as well as the evidence from more

traditional media, that ufology as such now barely exists as a single area of study.

The most obvious division is now between British and American ufology. It is clear that the overwhelming majority of active UK ufologists have pretty much rejected the ETH as an *a priori* explanation for individual UFO reports. In the US the ETH still remains the prime explanation of choice for puzzling reports, although some American ufologists who seem to support it are unwilling to go the final few inches and actually say so in so many words. Their backing of the ETH largely takes the form of attacking alternative explanations.

An influential group of American ufologists also seem to be developing a technique of so closely defining what a 'UFO' is as to eliminate any explanations for events which do not depend on the presence of actual hardware. So although Hynck's CEII and Radar/Visual cases are embraced as UFOs, abductions, LITs, close encounters which do *not* involve structured 'craft' etc., are not considered part of the phenomenon. This is handy, as the cases which survive their screening process tend to be those reported by our old friends the 'reliable witnesses': pilots, policemen, military personnel, etc.

However, those cases which survive are not then proclaimed as evidence of extraterrestrials, as that would be too much of a hostage to fortune, and might invite ridicule from astronomers and physicists. So formulations such as 'Objectively Existing Object' have to be devised to avoid saying the dreaded words 'ET Spaceship'. The idea seems to be, "Yes, this report was generated by a physically real solid flying object showing performance characteristics beyond any known terrestrial technology. But from another planet? Show me where I said that, guv!"

This is all rather reminiscent of the ufology of the fifties, when 'serious' ufologists tried desperately to keep the phenomenon under control by ignoring that era's contactee cases (another phenomenon which is not ufology, according to the neo-ETHers). It seems that this decade's nuts and bolts brigade is trying the same technique with a new set of embarrassing reports.

Possibly after thirty years my prophecy has come true and ufology has split into a series of different fields of study, the proponents of which seem to be scarcely communicating with each other. The problem I didn't foresee was they would all still be calling themselves 'ufologists' and using the same forums to expound their ideas.

Editorial Notes

The hunting of the ZEL

A tale of desert adventure, crashed airplanes, and a search that would never end

Curtis Peebles

OVER THE past two decades, the "Roswell Incident" has become the most investigated UFO case in history. When viewed as a historical event, however, the result of all this effort is unsatisfactory. There is

no agreement between the various books as to the exact date of the crash, the number of aliens, their appearance, the shape of the UFO, or the roles of the various individuals involved. One does not have the sense that the accounts are differing views of the same historical event, but rather have no connection with each other. The conclusion one reaches is that the Roswell Incident is not a historical event, but belongs instead to the realm of mythology. A real event, the discovery of debris from a Mogul nuclear detection balloon, has been expanded and embellished over the years. [1]

One aspect of this is the multiplication of "crash sites." There are now six, each with its supporters. [2] In the published accounts, the crash site, wherever it might be located, was sealed off by military guards, and every trace of debris was carefully cleaned up. In Randle and Schmitt's "UFO Crash At Roswell," they say that once the debris field was photographed, troops walked across the area, collecting the largest pieces. They then re-crossed the field

from another direction. Finally, they are described as getting down on their hands and knees, removing the tiny bits caught in the yucca plants, the clumps of prairie grass, and in rodent holes. [3]

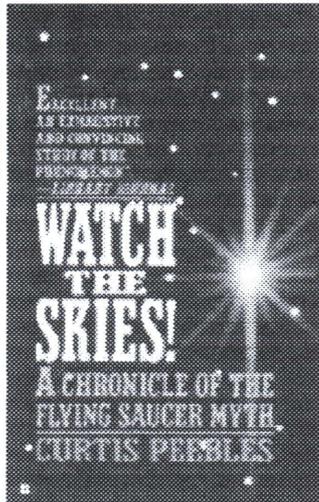
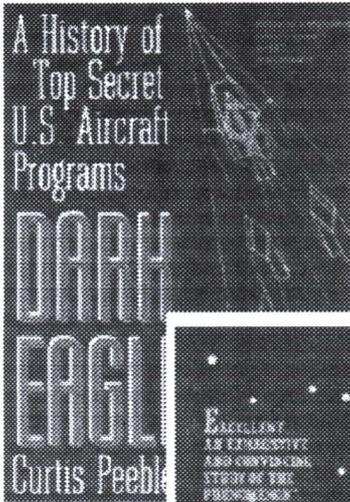
In Randle's later book, "A History Of UFO Crashes," he describes how the troops dealt with the crashed UFO itself. They, "loaded the remains of the crashed ship onto flatbed trucks..." The following day, "they brought experts in camouflage to the area," in order to "eliminate visible traces of the crash and the recovery operation in the area." [4] Such extraordinary efforts have become a part of each telling of the Roswell Incident. This too, is mythology.

For a number of years I have been friends with Peter Merlin, a member of the X-Hunters Aerospace Archeology Team. They have located the crash sites of various experimental aircraft, primarily in the Edwards AFB area. Merlin has participated in the discovery of the crash sites of the N-9M, X-1A, X-2, X-15, and even a MK-17 H-bomb. In each case, there was debris, in spite of the passage of time, such as with the 1943 crash of the N-9M, or the extreme sensitivity of the object, as with the MK-17. During 1994 and 1995, we visited the crash site of the YB-49 flying wing. The crash occurred on June 5, 1948, when the aircraft broke up in flight, killing the five-man crew, which included Capt. Glen Edwards, for whom Edwards AFB is named. Although the crash had occurred more than 46 years be-

fore our visit, there was still considerable debris at the site. Most of it is small metal fragments, although there are also large amounts of melted aluminum, as well as the odd piece of plexiglass and hydraulic fittings.

Both seeing the YB-49 crash site, and talking with Merlin, the implications for Roswell were obvious. The Air Force does not clean up every trace, there is always something left, no matter how sensitive the aircraft that has crashed. The obvious example was the MK-17. Here was an H-bomb, the most secret device built by the U.S. in 1957, yet material was still left behind. Debris will be buried, it will be caught in bushes, and it will be caught in branches. Even very large pieces will escape recovery. I began thinking of using the search for an aircraft crash site as a test case for Roswell.

In late 1996, I bought a video called "Runways Of Fire" on the Zero Length Launcher (ZEL) program. This involved attaching a rocket booster to an F-100D fighter bomber and launching it off the back of a flatbed truck, thus eliminating the need for runways, which could be destroyed by a Soviet attack. Despite the risk of launching a jet fighter off the back of a truck, there was only one accident in the course of the F-100 test program. On the second launch, made on April 11, 1958, the rocket booster failed to separate after burnout. This made it impossible to land the aircraft, as the rocket extended down below the landing gear. Al Blackburn, the North American Aviation



Curtis Peebles is the author of *Watch the Skies*, a sceptical history of ufology, and *Dark Eagles*, an account of 'black' aircraft development programmes, including those at Groom Lake - 'Area 51', and the so-called 'Aurora' space-plane project.

examining the wreckage, including the rocket booster. [5]

I realized that the ZEL F-100 crash provided the test case for Roswell I had been considering. The ZEL crash site was in a remote area, and it was unlikely that the remaining debris had been disturbed in the nearly forty years since the recovery crew left the site. Also, the circumstances of the ZEL F-100 crash itself resembled the stories told by the different claimed eyewitnesses to the Roswell recovery. These individuals describe a vehicle which is battered but still largely intact. The F-100's fuselage was burned out by the post-impact fire, but the wings and tail surfaces were intact. The debris would be concentrated in an area about the size of the vehicle.

Merlin was interested in trying to find the ZEL F-100. He talked with Al Blackburn, and tracked down press accounts. These indicated that the F-100 had crashed about a mile from the north edge of Harper Dry Lake, located east of Edwards AFB. The press accounts gave only the general location. This is where the

test pilot for the project, attempted to shake the booster loose, but, with fuel running low, he was forced to bail out. The video also contained three views of the impact site. The first showed an overhead shot which showed the aircraft wreckage and the surrounding area, a second was of firemen spraying the burning debris with foam, and finally, there was a shot of the engineers

photos came in. By lining up the features in the photos, such as background hills, it was possible to narrow down the specific area. Features in the vicinity of the crash, both natural and man-made, can further limit the search area. It is, for example, possible to identify a bush in a photo taken four decades ago with one growing today. Then it is a matter of walking across the desert, looking for the photos to line up, and the tell-tale glint of metal fragments. Merlin and Tony Moore made two preliminary searches of the area, looking well north of the lakebed, but were unsuccessful. Despite this, finding the ZEL F-100 did not seem to pose a major problem. Merlin had found crash sites with less information. None of us knew the adventure which awaited us in the desert.

The stage upon which the adventure was played out was Harper Dry Lake. The lakebed is about six miles long and three miles wide, and is shaped like an elongated "U" with the long axis running east to west. At about the midpoint of the lakebed, it is crossed by a dirt road running north to south. Beside it is a barbed-wire fence. The area to the north of the lakebed is a gentle slope, with a surface of sand and small rocks washed down from the surrounding hills. The vegetation is scattered brush. There are a series of flood control channels to the west of the fence, and at the far western end of the lakebed is a solar power station. The only other man-made structures are an abandoned shed, well, and corral.

The first search attempt I participated in was made on February 22, 1997. Merlin, Moore, and I drove out to the general area. The first problem was to determine the directions of the photos. It was immediately apparent that the shots of the engineers were taken looking almost due east. There were two sets of mountains, and the task became finding a position where the near and far mountains were lined up correctly relative to each other. The photos seemed to show a rolling landscape, with the impact point in a low area, and a rise in the background. In my initial viewing of the tape, I thought I could see a row of cars parked on this rise, indicating a road or hard surface. The other two photos were more ambiguous. The shots of the fire-

men seemed to have been taken looking almost due south, towards several low hills on the horizon. When the two lines of sight crossed, we would find the wreckage. There was not a clear view of the lakebed, but rather two long tan areas against darker areas of brush. This seemed to indicate the impact point was back from the lakebed, with the view of the lakebed blocked by the foreground brush. The overhead shot of the wreckage, however, showed an area almost bare of brush, with a light tan surface and only a scattering of darker rocks. This indicated a site on the edge of the lakebed. The problem was that all we had to work with was photos taken off the television screen.

Because of the rolling terrain we saw in the photo of the engineers, we started in the general area of the channels, which was west of the fence. We first walked east, then turned back west. I followed Merlin, while Moore went out ahead, closer to the lakebed. This was more than simply a walk in the desert. We were tiny figures alone amid a vast desert. The only sound was our own footsteps on the sandy ground. The landscape extended for miles in every direction, while the horizon beckoned us onwards with the possibility of discovering the object of our quest. Moore was now somewhere out ahead of us, while Merlin's Jeep had become a small white dot behind us in the distance. We finally turned north, then back east, towards the Jeep, and through the flood control channels.

Every now and then, the surrounding desert seemed to match that in the photos, but each time the feeling faded. At no time did we see any indication that the F-100 had crashed in this area. The ground was undisturbed, and there were no small metal fragments which might have come from an aircraft crash. When Moore came back, he said he had found a clue. He had headed farther west, past the old corral. At one point, he found a set of old truck tracks - so old there were bushes grown in them. The overhead shot had shown a fire truck at the crash site, and it was possible that such tracks could remain even after four decades. Moore had found no debris, however. Despite this, the area looked positive, and we decided to look there on

our next attempt.

After leaving the area, we went to the crash site of a prototype B-1A which had been lost on August 29, 1984. The airplane had been making a low-level test when the four-man crew made an error in transferring fuel from one tank to another. The B-1's center of gravity limit was exceeded, the aircraft stalled, and it was too low to recover. The crew fired the escape capsule, but the parachute system did not operate properly. The hard landing killed test pilot Tommie D. Benefield, and injured the other three crewmen. Once most of the debris had been removed, the Air Force had simply bulldozed over the debris. As a result, the crash site now looked like a land fill. There was a large amount of parts and structural components scattered around the area.

The ZEL search adjourned for the summer months, and it was not until November 9, 1997 that the second try was made. We went to a part of the lakebed farther west than the area we had searched on the first try. This was the general area where Moore had found the tire tracks. We found a flat area close to the edge of the lakebed which seemed to match the overhead shot. The ground and vegetation was similar, and the surrounding terrain was rolling like that in the shot of the engineers. I felt sure this was the crash site. For more than an hour, I walked back and forth across the area, looking for the telltale glint of metal fragments. But they were not there. This was not the place.

There was another disappointment awaiting us when we followed the tire tracks. They were as Moore had described them, a single set of dual wheel tracks that were so old that bushes were growing in them. If they had been made by the fire truck in the overhead view, then they would lead us right to the crash site. But as we followed them into the desert, it became apparent that they actually led to the corral area. They had nothing to do with the crash. We still didn't know where the ZEL F-100 was, but we did know where it wasn't. These first two searches indicated that we were looking too far west, and that the next attempt would have to be made to the east, close to the fence line.

The desert still beckoned

us on.

It wasn't until dusk that we started back. As we were driving, we noticed a pillar of fire in the western sky. This quickly grew into a huge iridescent egg-shaped bubble. As this egg began to fade, a contrail continued towards the south. It was a Delta II booster, carrying a payload of Iridium communications satellites being launched from Vandenberg AFB. The "bubble" was from the first stage as it shut down, while the subsequent contrail was the second stage exhaust. Both were lit by the Sun below the horizon.

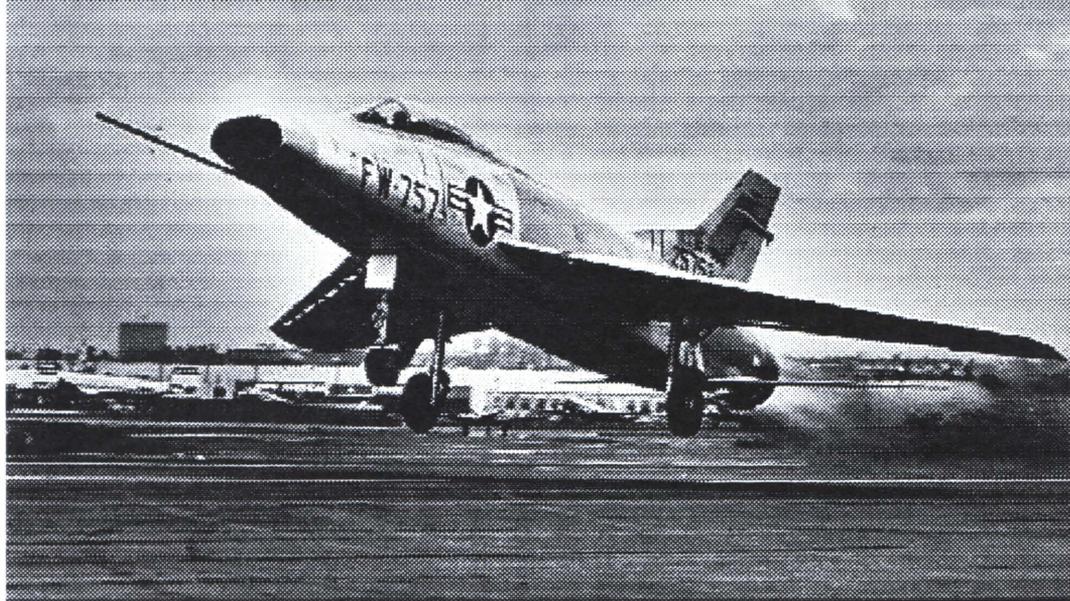
After we returned to Merlin's apartment, we re-ran the "Runways of Fire" tape. Seeing the video, we noticed several details. I had thought there was a

with temperatures of over 100 degrees F. The heat made it hard to breath. The sky was a brilliant blue, while the glare from the sand was strong. Even the water in our canteens seemed to be hot.

The small rocks on the desert floor were dark in color, but when they caught the light, they were

The North American F-100 was the first western fighter capable of supersonic speeds in level flight and was a major step forward for the US fighter arsenal when first introduced in the early 1950s

SAF Museum Photo Archives

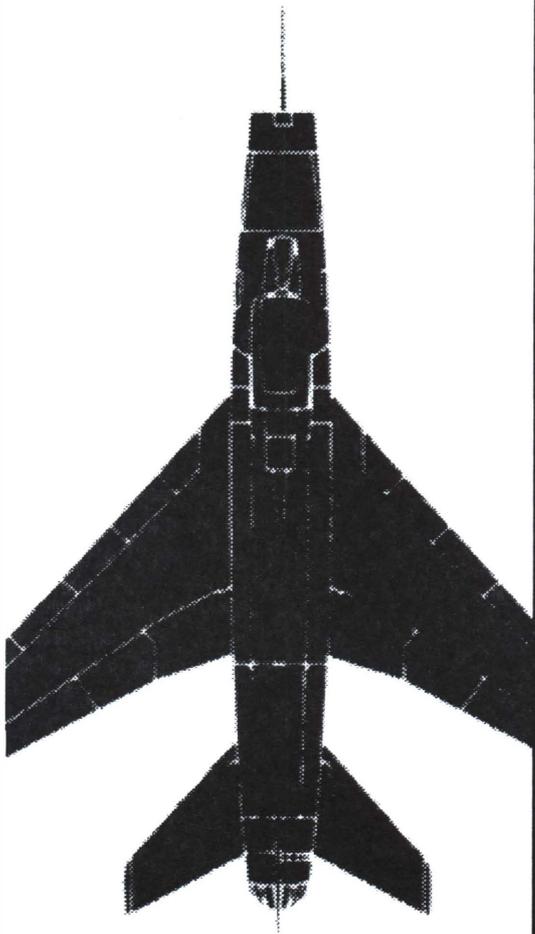


line of cars in the shot of the engineers. On viewing it again, it was apparent that they were only bushes and shadows. This was important because we had assumed that the cars had driven along the banks of the flood channels.

The normal time for searches such as this is between the late fall to the early spring, before the heat of summer begins. The winter of 1997/1998 was a severe one, however, and because of this, the third search was not made until June 27, 1998. Due to work requirements, Tony Moore, who had been on the first attempts, could not join us. Rather, this third search was made by Merlin, Tony Accurso, and myself. As our small band searched the edge of the lakebed, we had to cope

highly reflective and glinted. They looked like bits of metal. At one point, we crossed an area which seemed to match the firemen shot. The brush and lakebed pattern seemed right, and there was rolling terrain to the north. I also found a piece of metal, but Merlin said that it did not look like it was from an aircraft. We were in the middle of nowhere, it was really hot, and Merlin's Jeep was getting smaller and smaller. The Jeep was the only easy way home. At this point, a question occurred to me that should have been asked earlier. I asked Merlin and Accurso if, by any chance, either of them had told anyone where we were going? It turned out that they had.

We finally reached the fence and stopped. It was just too hot to go on. We turned around



and went back to the Jeep. Despite the failure to find anything, I still believed that the one area which seemed to match the firemen shot looked promising. I remember thinking at the time that we had probably been within a hundred feet of the crash site. The desert was continuing to beckon us on. When we got back to the Jeep, the three of us had sodas, with plenty of ice. Merlin then took us on a

tour of historical sites of the Mojave desert, both ancient and modern. We went to two sites in the hills north of the lakebed where there were Indian petroglyphs. These are common in the area, and are several thousand years old. One of the sites was a small hill that had been fortified. It could still be seen where rocks had been placed to make walls. From the top of the hill the whole valley floor and Harper Dry Lake stretched out into the distance. It was an impressive sight, but frustrating as well. Somewhere in that expanse of brush was the debris we were seeking. I was looking right at the crash site, but I could not see it.

We also visited four aircraft crash sites. They were of the X-2 and X-31 experimental aircraft, as well as an F-86H flown by Capt. Joseph McConnell, Jr. and finally an F-101. The X-2 crash site had been discovered by Merlin several years before, and had been well picked over in that time. Despite this, there were still a few small fragments left. The story at the X-31 site was similar,

although the events were different. The aircraft used carbon composites, and a home owner living nearby had insisted that the site be cleaned up. As with the X-2, there was still debris to be found.

McConnell was the top-scoring U.S. jet ace in the Korean War with 16 kills. In 1954, he came to Edwards AFB to evaluate a new F-86H. During the flight, the elevators (which controlled the up and down position of the plane's nose) failed. McConnell had to fly the plane using the elevator trim. Rather than bailing out and losing the airplane, he tried to fly it back to a landing at Edwards. Several miles short of the lakebed, the attempt failed. McConnell bailed out, but he was too low for his parachute to open. The plane hit a quarter mile away, digging an elongated crater, and sending debris flying for 830 feet from the point of impact.

The site had been discovered only recently, and we were among the first to see it. Among the earlier visitors to the site was Patricia McConnell. She had been nine years old when the crash occurred. She had asked Merlin to show her the place where her father had died. Despite the passage of 44 years, the impact crater still existed, and there were large quantities of debris on the ground. The debris field was fan-shaped. It was easy for me to find the edge as I walked back and forth. Another particularity was that the debris was not randomly distributed within the field. The parts from the forward section of the plane were closer to the impact point than the engine fragments, which were near the far end of the debris field. The F-101 debris was similar - a round impact crater with the debris spread in a fan-shaped pattern across the desert.

This was different from what we expected at the ZEL F-100. Its debris would be concentrated in the immediate area of the crash, with only a minor amount thrown any distance. This made it hard to find; while the F-86H debris was thrown the distance of three football fields, we would have to come within a few feet of the F-100 debris to ever find it.

It was fall of 1998 before we tried yet again. In the meantime, higher-quality copies were made from the video. This

was done by Tom Tschida, who, like Merlin and Moore, worked at the NASA Dryden Flight Research Center. From the photos, Moore attempted to pinpoint the crash site. Comparing the overhead photo with a topographic map, he thought he found a spot. It was at the end of one of the channels, where it flared out. Looking at the map location, I thought it was at about the point where I thought I recognized the terrain in the firemen shot.

And so, on October 4, we set out once more on the search that never seemed to end. This time, we brought reinforcements. The search party was composed of Merlin, Moore, myself, Tschida, and J. Lynn Lunsford, a staff writer with the Dallas Morning News. Whatever happened, the press would be there to record it. We drove out to the general area in Merlin's white Jeep and what Lunsford called "a rattletrap red Ford pickup." We parked the vehicles, and got out and walked. We headed south towards the lakebed, then turned east, forming a skirmish line. The desert has its own particular beauty, with its endless skies and distant horizons. It was just that this particular part of the desert was getting a little too familiar.

As I said, the area we were searching was very isolated. However, even here the hand of man was apparent. Over the course of the next four hours, we found a Winnie-the-Pooh balloon, three instrument packages from crashed weather balloons (yes, weather balloons are real), a tow target dating from World War II, and numerous .50 caliber machine gun shell casings. We also ran across one of the local inhabitants. It was a rattlesnake about eight inches long, tan with brown stripes, and a really bad temper.

In the course of our wanderings, we had covered the channels where we had thought the crash was located. This included the area where I had thought it was located during the previous attempt. Again, there was nothing. For the first time we crossed the fence line. All three earlier searches had been west of the fence. We continued east, then turned south towards the lakebed, then back west. I think it was Lunsford who observed that the last time anyone had been looking for the crash site they were guided

Based on my own experience as well as that of Peter Merlin and the other X-Hunters I can say with assurance that if an alien spaceship did crash near Roswell, there will still be debris and other traces of the crash

by a plume of black smoke that rose into the desert sky. We had no such help.

At one point, Moore said, "When I get the hills lined up, the lakebed is in the wrong place." He continued, "And that fireman is standing on a slight rise where the dirt is gray, but there aren't any rises like that." Finally, Moore realized we had been misreading the photos. We had always assumed the firemen shot was taken looking nearly due south. With the hills to the east correctly lined up, it was apparent the firemen shot was not looking to the south, but rather almost due west, towards the present location of the solar power station. We had been thinking that the intersection of the two lines of sight would form an "X." Instead, the crash site was somewhere along a line running east to west.

During this period, there was a seemingly minor mishap. Lunsford was carrying a camera, and he discovered that its battery had fallen out. He set off to look for it. At the same time, Moore and I started walking west, using the fireman photo to determine our path. We continued until we reached the fence. Meanwhile, Merlin and Tschida had gone back to the vehicles to drive them to our location. (They were so far away that we could no longer see them.) We were leaning on the fence, looking west. There was a rise past the fence that, to me, looked promising. This was in the same area where I had thought the crash site was on the third attempt. Lunsford was to the south and east of us.

It was now about 1:30 p.m. and we had four hours before it would begin to get dark. The day was warm, but not hot, and there was still plenty of time. Yet, for all the Saturdays and Sundays we had spent out here, all the many miles we had walked, we had not found a single indication we were anywhere close to the ZEL F-100 crash site. The debris field was small, and it was a very big desert. Moore and I were looking towards Lunsford, a small figure in that very big desert. Moore said, "Wouldn't it be funny if he found it?" It was a minute or two later, as I recall, that Lunsford began waving his arms, and yelling that he had found a piece of metal.

We ran over to Lunsford

to see what he had found. The fragment was the size and shape of a thumbnail. The front side was shiny aluminum, while the curved back still showed traces of green primer paint. This was the type of paint used in 1950s aircraft interiors. We were on the ZEL's trail. Lunsford had marked the point where he had found the fragment with a large "X." The three of us began a circular search pattern. After a few minutes, I found a second piece of metal. It was larger, with smears of gray paint. I later found out that gray paint was used in the cockpit. I thought it might have washed down from farther north, and I searched an area close to a rise. There was nothing there, so I rejoined Moore and Lunsford.

We started walking west; I followed Moore, while Lunsford was more towards the lakebed. Our pace was fairly slow, as we looked for any additional fragments. It was now about 2:20 p.m. Finally, Moore found another one. We knew we were close, and we started to walk faster. I began to see a few small metal fragments scattered on the ground.

And then there it was.

The F-100 had hit the ground flat and right side up. No impact crater was visible. The plane's nose had been pointed towards the northwest when it hit. There were two main areas of debris, one from the cockpit area, and the other from the aft fuselage and engine. Surrounding these two areas was a circular pattern of fragments extending perhaps 20 to 30 feet away. As we had expected, the main debris field was about the same size as the airplane. Contrary to what one might assume, the debris was not simply shredded aluminum. In the cockpit debris were found colored plastic fragments, a switch cover marked "jettison," a large amount of glass and plastic from the windshield, various pieces of the instruments, and also the remnants of 1950s vintage electronic components. This was not simply a pile of aluminum, but the remnants of a complex, structured object.

The other area of debris was from the aft fuselage and engine. Among the parts found here were a burned Pratt & Whitney engine placard, and an inspection port cover with the words "Pylon Ejection Breach Access" painted on it. Nearby was a section of wire-wrapped hose. Several of the

pieces, including the inspection port cover, had part numbers.

The amount of debris at the F-100 ZEL was typical. This will vary according to the situation of the crash. There was less debris at the F-100 ZEL than at the F-86H crash site. There was, however, a much greater amount of material left from the F-100 ZEL compared to debris at the X-31 site.

While we collected the debris, Lunsford photographed us with my camera, and Merlin and Tschida returned with the vehicles. Merlin dug in the area of the engine debris with a gardening tool. The surface of the ground was discolored, and, as Merlin dug down, he came across burned dirt which still smelled of jet fuel after 40 years. It is probable that we were, in fact, the first to visit the crash site in 40 years. There was no evidence of recent digging, and the surface debris did not seem to have been disturbed. We spent about an hour at the site, then loaded the trophies of the hunt and headed back. The debris was formally identified by the part numbers. They indicated it was from an F-100D, the same model as that lost in the crash. We also found two pieces of the plane's skin that were covered with black paint and narrow white stripes. This pattern was unique to the specific F-100D which was lost. It covered the plane's underside, and the left sides of its fuselage and the vertical tail. (The vertical tail's right side was painted dayglow orange, and this is visible in the overhead shot.) Lunsford's account of the ZEL's discovery was printed in the November 23, 1998 issue of the Dallas Morning News and was subsequently carried by other papers. [6]

The ZEL F-100, like the other crash sites, show the as-

1. For an examination of Roswell as myth, see: Benson Saler, Charles A. Ziegler, Charles B. Moore, *UFO Crash at Roswell, the generation of a modern myth* 1997.
2. William P. Barrett. "Now where was it those aliens crashed?", *Crosswinds*, August 1996.
3. Kevin D. Randle, Donald R. Schmitt, *UFO Crash at Roswell, 1991*. pp63-64
4. Kevin D. Randle. *A History of UFO Crashes*, 1995. p.9.
5. *Runways of Fire*, 1995.
6. J. Lynn Lunsford. "Team scours desert for crashed planes", *Dallas Morning News*, November 23, 1998.

sumption that the Air Force cleans up every trace of debris is false. A "parts drag," as the crash cleanup detail is known, is hard, hot work. Although apparently not an actual punishment detail, it is not sought after by Air Force enlisted personnel. It is not done by an elite group of highly trained personnel, but rather by whoever is available. The airmen do not get down on their hands and knees to remove every tiny bit of debris caught in brush and rodent holes. In some cases, even very large aircraft panels, on the order of 4 by 4 feet square, are left behind. There is no effort to restore the desert to its natural appearance, and the crash site itself is readily apparent four and five decades later. There will also often be truck tracks and trash left by the cleanup crew.

Based on my own experience searching the desert, as well as that of Peter Merlin and the other X-Hunters, I can say with assurance that if an alien spaceship really did crash near Roswell, New Mexico, there will still be debris and other traces of the crash, such as scorched earth and other residue. This debris will include torn pieces of skin, structural components, and mechanical and electronic systems. It will be immediately identifiable as not of human origin. No such debris has ever been reported at any of the six claimed UFO crash sites. This, based on the examples of actual aircraft crash sites, including those which were highly classified at the time of the accident, effectively eliminates them as valid. ■ ■

Paradise of Grey Peris

David Sivier

A literary speculation on some Oriental elements in the abduction experience

ONE OF THE paradigms now being used by sceptical ufologists to explain the abduction experience is sleep paralysis and the attendant hypnopompic states, during which the experiencer feels paralysed and

may confuse elements of their dreams with the reality from which their consciousness has not yet fully retreated into deep sleep. (1) It has been remarked that much Western theorising about the nature of religion, such as the belief propounded by Euhemerus in the Classical world that it has its origins in the deeds of great figures of the past whose feats became gradually confused with time until they became gods, is made manifest in Chinese religion. The numerous deities of the Middle Kingdom contain a number of deified individuals admitted to the company of gods by imperial edict, and the pantheon itself is structured according to the Chinese imperial bureaucracy. (2) It should come as no surprise then, that the connection between sleep paralysis, the Old Hag and otherworld journeys to a fairyland should similarly become overt in oriental mystical tradition. One of the classic Chinese ghost stories concerns a scholar who falls asleep in a monastery, only to journey to a strange fairyland reached through a gap in his pil-

low. (3) The connection between hypnopompic dreams and supernatural journeys is obvious, and serves to illuminate other Chinese legends more similar to Western tales, such as that of Chun-Yu Fei, who became the governor of an otherworld state entered through a gap in a tree. (4) The parallels between this, medieval Chinese legend, and Western tales locating the fairy realm under hollow hills and the roots of trees, is likewise clear.

The similarities between the Close Encounter and Near Death Experience has also been remarked upon. Betty Andreasson, and Peter, who with his wife was abducted from Beit Bridge in Zimbabwe, (5) were both abducted "out of the body", for example, as was Maureen Puddy. Judy Doraty, who was abducted in May 1973 while driving near her home in Houston, Texas, was told by the Greys aboard the craft that she had spontaneously appeared out of her body in their craft, and that they had not intended to take her. (6) This has obvious parallels with the beings of light commonly reported by those who have had NDEs, who tell them it is not their time yet and who send them back to Earth. In the case of the Oriental version of the NDE, this commonly takes the form of an encounter with an otherworldly being who looks them up in a book and tells the percipient that there has been some mistake before returning them to full life. In the myth of Hanuman, the Monkey of Wu Chang-An, the myth's hero gained his immortality by ripping the page on which his name was writ-

ten out of Yama's, the king of death's, book. This conception of a fallible, or at least easily duped, heavenly bureaucracy has its parallel in the numerous Western joke scenarios in which a bureaucratic mistake amongst the angels and saints in heaven leads to someone being taken before their time because of a confusion with someone who has the same, or a similar, name. The short-lived ITV 1980s comedy series, *Dead Earnest*, was based on just such a premise. The abduction of Judy Doraty, who saw her daughter, who had also been travelling with her, being deliberately examined by the Greys but who herself was not wanted by them, leaves itself open to just such an interpretation. Of course, perhaps the incident is better interpreted as a woman fearing and imagining the worst for her child during a period of intense psychological stress occasioned by the original incident and its possible confabulation during the subsequent hypnotic investigation by Leo Sprinkle.

Then there is the problem of the Greys' eyes, one of their defining traits. It is through their eyes that the Greys establish control, sometimes almost devouring their victims psychically. The "mindscan" leaves them feeling that information has been extracted from them telepathically, while some abductees feel that the eyes promise something deeper, such as John Mack's patient, Peter, who declared that: "It really wants to connect with me. It's almost like it's looking at an infant . . . if you were only a little older

and a little wiser and we could have a relationship or something.” (7) This occurs as the individual’s own willpower is destroyed through eye contact with the alien, such as in Karen Morgan’s statement that, “Once you look into those eyes you’re gone, you’re just gone”. (8) Erotic feelings may also play their part, as in Barbara Archer’s statements about how, when looking into the eyes of her Grey abductor, “He makes me feel happy. I think that he likes me . . . I feel wonderful. I think that he is wonderful”. (9)

Although Spencer himself points out the importance of eyes to humans, and the numerous sayings emphasising them, such as “bedroom eyes”, “the eyes are the portals to the soul”, he neglects their intimate connection with spirituality. The painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti considered the eyes to be the most spiritual part of the face, and the mouth the most sensual. In the pages of this magazine Peter Brookesmith has also called attention to the accentuated eyes of ancient Middle Eastern figures. The strongest religious parallels to the Greys’ eyes are, however, in Islamic Sufism. The ultimate goal in Sufism, as with other forms of mysticism, is union with God. Sufis, however, stress the importance of the Beautiful Vision, with God’s face in particular the focus of their attention. This comes from a passage in the Qu’ran describing God fading away until only His face is left. This aspect of Islamic mysticism shows more than a passing similarity to Jacob’s encounter with the angel at Peniel in the Old Testament. The Hebrew term translated as “presence”, when the patriarch at last discovers that he has been in the presence of God, literally means “face”. There is also a powerful erotic element in Sufi literature, which attempted to communicate their intoxication with the Divine through the metaphor of wine and earthly, even homosexual, love. Al-Hallaj, one of the earliest Sufis, himself wrote poetry which employed the terminology of secular love. The relationship with God was compared to that between lover and beloved, something which recalled the “St Amour” of the Knights Templars. More than that, God’s face could be likened to that of a particular student at the madrasseh, who is possessed of a pleasing counte-

nance with dark, limpid eyes. This mystical speculation desiring spiritual union with God, achieved through contemplation of the Beloved’s face and eyes, has obvious parallels with the above quotes about the mystical, erotic power of the Greys’ eyes.

Most controversial of all the Greys’ features is the similarity some commentators see between them and small children. Professor Jack Cohen, a reproductive biologist at Warwick University and the designer of fictional aliens for SF authors such as Andre Norton, Harry Harrison and Larry Niven, declared in a recent lecture to the British Interplanetary Society that the image of aliens either as dragons or three-year-old children was due to the cultural perceptions of such monsters impressed on Western infants at about that age. Dr Marina Warner discussing her latest book, *No Go the Bogeymen*, at this year’s Cheltenham literary festival, pointed out that in their insatiable appetites and complete disregard for social norms and adult behaviour, giants were really overgrown babies.

This equation between the infantile and the monstrous is often made plain in medieval Western folklore, and the religious beliefs of African and native American peoples, but is suppressed in contemporary Western culture. The peculiarly alien nature of children, who behave differently from adults, only finds its expression in modern society in contemporary horror films like *Rosemary’s Baby* and *The Omen*. In Africa children have a numinous element unknown in the West. The Chamba of the Nigeria/Cameroon border area believe that the inarticulate babbling of babies and the senile is the language of the spirits. Babies haven’t quite forgotten it, and the elderly are only just resuming it prior to their joining the spirits in death. This stresses the similarity between the very young and the very old, something often remarked on in the West but never stressed to the same extent, except by television company apparatchiks who recently lumped the fandom of the late comedian Benny Hill - again, the very old and very young - under the collective title of the ‘underwear-soiling ages’.

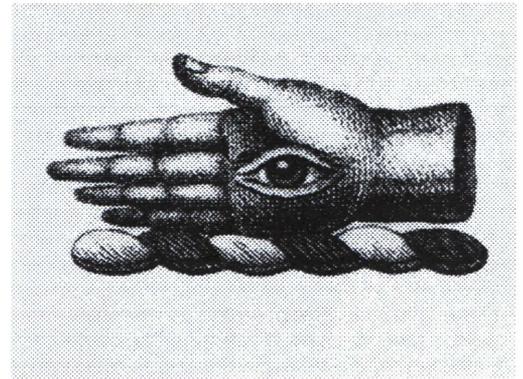
The appearance of the Greys, at once an old, dying race,

whose appearance owes much to Victorian ideas of racial senility, (10) but physically resembling small children, is a far more powerful expression of these perceived parallels. Going further than this, there is the final image of Kubrick and Clarke’s epic SF film 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. This is the Star Child, the final apotheosis of the last astronaut, Dave Bowman, after he has made humanity’s latest evolutionary leap wrought by the

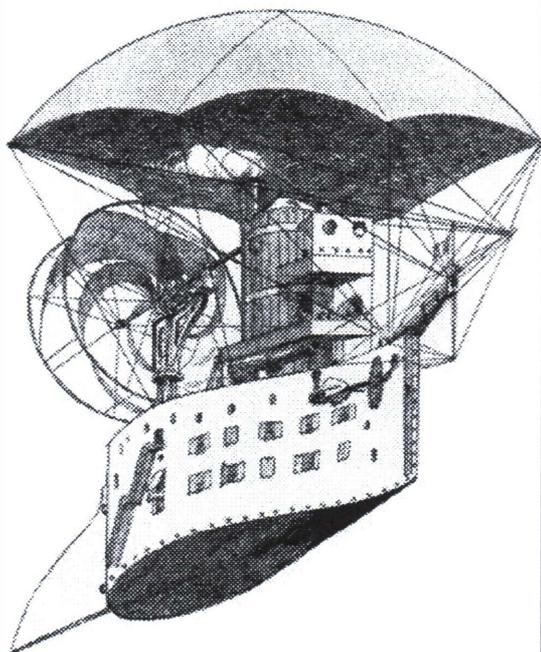
alien builders of the Black Monoliths, who are also immeasurably ancient. This link with the world of the spirit is a matter of some fear to certain African peoples like the Baule of the Ivory Coast. They believe it is dangerous to bring two babies still speaking the language of the spirits close to each other, in case they plot against the living. This belief in the power of a primeval language also formed part of the medieval European mystical tradition, especially in certain forms of Cabbalism and Freemasonry. In the quest to discover it, children could be put in considerable peril by adults. Frederick II, the German emperor widely considered to be the Antichrist during his lifetime, conducted an experiment to learn this language. He ordered a number of small children to be separated from their parents and to be attended only by nurses who would remain perpetually silent. This cruel experiment afforded him no results, however. None of the unfortunates lived long enough to utter a single word.

The idea that children

The individual’s will power is destroyed through eye contact with the alien - “once you look into those eyes, you’re gone, you’re just gone”



can be consciously evil, plotting against their parents, is extremely shocking to the contemporary Western mind. When the Avenging Embryo thesis, which held that the Greys’ embryonic form was the product of Western guilt over abortion, first reared its head some time ago, it was bitterly attacked for its alleged misogyny. Michael Grosso similarly considered the forms of the Greys to be based on Western feelings of self-guilt. Images of starving children from the Third World, dying through disease, famine, civil war brought about by the strains of the global economic and political situation and the ecological crisis, evoke strong feelings of guilt amongst some Westerners. Grosso sees the Greys as metaphors for the guilt the West has because of the impact of its technology on the planet, though the causes of this guilt are surely not confined to this. Western Europe and North America are the present dominant cultures, and their wealth comes to a greater or lesser extent upon the exploitation of weaker cultures conquered during their colonial



Early descriptions of ufonautical visitors stressed their foreign features. The phantom airships were crewed by foreign-looking men who were frequently swarthy, and it is possible that the Greys were gradually elaborated from descriptions of such extraterrestrial visitors as short and oriental with slanted eyes. Garnett quotes Benita Parry's analysis of the fiction of Joseph Conrad,

Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers, as part of his thesis that as part of the guilt and fear associated with the idea of Africans and Orientals, "is the conception of colonial peoples as possessed of privileged insights into the transcendental realm and endowed with magic powers". (13) The Greys, as elaborated from stereotypical images of Orientals, possessing infantile features, surely fit the above description exactly. Their forms articulate Western guilt. Like Wells's Martians they conquer through technology. Like Dracula and Marsh's Priest of Isis, they also conquer through arcane mystical power. The link between ufology and westernised forms of oriental mysticism, such as theosophy, is quite strong, and likely to remain so in the current fashion for New Age forms of religious experience. In seeking to change Western consciousness through espousal of an orientalised religious philosophy, the Greys may very well be said to embody the East's mystical revenge, even if this revenge is brought about

periods of expansion. Many Westerners therefore feel themselves naturally responsible for the poverty and suffering on the rest of the planet, a situation analysed by the writer Albert Memmi at the beginning of Western decolonialisation: "Deep within himself the colonialist pleads guilty." (11) In his analysis of imperial and sexual guilt as encoded in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle*, he states that "this mechanism - the projection of Western guilt, fear and desire, on to the Oriental (African) - as Other - carries with it a considerably in-built penalty. It invests him with the power of the repressed . . . The forms of inversion of imperial power which this guilt produces include defeat by alien technological superiority (Wells's Martians, for example), and not only the revenge, in appropriately dehumanised forms, of imperial subjects, but also the return of, or regression to, the metaphysical realm of transcendental religion, displaced, and debased, by the advance of scientific positivism." (12)

solely by collective Western feelings of post-imperial guilt.

The parallels between Marsh's tale of terror and the modern abduction myth go beyond a common fear of the Other, however constructed. The Priest of Isis in the story takes the form of a monstrous insect, while the Greys are similarly described as insectoid. This fear is no doubt based on the strong repugnance most people feel towards "creepy-crawlies". Marsh succeeded in linking it to a fear of Orientals through the ancient Egyptians' reverence for the scarab beetle. Coupled with this is also the deep and abiding fear of loss of humanity - such transformations from human to the monstrous, with a concomitant loss of individuality, were the stock-in-trade of some of the more shocking episodes of *Dr Who*. C.S. Lewis once remarked that the ants encapsulated the two strongest middle-class fears - fears of the feminine and the collective. The strongly collective nature of many Oriental societies is uniquely disturbing to the Western mind, raised on notions of individualism, a fact of which the creators of *Star Trek* were only too aware when they created the Borg, the ultimate gestalt creature. At the beginning of this century the Bolshevik victory in Russia led many right-wing ideologues to equate Communism specifically with the threat of barbarian Asiatics. Gurdjieff, the great Russian mystic and fashionable charlatan, himself taught that ants were antediluvian Communists, who had suffered the ultimate in divine punishment by being finally reduced to their invertebrate status. Several abductees have similarly reported the lack of individuality in their captors, one specious explanation given for this being that their life force is not as differentiated as ours. In view of the oft-reported comment on Orientals' features that "they all look the same to me", the similarities between the Greys and the Asiatics is too strong to be considered purely coincidental.

The gender of the Priest of Isis is similarly in doubt. In one passage he is described as male, in another as female, much like the highly sexed, but neuter Greys. Part of his tactics of conquest involve the seduction and debasement of Western women, like the tale's heroine, Marjorie Lindon.

These seductions have strong homophobic overtones. When Robert Holt discovers the Priest in an abandoned house, he is first embraced in darkness by a monstrous insect which "gains his loins", (14) before going on to his head and upper body. When in human form, the Priest, now represented as a man, orders him to strip naked before grinning at him with "a satyr's smile". (15)

Lindon's seduction, too, has homosexual, lesbian overtones, as the monstrous insect enters her bed. Again, the parallels with the modern Close Encounters scenario which also has strong homophobic overtones - buggery with weird alien probes and the like - are strong. The primary targets of the Priest's tactic of seduction are women, undoubtedly due both to Victorian fears of female sexuality and the belief, predating the Victorians, that women's sexuality makes them especially vulnerable to the monstrous overtures of the Other. These fears are of a group with Lanz Von Liebenfels' confused ideas of a primeval humanity deprived of its superhuman powers through repeated coupling with subhuman apes, the only remedy for which was the subjection of good Aryan women to pure German husbands. Most abductees are women, another example of women's sexuality making them vulnerable to supernatural possession, a phenomenon which almost certainly comes from the same psychological roots as the vulnerability of Marsh's female characters to the vile overtures of the Beetle. Mixed in with this is racial desire and envy on the part of the Beetle-Priest himself. When gazing on the naked form of Holt, the Priest declares: "What a white skin you have - how white! What would I not give for a skin as white as that - oh yes!" (16)

The Greys are similarly motivated by a desire to gain some element of our racial or genetic heritage for themselves. They need to interbreed with us, to spawn these hybrid offspring, because they themselves are dying. This racial envy projected on to the Other serves both to bolster the collective ego, as humanity, or at least the Western portion of it, has something innate which this rapacious Other, for all its power, does not and at the same time exacerbates the racial fears upon which

these perceived motives are based. The Other - alien or Beetle-Priest - is planning to usurp Western humanity's most intimate defining trait, its genetic heritage itself.

Marina Warner, in answer to the author's question concerning the infantile nature of the Greys, felt that part of the fear producing the abduction phenomenon lay in Christian notions of self gained from Greek philosophy. The Greeks, according to her, believed that the self was one and indivisible, that each person was uniquely whole. Thus, the worst thing that could happen to a good Christian was possession by an invading entity, with the concomitant fracturing and alteration of their deepest selves. In cultures which did not have this view of the individual soul, possession was not something feared, but sought. The "scooping" of abductees, the removal and replacement of organs and the insertion of implants, although having their immediate roots in fears of modern biotechnology, stem ultimately from Christian fears of possession, or fragmentation of their indivisible self. The fear was that the person was somehow being clandestinely altered, and changed into something not really him- or herself, and that the precise nature of this change was frighteningly unknown.

There is something to this. Many cultures with strong shamanic traditions believe the individual has a multitude of souls unknown in Christian culture. The Inuit, for example, have three - an animating principle in the body, a unique soul conferred with a person's name, and an immortal soul which journeys to the afterlife after death. The Chinese similarly have two souls, one of which resides in the grave after death, and one which journeys on to its eternal reward in the numerous hells and paradises envisioned in Buddhism. Shamanism played an important part in early Chinese religion, and even in the modern, technological world researchers have noted the importance of traditional seances in Chinese domestic religious observances. (17)

This view, stressing a straight dichotomy between a Christianity fearful of possession which believes that a person is indivisible, and pagan cultures stressing heterogeneous spiritual elements in the human constitution

and actively seeking communion with possessing entities, ignores the charismatic elements in Christianity. The early church was especially open to the gifts of the spirit since the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles at Pentecost, St Paul being particularly inspired in this respect. . The *Didache*, a short document claiming to be the teaching of the twelve apostles, gave explicit instructions intended to guide the congregation when attempting to discern which of the inspired individuals who came amongst them was a true prophet. The charismatic revival beginning in the black Pentecostal churches in the 1920s renewed this mystical tradition, though revivalist sects such as the Catholic Apostolic Church stressed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as far back as the 1890s, and the importance of these spiritual gifts to the Quakers and Shakers in the 17th century is well known. Among charismatic cults like Vaudaun, the possessing entities can be evil, as well as good, so Christianity has by no means a monopoly on considering certain forms of mystical experience evil. The difference between Christian attitudes to charismatic phenomena and those of the various pagan cults which seek possession in some form probably stems from Christianity's monotheism which forbade any contact with the spiritual world beyond the officially sanctioned dimension of the church and which possessed a powerful bureaucracy able to enforce that prescription.

This fed into Enlightenment attitudes to charismaticism which saw them as both examples of ignorant superstition and dangerously socially disruptive. Enthusiasm originally meant something like "spiritually inspired", and quickly acquired a negative connotation in the 18th century when the term "enthusiast" was equivalent to "religious fanatic". Religious zeal was a dangerous thing that had plunged Europe into a series of bloody wars between Catholic and Protestant, and Enlightenment intellectuals feared its return. The abduction phenomenon is a return of this mystical, shamanic tradition given a darker form due to its repression in the Western psyche, and its perceived links with primitive oriental and African cults. On the other hand, its appearance at the time when many Christian churches have

taken on the charismatic renewal suggests that it is part of this common post-secular trend towards mysticism, rather than a separate phenomenon. Of course, to many people Christianity very much has a stifling, stuffy image despite the efforts of the Evangelicals. The darkness of the abduction phenomenon could represent suppressed drives towards charismaticism in those who subscribe to the arguably majority view in Western culture

which finds such things in some way evil, or it could also stem from Christian charismaticism taking an oriental and technological guise as Christianity loosens its hold on Western thought. Peter Brookesmith has vehemently argued the latter in the pages of this magazine, while ignoring the universality of some of the features he condemns and the strong oriental intellectual influences on ufology. It's a convoluted issue of which the only clear feature is that it represents a powerful mystical experience of a type discouraged by contemporary society.

Back to the suspicion of children, however. Some cultures believe that suffering children are really malevolent spirits gaining spiteful pleasure from the torment of their human parents. In West Africa there is the belief in "ghost children", evil spirits that are born in pain and suffering, bringing grief and sorrow to their parents through their sickly condition before deliberately dying to inflict the maximum amount of pain. These malicious beings then rein-

Marina Warner felt that part of the fear producing the abduction phenomenon lay in Christian notions of self gained from Greek philosophy



carate themselves to begin the cycle over again. The grief they inflict on their human parents sustains them, and the tears they shed are valuable items in the land of the dead. The only way to prevent deprecation by such spirits is to give them names that refer to their unattractive features and evil, or smear them with repulsive matter that will make them repulsive to the spirits. When such children die, their bodies are liable to mutilation. This belief is of a type with the medieval European conviction that deformed, sickly or retarded children were changelings substituted by the fairies for the beautiful human child. The solution was to make life so uncomfortable for the changeling that it left and the fairy parents brought the original child back. This all too readily took on brutal forms. Changelings could be whipped, put on the fire or burnt in the oven, in order to bring the fairy mother to rescue it.

Martin Luther, on finding a particularly malevolent changeling in one of the German states, told the Elector of Saxony that if he were the country's prince

he would kill it and throw the body in the Moldau. When this suggestion was refused, he ordered the local people to pray in church for the creature's death, which happened in its second year. The Nuer of Sudan used to dispose of such deformed dead babies by putting them down by the river by the hippopotami who were perceived as being their real fathers. All these beliefs have the function of explaining the occurrence of deformed children and assuaging the grief felt by their parents when they eventually pass away. After all, if the children were really malicious spirits, and not the couple's own children, then there was no point in grieving over their deaths. On the contrary, if the creatures were evil, their final demise should be a cause of celebration.

Interestingly, the fairies had human agents active in the stealing of children for them. According to Strype's *Annals* of the 16th century, midwives had to swear an oath not to allow anybody to substitute another child in place of the mother's own, nor to use any sorcery or incantation during childbirth. This has obvious parallels in both the way the Greys spawn children on abductees, only to steal them away again, and the activities of various clandestine government departments in promoting this programme of extra-terrestrial miscegenation.

In modern Japan where abortion is common due to the prohibition of contraception, there is a real fear that the spirit of the aborted child will exact vengeance on the mother. Thus, special ceremonies are performed and statues of Jizo, the Japanese god of compassion, put up. Jizo is believed to comfort the souls of dead children in their endless toils on the Sai-no-kwara, the Buddhist Styx. Coupled to this are the kokeshi dolls, papoose-like images made by the Japanese to represent the victims of infanticide, those smothered or crushed to death. Often the killer is their mother. In the West there is an intense debate on the morality of abortion. To many Christians and others in the pro-life camp, abortion is infanticide of a type comparable to the wholesale sacrifice of children to the Phoenician god Moloch. To the pro-abortion side, such concerns are false. The children aborted are not true children at all, and it is a distortion to represent

them as such. Furthermore, any ban on abortion is an invasion of women's rights to control their own bodies, and attempts to impose it are part and parcel of a general assault on women's rights by Fascist groups seeking to reinforce the subjugation of women.

It's been claimed that, despite the claims of the pro-life side, few women who have had an abortion actually feel guilty. This may well be so, but the writer of this article has personally encountered women who have been forced into abortions by their husbands, and seen this as nothing less than the murder of their child. Grief, sorrow and guilt over miscarriage and abortion certainly exist. Although many hospitals now arrange to carry out special services for miscarried babies, the victims of abortion or the controversial experiments in human reproduction are far less cared for. An example of the ambiguity accorded to the victims of abortion was the scandal which erupted in America in 1985 over the disposal of 16,433 aborted fetuses found in a steel bin. The US Supreme Court was required to make a ruling whether or not these children should be given over to a religious organisation for burial. The final decision was a compromise. The fetuses were given a secular burial as inert matter, but with a eulogy from Ronald Reagan. Such a debate between religious values and modern, secular notions, both stressing the dignity of human life, has caused intense feeling on both sides and even motivates some to murder. Fundamentalist Christians in America have killed doctors who perform abortions, while the Red Army Faction in Germany, on the other hand, used to kill those doctors who refused to perform them as Fascists.

The intense feeling generated by the debate, and the guilt some individuals undoubtedly feel, even if only a minority, may well seek expression in the spiritual sphere. Maternal guilt over the abortion of a child has already been expressed in the literature of science fiction in Ian McDonald's short story "Innocents". This particular tale, set in a future in which the dead are resurrected through nanotechnology, culminates in the suicide of a woman after she comes to believe the lover she has taken is her own aborted son, brought back to life

by virtue of the above technology. Although the vengeance exacted is at the hands of the mother herself, and the suspected son remains passive, not even aware of his true identity, the story contains all the significant motifs associated with the abduction myth as interpreted by the Avenging Embryo hypothesis: guilt for the fact, gynaecological examination and operation by clinical, distant and inhuman beings, and sex with a creature who is really a child, despite his adult guise, with the suspicion that the situation has been deliberately contrived by the inhuman protagonists against the human for some dark purpose of their own. In this respect the interpretation of the obstetric experiments of the Greys as "avenging embryos" is quite valid.

As for sex with incubi, succubi and the spirits of the dead, these are by no means confined to Western Christendom. Among the Baule a troubled adolescence, impotence or sterility may indicate that a person has a spouse in the spirit world who is discontented. This will be confirmed if the sufferer has erotic dreams about someone they have never met. The solution is to have statues of this spirit lover made and a type of marriage ceremony performed. The earthly spouse is then obliged to hold feasts and offerings in honour of this spouse, and to reserve Thursday nights for sexual relations with the spirit spouse. More than the succubus elements prominent in the abduction myth, this has strong parallels with

Elizabeth Klarer's liaison with a spaceship captain, who returned with their child to his home among the stars. Perhaps it is no accident that, even though she was white, she came from South Africa.

It's clear then, that the abduction myth contains strong oriental and African elements. The links to certain forms of Eastern and African religious experience probably arise from common roots deep in human psychology, the Western flowering of which, as evidenced in medieval folklore, was suppressed after the rise of the Enlightenment, only to take a distorted, technological form with the dawn of the Space Age. The prominent orientalism in the construction of the Other's identity likewise arises in archetypal racial fears being ascribed to the Other, fears which, although having their roots in the imperial terrors of the late 19th century, were easily elaborated and ascribed to the extraterrestrials once human enemies as objects of fear had been superseded. Intimately mixed with these fears is guilt, both imperial and sexual. These terrors, the deep Freudian fears of race and sex, are the most profound and powerful in the human psyche. Spawned from such dark origins, it is no wonder the close encounter experience is both compulsive and terrifying. It is also no surprise that the Greys, despite their putative alien origins, always retain some human aspect, for through them humanity stares at a distorted image of itself.

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10. Kottmeyer, Martin, "Varicose Brains: Entering a Grey Area", *Magonia*, No. 62, 8-11
11. Meemi, A, *The Coloniser and the Colonised*, first published 1957, reprinted 1974, Souvenir Press, London, p. 57, quoted in Garnett, Rhys, "Dracula and the Beetle: Imperial and Sexual Guilt and Fear in Late Victorian Fantasy", in Garnett, R. and Ellis, R.J., *Science Fiction: Roots and Branches*, MacMillan, 1990, pp. 30-54
12. Garnett, p. 35
13. Parry, B., *Conrad and Imperialism: Ideological Boundaries and Visionary Frontiers*, MacMillan, London, 1983, p. 3
14. Garnett, p. 452
15. Garnett, p. 456
16. Garnett, p. 456
17. Ching, J., *Chinese Religions*, Macmillan, 1993, pp. 207-208



Readers' Letters

Dear John,
Peter Rogerson's characterization of Greg Sandow's article on abductions which appeared in *The Anomalist* 7, as the "highlight" of that issue is somewhat mystifying. Sandow's article, "The Abduction Conundrum," occupied 33 and 1/2 pages out of a total of 192, our largest issue ever. Did Rogerson perhaps overlook Colin Bennett's article, "Intermediate States: Charles Fort's Degrees of Reality," which ran for 78 and 1/2 pages in the same issue, more than twice as long as Sandow's? That would appear to render the Sandow piece a very odd "highlight" indeed.

I might point out that the highlight of *The Anomalist* 2 (Spring 1995) was "Alien Dreamtime" by Dr. Robert A. Baker (professor emeritus of psychology, the University of Kentucky, Lexington, and CSICOP fellow), which ascribes the abduction experience to sleep paralysis and hallucinations, and runs to 43 and 1/2 pages out of 160. Baker concludes: "Whether intentional or not, the entire abduction scenario is an elaborately staged hoax, a production dumped upon the American scene by a naive and credulous group of sensationalistic zealots and misguided psychotherapists who should know better." Surely that should make Rogerson's "highlight" list of *Anomalist* articles! Another highlight he may have missed: Mike Davis's "Cosmic Dancers on History's Stage: The Permanent Revolution in the Earth Sciences," *The Anomalist* 5 (Summer 1997), 55 and 1/2 pages out of 160.

Publication of the Baker and Davis articles (and others) in *The Anomalist* also calls into at least some question Rogerson's sweeping editorial generalization in the same issue of *Magonia* that the "whole Fortean, ufological and paranormal field" represents a "profound rejection of the contemporary scientific world view, and of modernity in general." Next thing we know, Rogerson will be telling us what sleep, dreams, hallucinations, and consciousness really are, and what effect modernity and the contemporary scientific world view have on same. Do scientists dream of electronic sheep and not tell lies into the bargain?

Oh, yes, *The Anomalist* has also published three articles by Martin Kottmeyer to date. And we adore librarians. When we get out. Sincerely,
Dennis Stacy,
Co-editor & publisher
The Anomalist, San Antonio, TX.
www.anomalist.com

Dennis has no need to remind us of The Anomalist's excellent record of publishing sceptical material, and I heartily recommend it to all Magonia readers. Peter's review did in fact cover other papers in Anomalist 7, but I used my arbitrary editorial powers to cut them to concentrate on the Sandow piece as it raised issues which are currently being widely discussed. As for highlights - surely every article in The Anomalist is a highlight?

Dear Editor
Andy Roberts has sent me a copy of John Harney's review of my latest book, *Cosmic Crashes* (*Magonia* 68), and I wanted to make a few comments and observations.

First, the guy's claim that I set out to 'convince' the reader that some UFOs had crashed in Britain is incorrect. I genuinely don't give a toss if people agree with me or not! I have my conclusions and if others don't share my views, am I going to lose sleep over it? 'Course I'm not. Trying to turn everyone within ufology into Nick Redfern clones is the last thing on my mind! Although it wouldn't be all bad - sales of Sex Pistols, Exploited and Ramones CDs, Doc Martens and black T-shirts would rise dramatically, zero-grade haircuts would become compulsory, and cider and whisky 'n' coke quaffing would become nightly pastimes.

As readers of the book will quickly become aware, it's written in a very different style to my previous books. Whereas *Cov-ert Agenda* and *FBI Files* were essentially straightforward looks at the officially released files of the MoD and the FBI (with my thoughts added), *Cosmic Crashes* is written in the first person and is an account of what happened when, for approximately a couple of years, I immersed myself in the

bizarre world of crashed saucer accounts within the UK.

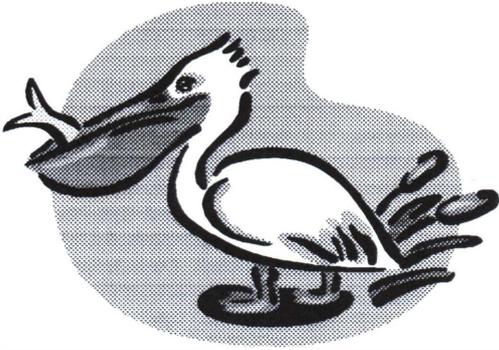
Andy, I think, is one of the few who seems to realise what I was trying to do. I was not trying to write 'about' crashed UFOs in Britain as such. I was trying to get across what happened to one UFO author (i.e. me) when they immersed themselves in that aforementioned bizarre world, the people they met and the experiences they had. Nowt more.

Plus, if I was so intent on trying to 'convince' people, I would hardly be saying in every lecture I do now that most (but not all!) of my views on the Berwyn Mountain case have altered as a result of Andy's findings (which, as Andy knows, only came to my attention two months after *Cosmic Crashes* went to press, when he gave a highly entertaining talk for the Staffordshire UFO Group in January 1999. Usurped by a Grateful Dead fan! Boo!
See ya,
Nick Redfern, Walsall,
West Midlands.

Hello John,
I read an article on 'Angel Hair' on your web site and thought you may be interested in the following:

In the summer of 1983 I was cycling across Somerset in England, at 07:00 on a clear summer day. I gradually became aware of what I at first thought were airborne seeds; pieces of white, fluffy material drifting around, getting caught in hedgerows and wet grass. As I progressed, the pieces became longer, like long threads hanging down from the sky. At this point I suspected they might be something to do with the nearby polythene factory (Bridgwater), but now I'm not so sure. After getting several pieces stuck in my hair, I stopped and collected some.

The material was about as thick as a piece of wool, with a definite structure, and had a granular texture, like fine sugar. I kept some, although on checking some years ago (after reading about 'Angel Hair'), whilst it was still there, it had turned to a crystalline powder, again like ground sugar. I don't think we get ballooning spiders in the UK.
Paul Francis, by e-mail



the Pelican writes...

IN

discussions on the Internet recently concerning Kenneth Arnold's famous 1947 sighting it was tentatively suggested that he might have been deceived by a distant view of a

flight of pelicans. This perfectly rational suggestion outraged the believers, who started to refer to the small group of more sensible ufologists as "pelicanists".

Now some of you might want to know the essential differences between pelicanists and other ufologists, so the Pelican will start his new column by telling you. The pelicanists prefer a scientific approach, whereas the other lot entertain fantasies about the space people and their saucers. Some of them pretend to be scientific and say that they are only considering this as a possibility. Yet, in any particular case where that possibility seems to be present, they get very upset when the pelicanists descend on it and tear it to pieces.

Many UFO reports are full of inconsistencies and inaccuracies. For example, witnesses give confident estimates of the height and speed of UFOs and there are sometimes said to be dozens of witnesses. When pelicanists point out that it is impossible to estimate the distance of an object seen against a background of sky if you don't know what it is, and thus don't know how big it is, and when they draw attention to the fact that the other alleged witnesses were never interviewed by investigators, they are accused of being "sceptics" or "debunkers". According to Jerome Clark the critical examination of UFO reports is not a rational and scientific procedure, it is merely "literary criticism", although other believers usually refer to it as

"armchair ufology". Well that's not quite accurate. If the critical examination leads to the conclusion that the report is reliable and that it remains unexplained then that is not literary criticism. The "right" kind of evaluation of reports does not include the posing of awkward questions, such as those mentioned above. Also, one should not ask questions concerning the reliability (or even sanity) of witnesses. For instance, one of the great "classic" cases involved police officers chasing a UFO at high speed for a great distance. Now it is definitely bad form to suggest that it is crazy to attempt to pursue any kind of airborne object in a car, especially if the object happens to be Venus.

There are great advantages in being a believer. The believers get invited to give lectures, and they sometimes receive fees in addition to their expenses. They receive enormous advances for their books filled with modern fairy tales masquerading as factual reports. Then there are the TV chat shows and TV "documentaries". The pelicanists pose a small but real threat to a thriving industry.

There are even some pelicanists who admire these people for their enterprise and their business sense, but the Pelican is not one of them. Why can't they make an honest living by writing science fiction rather than by deceiving gullible people who are quite daft enough without having their heads filled with the rubbish which they churn out?

In future columns the Pelican hopes to indulge in "literary criticism" of some of the believers' favourite cases and to demonstrate that they make a habit of ignoring or brushing aside mundane explanations which have been offered. Pelican Pride Punctures Preposterous Propositions (How's that for a slogan? No? Oh, well).

If you want to comment on any of the issues raised by The Pelican, you can contact him at his own e-mail address:

pelican@
magonia.demon.co.uk

BACK ISSUES

It's a while since we had a listing of back issues of Magonia for sale. Some are temporarily unavailable, but here are copies that are immediately available at £2.00 (\$4.00; FF20) each, post paid:

Number 68, Martin Kottmeyer on Big Heads, Jenny Randles on Joe Firmage

Number 67, Stephen Woodbridge on right-wing conspiracies. Plus, Nostradamus and dodgy UFOs in Manchester

Number 66, David Sivier: Satanism and Class Conflict. Humadruz, 17th century phenomena, memories of the Demon Headmaster

Number 64, Gareth Medway on ancient astronauts. Sivier challenges Brookesmith on the Flying Saucer religion

Number 63, Peter Brookesmith: Communion Cups and Crashed Saucers. Fascists, futurists and flying saucers

Number 62, Graeber on ink blots, cave art and UFOs. Kottmeyer investigates the birth of the Greys. The ETH on its last legs?

Number 61, Randles on Rendlesham; Spys and Mystics in the early days of ufology

Number 60, Brookesmith and Rogerson in the world of conspiracies; Mark Pilkington visits the Raelians

Number 58, Dangerous Abduction Fantasies; The Return of the Satan Hunters.

Number 58, Mark Pilkington investigates mind-control stories. The Hutchison Machine. UFO Crash retrievals, a developing myth

Number 57, Gods or Astronauts, a persistent belief. Hypnotic thefts. the Gill case solved?

Number 56, Organ Snatchers, anatomy of a rumour. The Godlings Descend, UFOs and Religion. Remembering Roger.

Number 55, Kevin McClure attacks the way abduction researchers are treating children. The Killer Monk of Beachy Head.

Book Reviews



Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince. *The Stargate Conspiracy.* Little Brown, 1999. £18.99.

This is a compellingly curious book of two very distinct halves. Part one is a timely and much-needed demolition job of that precarious - and no doubt pyramid-shaped - monument to wilful deception composed of millions of 'New Egyptology' books sold by Graham Hancock, Robert Bauval and friends. The second part is a trickier fish, with Picknett and Prince making connections - some thematic, some ideological, some social, many fairly nebulous - between the many people, ideas and organisations, from the OTO to the CIA, who have influenced the current dialogues within the New Age Egyptological arena.

The first section is a great piece of work. Investigating the claims of the 'pyramidiots' the authors, aided by their large research network, found not only that they are wrong, but that in many cases they appear to be deliberately misleading their readers. Much of the problem appears to lie with their incestuous use of each others' works as primary source material, without actually checking the facts themselves - as *Magonia* readers will know, a common problem with ufological and Fortean literature. Many cornerstones of this cosmic archaeology are reduced to so much sad rubble. The alignment of the shaft in the Queen's Chamber of the Great Pyramid with Sirius, for example, is made impossible by the simple fact that the shaft has a kink in it! The alleged alignment of the Pyramids with Orion in 10,500 BC, a key element in the apocalyptic jigsaw scattered throughout the books of Bauval and Hancock, also gets a serious drubbing. Then there's the outlandish Martian connection, adopted so enthusiastically by the 'Magic 12' (as the 'pyramidiots' now refer to themselves), and so resolutely demolished by last year's new Mars Global Surveyor snaps of Cydonia - unfortunately

the same week as Hancock and Co's *The Mars Mystery* hit the shelves.

Picknett and Prince also trace the roots of the genre back to Edgar Cayce and the writings of occultist and 'protofascist' R. A. Schwaller De Lubicz, the Freemasons and magical orders such as the OTO and Crowley's Argenteum Astrum.

Not surprisingly, Picknett and Prince ask how so many errors, repeated by the same authors, can remain unchallenged for so long. Perhaps getting slightly ahead of themselves, our heroes wonder whether the whole thing might be part of a Freemason-inspired, CIA-lead plot to create a new religious movement based around New Age beliefs in the continued existence of the Egyptian *Ennead*, or The Nine. When the weight of books sold by the Magic 12 could probably cause the kind of cataclysmic polar shift some of them repeatedly hint at, it's not hard to see why authors and publishers alike should be reluctant to worry about any erroneous details that might undermine their paper monolith. For most on-lookers, the Cash Conspiracy would be answer enough, but our intrepid authors dig deeper, unearthing some eyebrow-raising connections between the movers and shakers of US Intelligence and many influential fringe luminaries of the 1970s, among them Andrija Puharich, Uri Geller, Ira Einhorn, James Hurtak, even *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry.

While the links are undoubtedly there, it's difficult to concur with P and P's somewhat overwrought and occasionally hysterical conclusions. What becomes apparent, and is ultimately more frightening than the prospect of the return of the Egyptian gods, is that - as we have seen time and time again throughout history - world military, political and spiritual leaders are equally, if not more, prone to fits of gullibility, self-delusion and wishful thinking as the rest of us. *Mark Pilkington*

Kevin Randle, Russ Estes, and William P. Cone. *The Abduction Enigma.* Forge/Tom Doherty Associates, 1999. \$17.99

Ignore the nonsense on the blurb, this is one of the most important books on the abduction experience published to date. In it veteran ufologist Kevin Randle, documentary video maker Russ Estes and psychotherapist William Cone, take a detailed critical look at the abduction issue. Before we start let us say all three have done personal research into the abduction experience, they all make it clear that they are not CSICOP sceptics, and are at least open minded on the ETH, so when they produce the devastating conclusions they do - more severe than anything we in *Magonia* have written and indeed even more severe than Kevin McClure in his *Abduction Watch*, the abductionists have none of their 'armchair ufologist, cult of librarianship in ufology, bloody-minded sceptics, damned arts graduates' excuses.

The book is in five parts. In the first the authors present a pocket history of the abduction experience and of their own involvement with it, with some examples. The novel finding here is the claim, chiefly by Estes of the very high rate of sexual dysfunction among abductees, and of the much higher rate of sexual themes and imagery in the abduction narratives than other investigators publish. In the second section the authors begin their critical analysis of the abduction experience by looking at the role of folklore, popular culture and dreams in the generation of abduction stories. These are themes which will be familiar to *Magonia* readers, and here Cone introduces the role of sleep paralysis and boundary deficiency (for those who don't remember Martin Kottmeyer piece on this subject, this involves difficulties in separating out fact from dream and fantasy). The authors also briefly look at the contactee stories noting the differences but also the similarities. They ask why did ufologists reject unbelievable contactee stories, but endorse, if anything, even more unbelievable abduction stories? Rather naughtily they suggest one answer is that the contactees were the centre of their own stories, but with the abduction stories it is usually the researcher who is centre stage.

The themes of sleep pa-

ralysis and boundary deficiency are explored further in the fourth part of the book, which also takes a detailed look at the Satanic abuse and recovered memory phenomena. Here Cone speaks with authority, for he was working in a hospital which had a unit dealing with these patients, treated them, and, though he doesn't exactly spell this out, was bought into the belief system for a time, until experience turned him into a sceptic. He emphasises the role of suggestion by the therapist in generating false memories. Again and again he notes the problematic nature of memory recall, the absence of any evidence for massive repression of memory, the role of suggestion in hypnosis. Many examples are given of how researchers are able to take simple memories, say in the abduction context of sleep paralysis, and turn them into dramatic stories of abduction.

In the fifth part they examine the alleged physical evidence, scars, implants, and missing foci, to find though there are assertions aplenty, when it comes to independently verifiable evidence, it is just lacking.

The core of this book, and what makes it so devastating, is the third section, an analysis, based on actual transcripts, of the investigations of the major investigators: Boylan, Carpenter, Harder, Hopkins, Lawson, Jacobs, Mack and Simms. They may be perhaps a little unfair in starting the section with Marshall Applewhite, and do note that a thick line has to be drawn between him and the investigators discussed later. But perhaps that line is not quite as thick as one would like it to be, for as they begin the analysis, they rip the abduction researchers to shreds. Again and again they show how these researchers led witnesses to say what they wanted to here, exactly what Cone found in the case of the Satanic abuse stories. The similarities and differences arise because of who is investigating. The cueing can be subtle, but at times is quite blatant. There is Jacobs with his obsessive

agenda of alien take-over, twisting and forcing the witnesses to agree with him, there is Mack's New Agery, there is Lawson who performed useful work until he became bogged down in his pseudo-scientific birth trauma hypothesis.

Randle describes in detail James Harder's interrogation of Pat Roach (also known in the literature as Patty Price). This case deserves the attention it gets here (no doubt because it was Randle's introduction to the subject) as in many ways, this, not Betty and Barney Hill, was the first of the really modern abduction stories, the first to introduce the major theme of women taken from their home, humans involved with aliens, multigenerational abductions, neighbourhood abductions. This was the template on which other abduction narratives were erected, adding new elements from time to time.

The critique of Hopkins and the Neapolitano affair is massive, pointing out all the absurdities and inconsistencies in the evidence. What the authors might privately think of Hopkins emerges in a nice little Freudian typo. After noting how abductions were becoming old hat, and that Hopkins was in danger of being upstaged by people like Mack, and needed something dramatic to keep centre stage, they had no doubt meant to put in the standard libel lawyer's disclaimer: "This does not mean that Hopkins was lying or inventing tales", however in the printed next that little word "not" is missing.

The harshest criticisms come with the therapists Richard Boylan and John Carpenter. Boylan's problems with the state accreditation board, his - how shall I put it - rather unorthodox methods of treatment using a hot tub, and his pushing his clients into the abduction scenario, are examined, as is his claim to be an abductee himself. And if you still think that abductionists, even they do no good do no harm, read how John Carpenter transformed Leah Haley from an intelligent high function-

ing person, with a good job, studying for a doctorate, and with a family, into a paranoid abductee who lost her job, most of her friends, her husband and to a large degree her sanity.

There can be quibbles with their accounts, for example they point how Jacobs and Mack are aware in general of the role of false memory and the investigator effect in other fields, but will not allow it their own. So perhaps Estes finding of the high levels of sexual imagery is just another example of that effect, and there is still that huge Roswell beam in Randle's eye. Everyone else can see that the points he makes about abductees memories fit Roswell as well. Cone's explanation of boundary deficiency as being caused by "enmeshed families", in which personal space and personal property is constantly being invaded, and there is an inadequate sense of self, sounds like old fashioned 'blame the family' psychology, of the sort that is now largely discarded in fields such as schizophrenia and autism. It is also very culture specific: the notion of personal space and personal possessions in a family, is very much the product of twentieth century Western bourgeois consumerism. It should however give rise to a testable hypothesis, that the incidence of boundary deficient should be higher among identical twins, and among people from large families, that those with one or two children of separate ages. More likely boundary deficit will turn out have a neurological origin.

These criticisms, and perhaps that the autonomy of abduction imagery as a language for religious experience is not recognised, should not detract from the importance of this book, which should be read by every ufologist. Unless it is very specifically geared to sleep disorder therapy, in which the internal origin of the imagery is recognised and anxieties diffused, abduction research should stop now! We should recognise that those ufologists who continue to spread the abduction myth are destroying people's lives. However noble their motivations, the effects of their actions are akin to those of drug pushers and drunk drivers. They wreck lives. They should be stopped. Failure to act is literally criminally negligent.

Katherine Ramsland. *Piercing the Darkness: undercover with vampires in America today.* Boxtree, 1999. £9.99.

An journey into a sub culture a good deal more off-beat than your average UFO or SPR convention, the world of wannabe vampires. These are, mainly, young, people to whom the post-modern vampire has become a figure of romantic appeal, and who forge for themselves surrogate identities as vampires, quite a few of whom drink each others blood. It is hard not to note the parallels with again, often young, people who declare themselves reincarnated aliens, in both cases there is attempt to convert their sense of alienation into the assumption of a new 'transhuman' identity. Many of these 'vampires' show the same personality profiles as those labelled as fantasy-prone, such as the belief that one has psychic powers, is unusually empathic etc. There are also crucial similarities with what I have termed Caraboo Syndrome, the assumption of a fictitious identity, so powerfully believed in as to convince many people of the truth of their claims, and probably in many cases themselves.

There may be parallels also with the abductee subculture, the escape from the dull routine of the given world, into a world of magic and powerful forces, and the construction of subcultures wherein a new identity may be forged. Some of the abductees may well be 'psychic vampires' not in any paranormal sense but in the sense of being able to take control of investigators lives, manipulating them with 'shared experience' and feeding them with informational bait to keep them continually hooked.

Of course few of us in the *Magonia* world are likely to come across someone quite as dangerous as 'Wraith' whose story is one of those featured here, and by his own claims was at least an accomplice in his boyfriend's murderous activities. A book not for the squeamish

Eugen Weber. *Apocalypses: prophecies, cults and millennial beliefs throughout the ages.* Hutchinson, 1999. £18.99.

This latest addition to the spate of premillennial books on millenarianism and apocalypse is by a distinguished historian who has specialised in French history, and therefore perhaps the chief interest lies in his quoting of much obscure material from France, in what is in effect a whistle stop history of apocalypticism in Christian culture. Weber's major thesis is that apocalyptic thought was by no means confined to the poor, down-trodden and marginal, as he believes writers like Norman Cohn have argued, but was central to the world view of many leading figures in past times - this aspect of their careers often being overlooked by modern, Whig historians. This reflects the general disdain of the academic community towards fantastic beliefs, which are dismissed as the superstitions of the peasantry and of past ages.

This may have been the case in the 1950's when Cohn's *Pursuit of the Millennium* was first written but is hardly true today, when there is a vast academic literature on topics such as millenialism, astrology and witchcraft. Of course it must be said that few if any of these academics believe in witches, fairies or the imminent end of the world, but this does not mean they cannot treat sympathetically people, past or present, who did or do believe these things.

Weber has been accused by some reviewers of being too kind towards apocalypticism. While I am not sure that I would go that far, I think he underplays the truly destructive role that these beliefs can play, especially when linked with themes of the annihilation of 'the terrible others', leaving only a 'saving remnant' of the pure and elect to, if not always build, at least inhabit the New Jerusalem. It also has to be said that there are passages in this book which some will see as offensively anti-Semitic.

Unless otherwise stated, all book reviews are by Peter Rogerson

***Richard Belzer.** *UFOs, JFK and Elvis: Conspiracies you don't have to be crazy to believe.* Ballantine Books, 1999. £22.99

***Al Hidell, and Joan D'Arc (compilers).** *The Conspiracy Reader: from the deaths of JFK and John Lennon to government sponsored alien cover-ups.* Citadel Press, 1999. £13.99

***David Southwell, and Sean Twist.** *Conspiracy Theories.* Carlton Books, 1999. £6.99

***Robert Anton Wilson, and Miriam Joan Hill.** *Everything is Under Control: conspiracies, cults and cover ups.* Pan Books, 1999. £10.00

As the century lurches towards some kind of conclusion, and more and more people feel alienated from the institutions of power, grand conspiracy theories are on the rise. Not only that, they are, as these books I think testify, becoming fashion statements, and sources of entertainment. Life might seem to imitate the video game.

The great home of the conspiracy theory is the United States, thus three of these books are written there, and the fourth by Southwell and Twist relies chiefly on US conspiracy theories. Many reflect the fusion paranoia of recent decades, the left's fears of a great reactionary plot behind the death of JFK and the machinations of J Edgar Hoover, interacting with the right's fears of a New World Order run by those old favourites the Illuminati, the Masons, the bankers (left and right can agree on all of these), the repressive Establishment, the black helicopters, and dreams of crashed flying saucers and secret technologies.

There are common themes behind many of them, the hero, whether JFK, his brother, or John Lennon, could not be slain by a random act of self promotion or revenge, but must have been laid low by the incarnate forces of cosmic evil, the powers and principalities of the world, perhaps because the victim saw through the *maya* of history to the clockwork beyond. Or the hero is not dead, but has absconded from his fickle followers. There is the fear that They know something but

won't tell ME (Mummy and Daddy know where babies come from), or the hope that behind the random chaos of events someone, even if its a malignant someone, is in control. Everything is under control, or the darker fantasy, that all the pain, heart-ache and suffering in the world is caused by THEM, the terrible others, and if only they could be swept from the world, all would be well.

There are of course, authorised conspiracy theories: wild fantasies about MJ12, crashed flying saucers, and the Masons being behind the Jack the Ripper murders have excitement. More down to earth ones are either too complex, requiring some background knowledge, or too sensitive to publish. Real conspiracies tend to derive either from a simple desire to hang onto the good life at any cost, or the consequences of adhering to the maxim 'My enemy's enemy is my friend, my enemies

friend is my enemy'.

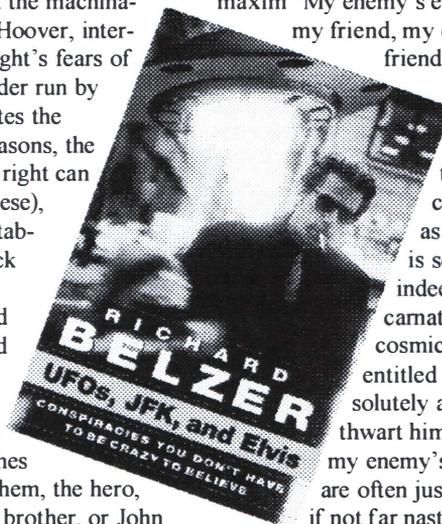
This leads to the conclusion that as my enemy is so terrible, indeed the incarnation of cosmic evil, I am entitled to do absolutely anything to thwart him, and as my enemy's enemies are often just as nasty, if not far nastier than my enemy himself, this means some pretty strange and unsavoury bedfellows. Better not let the naive, idealistic voters know anything about this, they might get the vapours. One conspiracy theory which you won't read in any of these or similar books, based on the same maxim, is the one in which the CIA and MI5 set up the Provisional IRA, because 'green' Irish Republicans were the enemy

Many conspiracies are the result of adhering to the maxim "my enemy's enemy is my friend". This means some pretty strange and unsavoury bedfellows

of the 'red' Official IRA.

Of the books listed here, I would recommend Robert Anton Wilson's. There is real scholarship as well as mordant wit and a healthy scepticism in his dictionary of conspiracy theories. The entries also have bibliographies and lists of web sites, though I would advise you to access some of them in the privacy of your own home, and not in your local library, which is likely to have rules about that sort of thing. The entries in Southwell/Twist are longer, and follow a standard format, but I have to say I found that format rather tedious, and also I really don't think they know very much about what they are writing about in places.

If you want to read some of the wilder shores of conspiracy theorists 'in their own words' then *The Conspiracy Reader* gives you some of the juicier items from *Paranoia* magazine, which the compilers edit. I couldn't possibly say whether they actually believe any of it, which goes for Belzer, who played Detective Munch in the TV series *Homicide*, and is apparently one of those angry stand-up comics. His book is basically a derivative Kennedy assassination book, padded out with a load of crap on crashed flying saucers and the like. This is very much through the eyes of Jim Marrs. If Belzer does believe it then he, a left wing Jew, is at one point endorsing the late Jim 'Black Helicopters' Keith, darling of the radical-right militias. For us Brits, I suppose this would be rather like Mark Thomas quoting, with approval, David Icke.



Erik Davis. *Techgnosis: myth, magic and mysticism in the age of information.* Serpent's Tale, 1999. £14.99.

It's not easy to summarise the contents of this book, but basically it is a study of the interface between magic, religion, technology and popular culture, centred principally on today's America's cyberculture. Davis tracks through history the ideas of technology, text and information as gnosis, salvation and apocalypse. The Gnostic theme is perhaps the central one, drawing on Howard Bloom's notion of the Gnostic roots of American religion, and drawing as its themes not just the idea of saving knowledge, but the separation of the rational, transcendental spark, from the messy world of human matter, an idea which finds perhaps its ultimate expression in the beliefs of some artificial intelligence enthusiasts that human beings can download their consciousness into immeasurably superior, coldly rational machines.

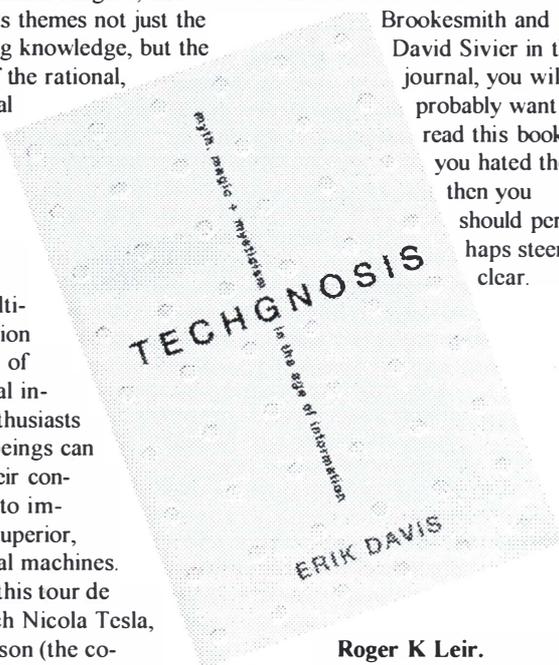
In this tour de force in which Nicola Tesla, Thomas Watson (the co-discoverer of the telephone), John Lilly, Timothy Leary, Marshall McLuhan, Philip K Dick and Teilhard de Chardin rub shoulders, many of today's techno myths are explored. There is for example a very literate chapter on UFOs, though Davis has perhaps only a fairly superficial knowledge of the intricacies. He sees the Gnostic imagery of the conspiracy theory: various secret cabals replace the archons of old, the powers and principalities of the world, which hold the world in bondage, but from which the saving gnosis offers salvation.

If science fiction and some popular science fiction represent secularisation of these traditional religious themes, the idea that the next scientific development, whether it be the telegraph, air power or the Internet will bring about the unification of human kind and the new age, then equally there can be the supernaturalisation of technology, such as the

growth of spiritualism, with its telegraph like codes, and its overt references to the 'spiritual telegraph', or the George Hunt Williamson radio messages from aliens (or Raudive's tape recordings, or the Spiricom story for example). One lacuna in the book is an omission of the CETI project, where for example Frank Drake's idea that if we signal the stars, we may get the secrets of peace and immortality in return, truly a techno secular prayer.

I think my best recommendation to would be readers would be to say if you liked the recent articles of Peter

Brookesmith and David Sivier in this journal, you will probably want to read this book, if you hated them, then you should perhaps steer clear.



Roger K Leir.

The Aliens and the Scalpel: scientific proof of extraterrestrial implants in humans. Granite Publishing, 1998. £12.99.

Well this book is certainly not scientific proof of extraterrestrial implants, or anything else for that matter. One thing does emerge, and that is that Roger Leir has no idea how to write a scientific book, albeit a popular one. Instead of a detailed carefully explained account of his researchers and objective analysis of the results, we get a tiresome listing of the author's life story, the minutia of his day (about the only thing left out is the nature and composition of his stools), invented conversations and the like.

This at least gives us an insight into how people get into the state in which they start believing this sort of thing. Leir admits to a feeling of inferiority compared with his more high flying cousins, including Ken Ring of NDE fame, and admit it, being a

podiatrist (a foot specialist) is not exactly practising the sexy side of medicine, not your heart-lung transplants, or separating conjoined twins which gets you into the headlines. Leir admits to wondering where is life and career was going. So when a plausible spicler, I'm sorry dedicated researcher, like Derril Simms suggests you are just the guy needed to make the scientific breakthrough of the century, you might be tempted.

The operations recounted here sound shambolic, and included Simms giving 'hypnoanesthesia' (to be fair Leir and colleagues did give local anaesthetics as well in most cases), a patient crying out because the local was inadequate. In one set of operations a whole panoply of star witnesses (the usual suspects of course) was invited, it is not clear how many actually turned up.

It is not at all clear just who did the analyses of the various samples, but none actually turned round and said "hey this stuff comes from outer space". One of the analysts, a friend of Simms, claimed one sample was boron nitride, and that this was a 'high tech compound' (actually it could be manufactured in any good high school laboratory). Leir was unimpressed. In some cases it appears that the project's funders, Robert Bigelow and friends, wouldn't even tell Leir where the samples were being analysed, let alone who was doing the actual work and what their qualifications were.

Leir is I think fundamentally honest, although naive, and, judging by the silly speculation about ancient astronauts and aliens are manipulating our evolution at the of this book he does not seem to be entirely scientifically literate outside of his own speciality, and is possibly being manipulated by others. At times he sees to get a glimmer of insight into his position. He would like his results presented in a proper scientific journal, but Bigelow prefers the obviously more prestigious *MUFON UFO Journal*.

The actual results are printed at the end, and I am not competent to comment on them. Hopefully others with the right technical background will assess them, although scientists quoted in Kevin McClure's *Abduction Watch* were not impressed)

Fred Adams and Greg Laughlin. *The Five Ages of the Universe: inside the physics of eternity.* Free Press, 1999. \$25.00.

Frontier physics and cosmology, exploring the far (and I mean far) distant future of the universe, when all the protons have decayed and the black holes evaporated away. Reasonably accessible to the non specialist, and a good example of the breathtaking speculative audacity of mainstream science, compared with which the stuff produced by Fortean and paranomalists is oh so tame.

Richard Dawkins. *Unweaving the Rainbow: science, delusion and the appetite for wonder* Penguin, 1999. £8.99.

Dawkins defence of the poetics of science, in what is essentially a series of interconnected essays. These include some good, knockabout swipes at the paranormal, and reading them it strikes me that in a very real sense Dawkins objection to the paranormal is a religious one. He sees paranormal claims as tacky trivia which detract from the awe-full dignity and regularity of nature, and is offended by them in much the same way as a Moslem may be offended by *The Satanic Verses*. That doesn't mean he is wrong.

Also some good old-fashioned bitching, targets include Stephen J Gould and Carol Vordermann (the latter, for our overseas readers, is a scientifically trained TV presenter who is currently earning far too much money presenting trivial TV programmes)

Michael Ruse. *Mystery of Mysteries: is evolution a social construction.* Harvard University Press, 1999. £16.95.

Philosopher Michael Ruse explores the debate between objectivist and constructionist accounts of science (do scientists neutrally discover an existing world, or do they construct models of the world, informed by a variety of personal, social and ideological agendas?). He uses his example the rise of evolutionary theory, from the pre-scientific speculations of Erasmus Darwin, to the works of his grandson Charles, through to such controversial modern figures as Richard Dawkins, Edward O Wilson and Stephen J. Gould). Intriguing for anyone interested in the history of science

Kenn Thomas. *Maury Island UFO*. Illuminet Press, 1999. \$14.95

1947 is dominated by two famous cases: Arnold and Roswell. A third one, Maury Island, due to its weirdness and dubious origins, is seldom mentioned.

You will find nothing on the case in the contemporary press; nothing that is until six weeks after its supposed occurrence, and even then it only got a mention due to an unfortunate plane crash which killed the two USAF officers who had been summoned to investigate the case.

The story allegedly began three days before Arnold, i.e. on June 21, 1947 when a Mr Harold Dahl witness six doughnut shaped UFOs when out in his boat near Maury Island, in Puget Sound, a few miles from Tacoma, Washington. One of the UFOs suddenly exploded showering a lot of debris onto the boat and the island, killing his dog and injuring his son. The remaining UFOs then disappeared. Dahl and his crew immediately sailed back and told Fred L. Crisman, his superior (they were both said to be in the Harbour Patrol at the time). A small amount of the ten tons or so of debris was collected and taken back to Tacoma.

Many weird events then followed. Dahl was visited by a mystery man who told him to forget the affair. Dahl had taken some photos of the UFOs but these didn't come out; later the photos disappeared. Sometime in July Dahl and Crisman decided to send the fragments to a magazine Crisman was familiar with. This was *Amazing Stories*, edited by Ray Palmer. (In 1946 Crisman was a keen science fiction fan, and had written to Palmer as a result of reading the 'Shaver Mystery' stories in the magazine. Crisman said he had encountered one of Shaver's deros in a cave in Burma during the Second World War, and had fought his way out with a submachine gun!)

By July Arnold's sighting was known world-wide and Palmer, who had already been in touch with him, asked Arnold to check the Maury Island story for him before he published it. Arnold did his best but soon got bogged down and called a friend of his to help out; he then went further and involved two USAF intelligence men he had met earlier. They flew

to Tacoma, spoke to the originators and even, so it is claimed, took some UFO fragments away.

The affair ended in tragedy when their B-25 crashed on the return trip to California. The intelligence officers died, although two other passengers escaped in time. Press reports hinted the plane was sabotaged due to the nature of the material (i.e. saucer fragments) it was carrying.

The case was soon hushed up and not mentioned again for two years when the USAF dismissed it as a hoax, as part of their Project Grudge release. The plane crash was an accident, the 'fragments' were nothing but slag from a copper smelter and the UFO story was pure invention. Neither Dahl nor Crisman were harbour patrolmen at all. They were actually partners in a timber business. Palmer, although not mentioned by name, was said to have encouraged the hoax.

So much for the original UFO story. What of the sequel? It seems that one of the originators, Fred Crisman, led a very chequered life thereafter, using various aliases. He was at various times a teacher, businessman, oil technician, writer, broadcaster, personnel officer, political agitator, and even an alleged CIS 'disruption agent', whatever that is. He seemed to have acquired a number of enemies, one of whom wrote an anonymous letter to the New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison in 1968, telling Garrison, who was then preparing to prosecute Clay Shaw over the JFK assassination, that Crisman might also be implicated.

Crisman narrowly escaped an attempt on his life that same year. He was subpoenaed and duly testified before the court but Garrison's whole case collapsed soon afterwards, with Shaw being acquitted in short order; and Crisman's involvement, it transpired, was a total red herring.

But wait a minute: we now have an established 'connection' between Maury Island and JFK. The author also claims that an FBI agent, Guy Banister, who had a detective agency in New Orleans, was involved with both Maury Island and, later, was interviewed by the Warren Commission. So we now have two such 'connections'. The plot thickens. Or does it?

In fact a close reading

Crisman claimed to have encountered one of Shaver's deros in a cave in Burma during World War Two and had fought his way out with a submachine gun

shows that Banister had nothing to do with Maury Island; he was only involved with another story (also a prank as it turned out) at about the same time. Crisman's own post 1947 career, if we can believe his claims, was so bizarre that it is not in the least surprising that he created a few enemies and that someone might try and frame him for the JFK assassination.

Crisman had the nerve to write an article in Palmer's *Flying Saucers* magazine in 1958 (under a pseudonym), claiming that the Air Force had since put an armed guard on Maury Island, that bound volumes of the Tacoma newspapers of summer 1947 had been seized by the military from the library, then returned with new pages replacing the originals; and that Keyhoe's *Flying Saucers are Real* had been bought up in large numbers by the military from the bookshops (presumably to prevent the public getting hold of it)! In 1967 it appears that Crisman lectured to a UFO group in Seattle, telling them that he still had the Maury Island photographs (Naturally nobody ever saw them).

The book contains many appendices, including FBI reports released under the Freedom of Information Act. Nobody reading these reports could have the slightest doubt that Maury Island was a UFO non-event. Nobody reading the Crisman 'file' as presented in this book could have the slightest doubt that Crisman was a master bullshitter.

This book will be very useful for conspiracists, of which there are quite a number. Also, there is no mention of Marilyn Monroe, Princess Diana or Monica Lewinsky, so don't buy it expecting any revelations about them.

Christopher D. Allan

Sergio Della Sala. *Mind Myths: exploring popular assumptions about the mind and the brain*. John Wiley, 1999.

Della Sala has assembled a multinational team to produce a series of largely sceptical pieces, examining a range of popular beliefs about the mind and brain. While chiefly aimed at students and fellow professionals, most of the contributions will be accessible to the lay reader. They include studies of topics familiar to *Magonia* readers such as near death experiences, hypnosis, false memories, the paranormal (including a piece on conjurers' methods by Randi, though I sometimes wonder whether the willingness of many sceptics to take everything Randi says at face value is not itself a form of credulity).

Other topics such as the role of the placebo (did you know that you can get the nasty side effects from placebos?), tracing the origin of the myth of 'we only use 10% of our brain', a critique of the myth of the right hemisphere of the brain, will be of less familiarity. I would recommend the various articles on different brain stimulation machines and techniques, and on the role of advertising, for some prime examples of pseudoscience.

While some of the topics have indeed been well covered elsewhere, the chief value in this book probably lies in the assemblage of critical material on a variety of topics together.



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Hold the Back Page

Helicopter Antics

After the Manchester suburban town of Urmston, was narrowly saved from destruction by collision with the planet Venus a few years ago as exclusively reported in *Magonia* by Jenny Randles, we learn of more disturbing news from Peter Rogerson's backyard.

According to the *Stretford and Urmston Messenger* (28 October, 1999) the town has become the latest victim of the dreaded Black Helicopters. It reports sighting near a spot which it calls, for reasons unknown to us, 'The Carrington Triangle':

"The area stretching from Urmston up to Sale is considered a hot-spot for mysterious activity in the skies", the *Messenger* informs us. "Residents have been reporting unusual insect-like helicopters hovering the area during September... They were not alone, with sightings across the whole of Manchester of the strange dark aircraft which seemingly fly with precision and no markings or lighting whatsoever."

Our old chum Steve 'Dress Code' Mera of MAPIT was on the case immediately, after chatting to a 'military official' who, according to the sober-suited ufologist: "Confirmed the use of unmarked helicopters of a similar description that are state-of-the-art and can render themselves invisible to radar - adding that these often undergo testing in daylight hours".

Well, believe that if you like, but we prefer to believe that it's the Greys delivering the latest sceptical disinformation cover-up material about the New World Order to our esteemed Book Reviewer. Rogerson denies that he has ever seen any of these mystery aircraft.

But he would say that, wouldn't he.

Ha'way the Greys!

Any aliens dropping into the Northumberland town of Bedlington will be entitled to a 10% discount on a range of goods in local shops, including pensioners' rates at the hairdressers (a big advantage to your average bald Grey, of course) and discounts on food and clothing.

Apparently the town's Chamber of Commerce got involved in some sort of racket to have yourself featured on a CD-ROM which is being taken to Mars on a landing project in 2001. Given the known lack of CD-ROM players on the Red Planet, it's difficult to imagine what they're going to do with it once they get there.

In a desperate attempt to get some publicity for the declining ex-pit village Chamber of Commerce Chairman Malcolm Robinson (no, surely not, it couldn't be... could it? No, he's safely two hundred miles away in lovely Castlebar Park, Ealing... isn't he?) put together the 'offer' together with local shops. Visiting aliens will also be given a course in the local Geordie dialect.

Just in case we were getting worried, Robinson reassures us, "it's a light-hearted exercise".

Beware, Librarians at Work!

In some notes on Kenn Thomas's book about the Maury Island affairs (reviewed on page 19 by Chris Allen) Peter Rogerson highlights something of the declining years of Fred Lee Crisman:

"Crisman's later career, as a teacher in trouble from time to time for taking amphetamines, and with just a hint of some darker scandal, seems to have had something of Cariboo Syn-

drome. His later years were spent enmeshed in the local politics of Tacoma, battling the city manager and the local librarian".

Perhaps it was this obviously bruising battle which has led some American ufologists to develop such an unnatural fear of librarians. Clearly American librarians in the 1960s were not people to be trifled with.

Peter also notes that in the appendix to Thomas's book there is a reproduction of the correspondence between Dahl and Crisman, and ufologist Gary Lesley which was published in the January 1969 issue of MUFOB. I seem to recall we got a strong rebuke from Gary Leslie for publishing that. Whatever happened to him, by the way?

Meet Magonia

A glance at our Millennium-Bug-proof calendar shows that the next Magonia Putney pub-night get-together would fall on Sunday 2nd January. As this is in the middle of the official millennium holiday, and we will all be busy nursing hangovers, trying to get our computers working again or still celebrating, we intend to put the meeting off for a week to give everyone time to recover. So the first meeting of the new millennium (OK, as a special concession for the purists we'll have another first meeting of the new millennium in January 2001) will be on January 9th, at the Railway, Putney High Street. We'll be there from 7.15-ish in the evening. Be there, remember, the alternative is the Dome!

Until then, Happy New Year (at least both factions of calendar experts can agree on that!)